

**Debate No. 07 of 06.09.05****WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS****HIV/AIDS – NUMBER AND MEASURES**

**(No. I B/246) Mr D. Boodhoo (Second Member for Piton & Rivière du Rempart)** asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the HIV virus, he will give the number of individuals, in Mauritius, who have contracted the virus to date and state what measures his Ministry has taken to reduce its prevalence among the population.

**Reply:** The first case of HIV/AIDS was detected in San Francisco in 1981. Mauritius, fully concerned with that epidemic, started primary prevention before the first case was even registered over here in 1987. As at end of July 2005, the total number of individuals who have been tested HIV positive is 1,829 out of which there are 1,715 Mauritians and 114 non-Mauritians.

Over the last two or three years, statistics have indicated a shift in the mode of transmission of HIV/AIDS from Heterosexuals to injecting drug users.

Regarding the measures, I would wish to refer the hon. Member to the reply I made to the PQ 1B/29 regarding firstly, the concern of this Government regarding the sharp increase in the number of HIV/AIDS detected over the last three years and secondly, its commitment to combating HIV/AIDS. Government has already announced that significant reforms are under way to restructure the AIDS unit and the “Sexually Transmissible Disease Unit”.

HIV/AIDS is a world devastating epidemic for which there is no cure. The long expected vaccine is still being awaited and will certainly be very expensive. All treatments are but palliative. That is why the priority has been to focus on primary preventive strategies.

Our preventive measures are targeted both towards high risk and low risk groups. In that context, much emphasis has been laid on sensitisation, information and the education of –

- Sex workers
- Homosexuals
- Injecting drug users
- Prisoners

Furthermore, a fully successful measure has been the prevention of mother to child HIV transmission. In fact, none of the children born from the 29 HIV positive mother, who have followed treatment during their pregnancy, have contracted HIV/AIDS.

As regards those who have already contracted the infection, my Ministry is providing latest available treatment, that is, Anti Retroviral Drugs.

More importantly, my Ministry is preparing a modern piece of legislation to protect both those who have already contracted the virus and those who have not yet been infected.

With a view to adopting a holistic approach, the services of a consultant are being sought from WHO to make recommendations for the elaboration of an Action Plan against HIV/AIDS for the period 2006-2010.

### **SIDS CONFERENCE – CARS - IMPORTATION**

**(No. I B/247) Miss K. R. Deerpalsing (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, with regard to the duty-free cars imported for the SIDS Conference held in 2005, he will state –

- (a) the number of cars imported;
- (b) the make and type (convertible or not) of the cars, and
- (c) the total duty remissions on these cars.

**Reply:** The total number of cars imported for the SIDS Conference was 258, i.e, 138 BMW cars including 15 sports utility vehicles and 120 Mercedes cars including 11 cabriolet and 3 coupe. The total amount of duty remitted on those cars was Rs 641.9 millions. Out of the 258 cars imported, Government received free of charge 68 BMW cars and 50 Mercedes cars.

## **BILLBOARD/MEDIA ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN – EXPENSES**

**(No. I B/248) Miss K. R. Deerpalsing (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes)** asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he will state the total expenses incurred by his Ministry with regard to the billboard and other media advertising campaign during the period March 2005 to July 2005.

**Reply:** I am informed that my Ministry has incurred the following expenses with regard to the Billboard and other advertising campaign during the period March 2005 to July 2005.

(a)	Billboard campaign	Rs 962,550
(b)	Advertising campaign for Polytechnics project	Rs 234,715
	Total expenses	Rs1,197,265

With regard to the billboard campaign, I am informed that a first tender exercise was conducted on 08 February 2005 based on specifications provided by Mr F. Abdool Rahman, Adviser who also held the position of Chairman, Pre-School Trust Fund. Quotations were invited from the following four bidders as recommended by Mr Abdool Rahman –

- (a) Public Ltée
- (b) Circus advertising
- (c) CREAD & Co. Ltd
- (d) Maurice Publicité Ltd

A pre-bid meeting was held on 14 February 2005 at the Ministry, chaired by Mr Abdool Rahman. Following discussions held with the two potential bidders who attended the pre-bid meeting, namely CREAD & Co. Ltd and Circus Advertising Ltd, decision was taken to extend the date limit for the submission of tenders from Tuesday 22 February 2005 to Monday 28 February 2005, and each bidder to be requested to make a presentation of their proposal on 01 March 2005. However, as at the closing date for the submission of tenders, no bids were received.

