



SEVENTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENTARY

DEBATES

(HANSARD)

FIRST SESSION

WEDNESDAY 14 JUNE 2023

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(Formed by Hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth)

Hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth	Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity
Hon. Louis Steven Obeegadoo	Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Land Use Planning, Minister of Tourism
Hon. Mrs Leela Devi Dookun-Luchoomun, GCSK	Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology
Dr. the Hon. Mohammad Anwar Husnoo	Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management
Hon. Alan Ganoo, GCSK	Minister of Land Transport and Light Rail Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade
Dr. the Hon. Renganaden Padayachy	Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development
Hon. Mrs Fazila Jeewa-Daareeawoo, GCSK	Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity
Hon. Soomilduth Bholah	Minister of Industrial Development, SMEs and Cooperatives
Hon. Kavydass Ramano	Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change

Hon. Mahen Kumar Seeruttun	Minister of Financial Services and Good Governance
Hon. Georges Pierre Lesjongard	Minister of Energy and Public Utilities
Hon. Maneesh Gobin	Attorney General, Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security
Hon. Jean Christophe Stephan Toussaint	Minister of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation
Hon. Mahendranuth Sharma Hurreeram	Minister of National Infrastructure and Community Development
Hon. Darsanand Balgobin	Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation
Hon. Soodesh Satkam Callichurn	Minister of Labour, Human Resource Development and Training, Minister of Commerce and Consumer Protection
Dr. the Hon. Kailesh Kumar Singh Jagutpal	Minister of Health and Wellness
Hon. Sudheer Maudhoo	Minister of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping
Hon. Mrs Kalpana Devi Koonjoo-Shah	Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare
Hon. Avinash Teeluck	Minister of Arts and Cultural Heritage
Hon. Teeruthraj Hurdoyal	Minister of Public Service, Administrative and Institutional Reforms

PRINCIPAL OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS

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MAURITIUS

Seventh National Assembly

FIRST SESSION

Debate No. 17 of 2023

Sitting of Wednesday 14 June 2023

The Assembly met in the Assembly House, Port Louis, at 10.00 a.m.

The National Anthem was played

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

ANNOUNCEMENT

ELEMENTARY RULE OF BEHAVIOUR IN THE HOUSE

Mr Speaker: Hon. Members, I have an announcement. It is an elementary Rule of behaviour in the House that any Member must address the Speaker and not direct his speech to the House or any party on either side of the House. This rule is reproduced in Standing Order 39(1) of the Standing Orders which provides –

“A Member desiring to speak shall rise in his or her place and if called upon shall address his or her observations to the Chair.”

The aim is to maintain the civil tone and objectivity of the debate. It also avoids personal attacks.

The hon. Bérenger, during his speech on the Appropriation Bill at the Sitting of Monday last, ignoring the above provisions, chose on no less than 7 occasions to deliberately address hon. Members instead of the Chair. The conduct of the hon. Bérenger was in clear violation of the above provisions.

I am making an appeal to hon. Bérenger and to all other hon. Members to stand guided by the above mentioned rule. I thank you.

PAPERS LAID

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, the Papers have been laid on the Table.

A. Ministry of Industrial Development, SMEs and Cooperatives

The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the National Co-operative College for the year ended 30 June 2022.

B. Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage

The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the National Library for the year ended 30 June 2022.

MOTION

SUSPENSION OF S.O. 10(2)

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I move that all the business on today's Order Paper be exempted from the provisions of paragraph (2) of Standing Order 10.

Mr Seeruttun seconded

Question put and agreed to.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Members, I now invite the hon. Deputy Chairperson of Committees to preside over the Committee of Supply.

At this stage, the Deputy Chairperson of Committees took the Chair.

The Chairperson: Please be seated!

PUBLIC BILL

THE APPROPRIATION (2023-2024) BILL

(NO. IX OF 2023)

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

(The Deputy Chairperson of Committees in the Chair)

Consideration of the Appropriation (2023-2024) Bill (No. IX of 2023) was resumed.

(10.06 a.m.)

(Ministry of Land Transport and Light Rail, and Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade)

Vote 6-1 Land Transport and Light Rail was called.

The Chairperson: We start from Sub-Head 6-101 – General and we have five minutes for that. Page 185 to 192. Hon. Dhunoo!

Mr Dhunoo: Under Item 21110 – *Personal Emoluments*, there has been an increase. Can the Minister give more details?

Mr Hurreeram: The increase in provision under some items of expenditure for payment of yearly increment, filling of funded vacancies and additional posts.

The Chairperson: Thank you.

Ms J. Bérenger: Item 21110.005 – *Extra Assistance*, can we have more details. Can we know to whom it is being paid, please?

Mr Hurreeram: The provision is made for payment of salaries to one advisor in information matters and one advisor in public relation. For Information matter it is Mr Yan Vincent Seetaram and public relation matter Mr Julien Brandon Bergicourt.

The Chairperson: No question? Hon. Luchmun Roy.

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22120.008 – *Fees to Consultants*, can we have more details with this?

Mr Hurreeram: Mr Chairperson, these are fees paid to Government Printing for the purchase of materials in connection with parking coupon.

The Chairperson: You are done, hon. Minister?

Mr Hurreeram: Yes, I am done.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms J. Bérenger!

Ms J. Bérenger: Item 28211.005 – *Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport*, can we have details about this, please?

Mr Hurreeram: These are provision made to meet the annual contribution to the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport.

Ms J. Bérenger: What is it for?

Mr Hurreeram: Yes we are member of this institute and so we have annual contribution.

Ms J. Bérenger: The question was with this institute?

Mr Hurreeram: That's a PQ.

The Chairperson: That's a PQ. So we move to the next Sub-Head 6-102 –Traffic Management and Road Safety which starts at page 186. It goes to 187 and part of 188 and we got 10 minutes for that. Hon. Mrs Mayotte!

Mrs Mayotte: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 187 Item 22900.952 – *(f) Road Safety Inspection and Audit*, can the Minister give us details of road safety audit carried out, please? Thank you.

Mr Hurreeram: This provision is being made for implementation of road safety measures after conducting road safety inspection. The main aim of this road safety

inspection is to identify potential hazard and deficiencies and to propose appropriate counter measures to reduce the number of crashes and to minimise the crash severity.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. David!

Mr David: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under same Item 22900.952 – *Implementation of National Road Safety Strategy (a) Studies and Surveys*, I can see that we have a yearly budget of Rs15 m. May I know from the hon. Minister who is carrying those studies and surveys and what is the target?

Mr Hurreeram: So, this provision as I said has been made for the implementation of measures of the National Road Safety Strategy. Firstly, we have the Adaptive Traffic Control System and Road Traffic Database. The project provides consultancy services for the collection of road traffic data, surveys, that is, service for surveys with respect of setting up of road safety performance indicators and then consultancy services for the setting up of a new photographic enforcement device system. The study will look into the most appropriate photographic enforcement system of latest technology of road traffic violations which should include speed camera, red light violation camera for the new system.

So, it is a holistic approach of quite a few studies that will be made.

The Chairperson: Thank you hon. Minister. Any other question on page 187? 188 under the same Sub Head? Thank you.

So now we move to the next Sub Head which is 6-103: National Land Transport Authority and this one starts on the lower part of 188 up to page 189 and again, we have got 10 minutes for this Sub Head.

We start with hon. Mayotte!

Mrs Mayotte: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 188, Item 21110.001 –*Basic Salary*, can the Minister inform the House why this increase in this Item? Thank you.

Mr Hurreeram: There has been an increase. In fact; provision has been made for the payment of salary and yearly increment to 244 funded positions for 2023-2024. Number of employees in post as at May 2023 is 271.

The Chairperson: Thank you.

Mr Hurreeram: And also, Mr Chairperson, there has been an increase in provision due to payment of increment to like 10 grade of officer.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie! Your question is on page 188?

Mrs Navarre-Marie: 189.

The Chairperson: Let me see if we have got any on page 188. Okay, so you can go ahead with your question.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Yes, thank you. Item 25500.003 – *Support to Bus Industry*, can we have a breakdown on this item, please?

Mr Hurreeram: Yes. In fact, this is a new item. The Public Transport Industry is heavily subsidized by Government with a view to keeping bus fare affordable to commuters while also reckoning that the transport can be construed as an economic enabler. So, these are several supports. In fact, I can give you some more details. You have Rs518 m. for the BCRA. You have Rs122 m. which cater for the payment of an integration of the interim allowance of Rs1,000 payable to tax, bus industry employees and Rs120 m. salary compensation. So, this is it.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms J. Bérenger!