Upon recommendation of Mr Abdool Rahman, the Ministry then decided to go for a second tender exercise on 31 March 2005. Tenders were invited from the following seven bidders as proposed by Mr Abdool Rahman-

- (a) Publico Ltée
- (b) Circus Advertising
- (c) CREAD & Co. Ltd
- (d) Maurice Publicité Ltd
- (e) Ajanta Marketing and Advertising
- (f) Nad Design
- (g) Eye-Dentity Co. Ltd

As at closing date (7 April 2005), only one bid was received, namely from Eye-Dentity Co. Ltd. The only bid was evaluated by a technical committee of which Mr Rahman was a member that recommended that the award be made to Eye-Dentity Co. Ltd for the total amount of Rs862,500.

A sum of Rs700,000 as available in the budget of my Ministry in respect of financial year 2004/2005 for the item "Mass Communication Campaign". In view of the cost of the contract, I am informed that my Ministry had recourse to reallocation of funds to meet the excess amount of Rs162,500 plus the amount paid to the MBC and the Radio Plus in respect of the airtime (Rs100,050).

According to information available, Eye-Dentity Co. Ltd now operates under the name of Amadeus Advertising and Brand Communication.

I am also informed that the Polytechnics Campaign was launched in May 2005 to sensitise students possessing a Cambridge School Certificate, but not willing to pursue to the Higher School Certificate. According to the information available, the cost of the concept/studio processing for the informative advertisement was initially estimated at Rs19,000 (excluding VAT). No tender exercise was carried out. Upon suggestion of Mr Abdool Rahman, the contract was entrusted to Eye-Dentity Co. Ltd. Since the Technical Management Trust Fund (TSMTF) had been entrusted with the responsibility of offering the Polytechnic courses, it was decided that payment for the concept design, hiring of Graphic Artists with regard to the advertisement inviting applications would be made by it. Furthermore, it

was also decided that media costs would be shared between the Ministry and TSMTF.

Eye-Identity Co. Ltd has been paid a total amount of Rs54,050 (inclusive of VAT) which is nearly three times the original estimated cost. When I examine the *dossier*, I can see the shadow of Mr Rahman hovering over these two projects where expenses have far exceeded the amount budgeted. Besides, all procedures have not been followed.

Details	Cost(Rs)		Remarks
Informative Advertisement (local press): Concept/Studio Processing Graphic Artist + Pre-Press	19,000 ) (excl. VAT) ) 6,000 ) (excl. VAT) )	28,750 (incl.VAT)	Paid by M/Education and HR
Concept design, hiring of Graphic Artist with regard to the advertisement inviting applications from students: Concept/Studio Processing Graphic Artist/Pre-Press	16,000 ) (excl. VAT) ) 6,000 ) (excl. VAT) )	25,300 (incl. VAT)	Paid by TSMTF

Media costs amounting to Rs180,665 were incurred as follows –

Le Mauricien (24/5 and 26/5/05)	Rs 73,600
L'Express (27/5/05)	Rs 39,100
News on Sunday (27/5/05)	Rs 13,800
Defi Plus (28/5/05)	Rs 19,665

Week End (29/5/05)	Rs 34,500
Total Cost	Rs180,665.