Ms J. Bérenger: Merci, Item 25500.002 – *Bus Modernisation Scheme*. Est-ce que les Rs225 m. qui sont allouées pour l'année budgétaire à venir concernent l'achat des 200 bus électriques annoncé dans le budget ?

Mr Hurreeram: Well, it does not directly concern those 200 buses but this scheme has been reviewed to provide higher subsidy to encourage bus operators to adopt electric mobility. To that effect, the budgetary provision has been increased.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Anymore question?

Vote 6-1 Land Transport and Light Rail (Rs3,220,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(10.16 a.m.)

Vote 6-2 Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade was called.

The Chairperson: For this Ministry, it will be hon. Seeruttun who will be replying to your questions. Have we got any questions? From page 197 – 202. No question? *Quelle page?*

Ms J. Bérenger: 198, but this Sub Head.

The Chairperson: Okay.

Ms J. Bérenger: So, Item 22900 – *Other Goods and Services*, can we have the breakdown for this please?

Mr Seeruttun: Okay. Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Other Goods and Services – this comprises provision for Uniforms, Accommodation cost, passage cost. So about Rs400,000 have been provided for uniform, Rs150,000 for accommodation cost and Rs150,000 for passage cost.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon David!

Mr David: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 198, I am reading from Sub Head 6-202.

The Chairperson: No. We are not there yet.

Mr Seeruttun: You are already there yet. I have just replied for 22900.

The Chairperson: No, he is under Sub Head 6202. The question...

Mr Seeruttun: I have just replied for that.

The Chairperson: No. It is the same number but not under the same Sub Head. Okay we move to the next Sub-Head 6-202: Foreign Relations and Regional Integration. Hon David!

Mr David: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. So, 6-202, page 198, Item 22900.014 – *Hospitality and Ceremonies*, I can see that every year we have a budget of Rs3 m. except for this new financial year where this budget has been doubled to Rs6 m. Is there anything special happening this year behind this increase?

Mr Seeruttun: Yes, Mr Chairperson. In fact, the items provided under this particular Vote are with regard to the plenary session on piracy and conference on maritime security which is going to be hosted by Mauritius this year and a sum of Rs2.5 m. has been provided for this year, unlike last year whereby there was only Rs500,000 but there is also a sum of Rs1.5 m. which has been provided for the setting up of a Diaspora Cell for Rs1.5 m. It explains the increase in expenditure.

The Chairperson: Page 199. Hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Yes, Mr Chairperson. Thank you. Item 31112.408 – *Upgrading of Chanceries/Staff Residence*, are these rented buildings? If yes, why do we need to upgrade them?

Mr Seeruttun: To which residence are we referring to?

Mrs Navarre-Marie: All of them, New Delhi, London, Paris, Washington, and Brussels.

The Chairperson: No! Hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie, just one item. Either (a), (b), (c), (d) or (e) but not all. Only one.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: But it is the same item.

The Chairperson: No. It is not. Even the city is not the same. Okay next question! Hon. Mrs Luchmun Roy!

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Can the hon. Minister provide further details with regard to Item *31121.801 – Acquisition of Vehicles*?

The Chairperson: Hold on, hon. Mrs Luchmun Roy!

Hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie, yesterday I mentioned that, if you have got any issues, you better talk to your Whip.

An hon. Member: He is absent.

Mr Seeruttun: Mr Chairperson, with regard to the question put to me for Item *31121.801 – Acquisition of Vehicles*, provision is being made for the purchase of two vehicles for the missions in Beijing and in Paris. Rs5 m. have been provided for this item.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms J. Bérenger!

Ms J. Bérenger: Item *31111.011 – Consultancy Services and Construction of High Commissioner's at Residence (New Delhi)*, il n'y a pas de provision faite pour l'année budgétaire à venir mais pour les suivantes, oui. Peut-on avoir une explication s'il vous plait ?

Mr Seeruttun: This is the amount provided for the construction of a High Commissioner's residence in New Delhi, a new one. The project value is Rs26.3 m. and we are yet to appoint a consultant. So, the amount is provided for the appointment of that consultancy services.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Dhunoo!

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under Item *31112.047– Construction of Chancery and Staff Residence – Madagascar*, can we have more details?

Mr Seeruttun: Provision is being made for the continuation of consultancy services for the construction of the building in Madagascar. The amount is being provided for that service.

The Chairperson: Hon. R. Duval!

Mr R. Duval: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. At page 199, Item 26210.058 – *SADC and Affiliated Institutions*, can we know why such a significant increase?

Mr Seeruttun: The increase in provision is due to additional funds for SAMIM adopted at the SADC Extraordinary Summit in June 2021 and extended from July 2022 to July 2023. So, SAMIM is the stand by for Mission in Mozambique.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 31112.408 – *Upgrading of Chanceries/Staff Residence (c) Paris – Renovation of Staff Residence*, may I know from the hon. Minister where is this residence located in Paris and whether it is a rented premises or is it owned by the Mauritian State?

Mr Seeruttun: The residence is situated at *Quai de Grenelle* in Paris and it is a Government-owned premise.

The Chairperson: Time is over for this Sub-Head. We now move to Sub-Head 6-203: International Trade. It is on page 200. Hon. Mrs Mayotte!

Mrs Mayotte: Item 26210.176 – *Africa Regional Intellectual Property Organisation*, can the hon. Minister provide information as to this item, please?

Mr Seeruttun: There is an annual contribution of Mauritius to ARIPO which is USD 41,850 and USD 5,000 to the ARIPO Reserve Fund.

The Chairperson: Hon. Juman!

Mr Juman: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22030 – *Rent* at page 200, can we get more details about the rent?

Mr Seeruttun: An amount of Rs7 m. has been provided for rent at Medine Mews, Level 4. It is rented for the International Trade Division and provision is also made for the rental of Sterling House, Level 11 for the Industrial Property Office.

The Chairperson: Hon. Nagalingum!

Mr Nagalingum: Item 22120.008 – *Fees to Consultants – Geographical indication applications for targeted sectors (EU Funded)*. Can I have some details on this item?

Mr Seeruttun: Fees to Chairpersons and members of Boards; Rs400,000 have been provided. There are also fees for training, courses to be provided by the Civil Service College and also fees to consultants with regard to capacity building and assistance in processing geographical indication applications for targeted sectors.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Thank you. Same Item 22120.008 – *Fees to Consultants – Geographical indication applications for targeted sectors (EU Funded)*. Can we know what are these targeted sectors?

Mr Seeruttun: I have just replied to this question, Mr Chairperson.

I said capacity building and assistance in processing geographical indication applications for targeted sectors partly to be EU funded.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms J. Bérenger!

Ms J. Bérenger: Item 22900.014 – *Hospitality and Ceremonies*. There is a substantial increase in the amount allocated. Can we have more details, please?

Mr Seeruttun: For goods and services, about Rs56,000 are provided for uniforms and also Rs1 m. provided this year for hospitality and ceremonies. These are provisions made to meet payment of expenses in connection with seminars and workshops. And this year the increase is due to the holding of eight workshops for this financial year.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: I just wanted to know the last *item 31122.402 – Upgrading of IT Equipment*. May we know what IT equipment is referred to here?

Mr Seeruttun: It is for the modernisation of the IP Office and also provision is made for the purchase of IT equipment for the IPO with the adhesion to the WIPO administered duties.

The Chairperson: Because we have got one minute, I am giving you exceptionally a second question on the same page.

Mr Nagalingum: Item 22070 – *Cleaning Services*, can I know from the hon. Minister the name of the contractor?

Mr Seeruttun: The name of the Contractor is Mauriclean Ltd. for the cleaning services of the office in Médine Mews, and also payment is made for Pest Control Services Ltd. And for the building at Sterling House, the Contractor is Sotractable Ltd.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Assirvaden.

Mr Assirvaden: Merci, page 201. Je voudrais savoir, Sub-Head 6-202: *Foreign Relations and Regional Integration*, Item 1 – *Ambassador*. Je vois que ça sort de 20 pour 25. Est-ce qu'on a l'intention d'augmenter le nombre d'ambassadeurs et dans quel pays ?

Mr Seeruttun: Yes, the number of ambassadors is going to be increased.

Mr Assirvaden: On ne connaît pas les pays où on va éventuellement poster les ambassadeurs ?