**CITE MARTIAL, PLAINE VERTE - MARKET - CONTRACT  
VALUE, NUMBER OF STALLS, ETC.**

**(No. I B/249) Dr. A. Husnoo (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East)** asked the Minister of Local Government whether he will, for the benefit of the House and in regard to the market at Cité Martial, Plaine Verte, obtain the following information -

- (a) the contract value;
- (b) the number of stalls by category;
- (c) criteria for the selection of eventual occupiers of stalls;
- (d) the proposed rent;
- (e) the date of the inauguration, and
- (f) the date of its becoming operational.

**Reply:** I would like to mention at the very outset that the project for the construction of a new market fair at Cité Martial was initiated by the Labour Government in year 1999 following representations made by the local inhabitants about the undue hardship they were undergoing. An appropriate site was accordingly identified for this project.

I am informed by the Municipality of Port Louis that the project value is Rs63.5 m. and the market comprises in all 420 stalls in the following category -

Food Court	14
Vegetable	90
Beef	12
Chicken	12
Fish	12
Shop	8
Haberdashery	272

I am also informed that the following criteria have been decided upon by the Municipal Council for the selection of eventual occupiers -

- (i) the market fair will be operational six days a week and two groups of stall holders will be housed;
- (ii) the first group will operate on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays;
- (iii) the second group will operate on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays;
- (iv) one stall will be allocated per family;
- (v) an applicant already holder of a General Retailer Licence would not qualify.

Regarding the proposed rental, no decision has yet been taken by the Municipal Council of Port Louis.

I am advised that the market was inaugurated on 21 May 2005 and nothing has been done so far. I, therefore, propose to take up this issue with the new Council in October with a view to expediting the matter.

### **MER ROUGE - FERTILIZER PRODUCTION UNIT - RELOCATION**

**(No. I B/250) Dr. M. A. Husnoo (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East)** asked the Minister of Environment and National Development Unit whether he will state if he is aware of an EIA application submitted by the Island Fertilizers Company Ltd., for the delocalisation of a pesticide plant from Mer Rouge to Desbouchers Street, Roche Bois, a densely populated area and, if so, whether he proposes to refer the application to a Technical Advisory Committee.

**Reply:** My Ministry has not received any application for the delocalisation of a pesticide plant. However, an application for an EIA



licence for the relocation of an existing fertiliser production unit from Freeport Zone 6 Mer Rouge to Roche Bois has been received on 01 August 2005. The project concerns the relocation of the existing facilities to an existing warehouse at Desbouchers street, at Roche Bois.

The application is being processed. In this respect, views of all stakeholders and public comments have been sought. Should the need arise a Technical Advisory Committee will be established to look into the matter.

**PLAINE VERTE - SWIMMING POOL -  
CONTRACT VALUE, COMPLETION, ETC.**

**(No. I B/251) Mrs B. Virahsawmy (First Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue)** asked the Minister of Local Government whether he will, for the benefit of the House and in regard to the swimming pool at Plaine Verte, obtain information as to -

- (a) the contract value;
- (b) the date of its completion;
- (c) the date of its inauguration, and
- (d) if it is operational and, if not, why not.

**Reply:** This is yet another case of mismanagement by the Municipal Council of Port Louis.

The swimming pool project at Plaine Verte which was completed on 20 May 2005 at the cost of Rs42.5 m. was inaugurated on 21 May 2005.

However, for reasons best known to the Municipal Council, I still fail to understand why after its inauguration, the swimming pool is not yet operational, thus depriving the citizens of Port Louis the privilege of enjoying these facilities.

I shall take up the matter with the new Municipal Council in October.

### **ALBION - OLD CHIMNEY - REHABILITATION**

**(No. I A/2) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Environment and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the rehabilitation of the old chimney at Albion, he will state -

- (a) when tenders therefor were launched and the closing date thereof, and
- (b) where matters stand.

**Reply:** I am advised that tenders for the rehabilitation of an existing chimney at Albion were launched in June 2005.

Two offers were received and ranged from Rs4.7 m. to Rs14.8 m.

However, the project has been put on hold in view of the high costs involved and as it is not considered as a priority at present.