Mr Seeruttun: As far as I know, they are promotional posts for officers that are on the establishment to be promoted to ambassadorial position. I am told that in the past there were a total of 24 ambassadors in post. Six Career Ambassadors and 18 ambassadors appointed on contract. So, this is going to be for Career Ambassadors that are going to be promoted to ambassador status.

The Chairperson: Okay, page 202. Any questions? No question.

Vote 6-2 Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade (Rs1,531,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(10.34 a.m.)

Vote 6-3 Human Rights Division was called.

The Chairperson: We got 5 minutes for this Vote Item and we got three pages: 203, 204 and 205. So, any question on page 203? No. 204? Hon. Navarre-Marie!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Thank you Mr Chairperson. Under Item 22900.932 – *Human Rights Awareness*, can we have a breakdown of expenses under this item?

Mr Seeruttun: Yes, Mr Chairperson. There is an amount of Rs800,000 that has been provided for *Human Rights Awareness* and this is also to mark the celebration of the Human Rights Day, also for capacity building and sensitisation on that particular Item. A sum of Rs400,000 has also been provided in respect to the National Museum for reporting and follow ups and Rs125,000 provided for expenses in regard to the National Humanitarian Law Committee.

The Chairperson: Thank you, we are still on page 204. Any questions? If you do not have, we will then move to page 205. *Pas de questions?* Okay.

Vote 6-3 Human Rights Division (Rs27,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(10.36 a.m.)

(Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development)

Vote 7-1 Finance, Economic Planning and Development was called.

The Chairperson: We got 25 minutes for the Vote 7-1. We are going by Sub-Heads. So Sub-Head 7-101: *General*, we got 5 minutes for that and it starts from page 211. Hon. Juman, is it 211 or 212?

Mr Juman: 211 and 212.

The Chairperson: Just take one by one.

Mr Juman: On page 211, under Item 21110.005 – *Extra Assistance*, can we have a breakdown?

Dr. Padayachy: Yes, provision is made for the remuneration of six advisors on contract and the Commissioner for the Protection of Borrowers. The advisors are –

- (i) Mr Guptar, Rs132,000 per month;
- (ii) Dr. Narainen, Rs219,000 per month;
- (iii) Mr Salim Mohamed, Rs94,500;
- (iv) Mrs Tatia, Rs66,200;
- (v) Mr Roopun, Rs103,875;
- (vi) Mr Aroof, Rs97,625.

For the Commissioner for the Protection of Borrowers, Mr Auffrey, Rs110,125.

The Chairperson: Thank you. We now move to page 212 and we start with hon. Assirvaden.

Mr Assirvaden: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Mr Chairperson, *à la page 212 à l'Item 26313.161 – Mauri-Facilities Management Co Ltd. Je vois que pour les Estimates de 2022-2023, c'était à R 450 millions et c'est passé près d'un milliard, R 975 millions. Peut-on savoir combien de personnes sont employées par Mauri-Facilities Management Co Ltd, et que fait cette organisation ?*

Dr. Padayachy: As at date, the company employs 1,242 cleaning technicians under the National Clean-up Programme. *Ils ne font que le nettoyage.*

The Chairperson: Hon. Doolub!

Mr Doolub: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22030 – *Rent*, an amount of Rs6,935,000 is being earmarked. Can we have more details pertaining to this Item, please?

Dr. Padayachy: The increase in provision is mainly to cater for a new office space and parking slots for the internal control cadre. Expression of Interest for office space has already been launched. The breakdown monthly rent –

- (a) Atchia Building at a rate of Rs24,000 monthly;
- (b) St James Court at a rate of Rs62,000 monthly;

The proposed office space for internal control cadre, total usable area is between 430-470 m² and is to be located within a radius of around 1.5 km from Government House. Rental of parking slots breakdown you have got –

- (i) 10 slots at Mac City;
- (ii) 17 slots at NPF building;
- (iii) 1 slot at Landscape Mauritius.

Additional parking slots –

- 1) 19 slots at Maubank, and
- 2) Proposed 5 slots for staff of the Internal Control Cadre.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22900.806 – *Expenses icw MOU with Infrastructure and Projects Authority (IPA)*. There is a provision of Rs10 m. in connection with the MOU with Infrastructure and Project Authority. May I know what is this Infrastructure and Project Authority and what does this budgeted amount relate to?

Dr. Padayachy: So, it is MOU with Infrastructure and Projects Authority. The provision is made for the implementation of the agreement signed between the Ministry and IPA of United Kingdom for capacity building and training to local public bodies, sharing of experience and expertise in addressing delays and bottlenecks and sharing of best practices in project and contract management in respect to capital project, life-cycle at all levels, such as planning, preparation, appraisal, procurement, implementation, commissioning, evaluation and monitoring. Furthermore, provision is also made for hosting of conferences, seminars and workshops.

The Chairperson: Hon. R. Duval.

Mr R. Duval: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. At page 212, Item 26313.020 – *Gambling Regulatory Authority*, can we know why there is such an increase?

Dr. Padayachy: The increase in provision is mainly due to –

- Compensation of employees with the filling of 32 vacancies and 9 additional posts;
- Office equipment and furniture – Rs2.3 m.;
- Consultancy fees – Rs1 m., and
- Others – Rs2.4 m.

For the compensation of employees, a surplus of Rs9.3 m.

The Chairperson: We now move to page 213, under the same Sub-Head. Any question? Okay. We now move to the next Sub-Head which is 7-102: Procurement Policy Office. We have five minutes for this. Hon. Yeung Sik Yuen.

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22120 – *Fees*, can we know the details of the amount disbursed, and why is it that for next year there is such an increase?

Dr. Padayachy: The increase in provision is due to the hiring of a Consultant to devise sustainable requirement for the procurement of sustainable projects. There are fees to Chairperson and members of boards of committees, fees for training and fees to Consultant.

You have asked for next year. For next year, there will be an increase and provision is being made for the hiring of a Consultant to devise the sustainable requirement for the procurement of sustainable projects. Hence, the increase.

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. With respect to Item 21110.005 – *Extra Assistance*, may we have details about it, to whom this is paid and how much?

Dr. Padayachy: The provision is made for payment of salaries to 2 members on contract –

- Mr Dabeesing – Rs97,625;
- Mr Reshad Jewon – Rs97,625, monthly.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Dhunoo.

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 31132.801 – *Acquisition of Software*, may we have more details from the hon. Minister?

Dr. Padayachy: The provision is made for implementation of e-Data Management System for registry.

The Chairperson: Hon. David.

Mr David: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22060.005 *Maintenance of which IT Equipment*, je vois qu'à partir de cette nouvelle année financière, le budget alloué va augmenter de R 16 millions à R 22 millions. Puis-je savoir qui est le fournisseur de cette maintenance et la raison de cette augmentation. Merci.

Dr. Padayachy: There is an increase in provision due to the acquisition of licence for net backup for virtual machines hosted at Government Online Centre. Payment for maintenance agreement and technical support fee for the e-procurement system after a warranty period of one year is around Rs16.29 m., payable in 2023-2024 to NexTenders Pvt Ltd.

The Chairperson: Any question on page 213? So, we move to the next sub-head – Sub-Head 7-103: Independent Review Panel. It is the upper part of page 214 and we have five minutes for this. Hon. Uteem.

Mr Uteem: Item 21110 – *Personal Emoluments*, may we know the composition of the Independent Review Panel and their salary package?

Dr. Padayachy: The composition of the Independent Review Panel and the fees –

- For the Chairperson it is Rs77,000 monthly and it is Mrs Ramano;
- For the Vice-chairperson it is Rs49,000 monthly and it is Mr Gunesh;
- For the members, it is Rs28,350 monthly and there are Mr Namdarkhan, Mr Gatany; Mr Mungra, and Mr Rughoobur.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms J. Bérenger.

Ms J. Bérenger: Thank you. Item 22120 – *Fees*, can we have a breakdown, please?

Dr. Padayachy: I have already given the answer, the fees to the Chairperson.

The Chairperson: You have already replied?

Dr. Padayachy: Yes, I have already given the answer; same answer.

The Chairperson: Hon. Nagalingum.

Mr Nagalingum: Item 21210.001 – *Contribution to the National Savings Fund*, can I have some details?

Dr. Padayachy: The provision refers to contribution to NSF staff and officers on contract as required under the National Savings Fund Act of 1995. Government contributes 2.5% of basic salary for civil servants. The maximum salary on which contribution is payable is Rs25,435 as from 01 July 2022. At retirement, an employee receives a lump sum over and above other retiring benefits.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Page 214, Item 21110 – *Personal Emoluments*, can we know the number of cases referred to the IRP?

Dr. Padayachy: Cases heard by the IRP in 2022-2023, 18 cases –

- 6 with merit;
- 10 no merit, and
- 2 cases withdrawn.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Nagalingum, a last one.

Mr Nagalingum: Item 22060 – *Maintenance*, I see that there is an increase, can I know which firm is doing the maintenance?

Dr. Padayachy: Provision made for maintenance of building repairs and maintenance of IT Equipment. I don't have it with me. I will table it. Thank you.

The Chairperson: Time is over! We now move to Sub-Head 7-104: Assessment Review Committee. We are talking here of the bottom half of page 214 and top part of the page 215. Again we have got 5 minutes. Hon. Juman!

Mr Juman: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 21110.005 – *Extra Assistance* and also the number of cases treated at the level of ARC?

Dr. Padayachy: Provision made for payment of allowance to Members of ARC. Members are having Rs96,295 monthly. You have got Mrs Sonah-Ori, Mr Mathura, Mr Golam, Mrs Chan Yuk Fee, Mr Ragnuth, Mrs Sobarun, Mrs Ram Vythilingum, Mr Seesunkur, Mr Maistry. Number of cases June 2022- May 2023: case settled – 2,917, case pending – 3,326, making a total of 6,243.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Yes, thank you. Under item 21110 – *Personal Emoluments*, I would like to know whether any provision is made to increase the number of Vice-Chairperson in view of the heavy backload at the level of ARC, as has been criticised in the Report of the Director of the National Audit.

Dr. Padayachy: There is in the other staff costs, where there is an increase in provision due to recruitment of additional staffs. The provision made for existing members only and chairperson.

The Chairperson: We now move to page 215, under the same sub-head. No. We move to the next sub-head which is 7-105: Economic Research and Planning Bureau, it's on the bottom half of page 215 and we got 5 minutes. Hon. Dr. Boolell, please!

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson. Item 21110 – *Personal Emoluments*, can we be apprised as to the number of people working in the Economic Research and Planning Bureau and as to the allowances drawn. If we could be apprised, Minister?

Dr. Padayachy: So, for the personal emoluments, there are 17 funded positions and we have got 9 in post. The increase is due to payment of annual increment.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Yes, under the item 21110 – *Personal Emoluments*, can we know the name of the Director of this Bureau and whether they have published any report last year?

Dr. Padayachy: The Director is not yet appointed.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms J. Bérenger!

Ms J. Bérenger: Item 22120 – *Fees*. Il y a une grosse diminution dans l'allocation faite pour cet item entre l'année budgétaire passée et celle à venir. Peut-on avoir une explication s'il vous plaît ?

Dr. Padayachy: Decrease in provision is due to non-recruitment of consultant to assist the Bureau and build capacity in the area of socio-economic planning.

The Chairperson: We now move to page 216. Hon. Assirvaden!

Mr Assirvaden: M. le ministre, à l'item Sub-Head 7-101, item 37 – *Assistant Financial Operations Officer*, tout au bas. Je vois que *Assistant Financial Operations Officer*, vous avez proposé d'augmenter le nombre de 36 à 73, presque enfin c'est le double, on peut savoir le pourquoi de cette augmentation du *Assistant Financial Operations Officer* ?

Dr. Padayachy: To cater for a succession plan in view of the high rate of national attrition in the cadre, *les cadres*.

The Chairperson: Anymore questions? Page 217, Hon. Dr. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much. In respect of Sub-Head 7-102: Procurement Policy Office, can the hon. Minister inform us as to who is the Director and the number of cases that they dealt with in relation to procurement and as to whether the staff is adequate? Thank you.

Dr. Padayachy: For the Procurement Policy Office, the Director is Mr Rambhojun, appointed on 15 September 2020 for a period of three years. The answer for the other question is: yes.

The Chairperson: Any more question?

Vote 7-1 Finance, Economic Planning and Development (Rs5,967,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(10.59 a.m.)

Vote 7-2 Central Procurement Board was called.

The Chairperson: We got 5 minutes for that. Page 218. Hon. Ms Tour!

Ms Tour: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Capital Expenditure, item 31 – *Acquisition of Non-Financial Assets*, may we know what this provision is about?

Dr. Padayachy: It's acquisition of IT Equipment. According to IT security report, server is out-dated and out of support since January 2020. Provision is made for acquisition of a new server at CBP in Financial Year 2023-2024.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under item 22120.006 – *Fees to Assessors*, can the hon. Minister table the list of all the assessors and fees paid to them in the past year?

Dr. Padayachy: Yes!

The Chairperson: Hon. Dr. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22030 – *Rent*. I see there is a relative increase in budgetary provision compared to last year's estimates. Can the hon. Minister apprise us and give us a breakdown in respect of rent?

Dr. Padayachy: Provision made for the renting of office space at the NPF Building, Rose Hill payable to National Pension Fund. The increase is due to rise in price of new contract period from 01 March 2023 to 28 February 2026, prices are inclusive of VAT.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms J. Bérenger!

Ms J. Bérenger: Item 22900 – *Other Goods and Services*, Can we have a breakdown please?

Dr. Padayachy: Provision made for payment of uniform to Driver, Office Auxiliaries and officers of the Procurement and Supply Cadre and Receptionist, catering, hospitality and ceremonies and service charges.

The Chairperson: Hon. Nagalingum!

Mr Nagalingum: Item 22070 – *Cleaning Services*, can I know who is the Contractor, please?

Dr. Padayachy: We will table it, we don't have the name. It will be circulated as we don't have it with us.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie?

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 21110 – *Personal Emoluments*, could we know the composition of the Central Procurement Board and the fees paid to each of the members?

Dr. Padayachy: The composition of the CPB Board and monthly remuneration –

- (a) Mr Prayag, Chairman – Rs164,650;
- (b) Mr Ragen, Vice-Chairman – Rs139,650;
- (c) Mr Jugroo, Vice-Chairman – Rs139,650;
- (d) Mr Sénèque, Member – Rs89,650;
- (e) Mr Sairally – Rs89,650;
- (f) Mr Ramdhony – Rs89,650.

The Chairperson: We now move to page 219. Pas de questions? Page 220? Non?

Vote 7-2 Central Procurement Board (Rs74,900,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(11.04 a.m.)

Vote 7-3 Treasury was called.

The Chairperson: The Treasury it is Vote 7-3. We start from page 221 up to page 223 and we have got five minutes for that. Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Item 22060.005 –*IT Equipment*, Rs44 m. May we know from the hon. Minister to whom these maintenance fees are paid?

Dr. Padayachy: I will table it later, I don't have it with me. I can give the description of what is. It is for the renewal of oracle licenses at Rs27,600,000. IT applications, servers and oracle support – Rs2,700,000, Hardware Maintenance Agreement, TAS server – Rs13,700,000. I will table the name of the supplier.

The Chairperson: Anymore questions on page 221? Hon. Juman!

Mr Juman: Page 222, Item 31122.802 – *Acquisition of IT Equipment*, can we know if the contract has already been allocated and to whom?

Dr. Padayachy: Provision made for acquisition of a new server costing Rs45 m. to replace an existing server which was purchased in HRMIS and TAS and which currently has a high maintenance cost.

Mr Juman: Contract already allocated for a new one?

Dr. Padayachy: No.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dr. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson. Item 31132.801–*Acquisition of Software*, with a budgetary provision of Rs7.8 m. Can the Minister be kind enough to tell us who the supplier of this software is, please?

Dr. Padayachy: Acquisition of software, upgrading of TAS from version R12.1.x to R12.2.8. Not yet awarded.

The Chairperson: Page 223, unless anyone has got a question on 222? Page 223? Non?

Vote 7-3 Treasury (Rs231,600,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(11.08 a.m.)

Vote 7-4 Statistics Mauritius was called.

The Chairperson: We got five minutes for this Section 7-4, we start at page 224 and it goes up to page 226. So, we start from page 224. Hon. Dr. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson. Item 22130 – *Studies and Surveys*, with a budgetary provision that has decreased compared to last year's estimates. I suppose some of the surveys and studies have been completed. So, if the Minister could

inform the House as to the number of studies and surveys carried out and the number of studies that have been made public?

Dr. Padayachy: So, the decrease in provision is mainly due to completion of housing and population census and to cater for ongoing surveys for household budget survey census of economic activities, continuous multipurpose household survey and new plan for census of agriculture and living conditions survey.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Luchmun Roy!

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under Item 22120 – *Fees*, can the hon. Minister provide details pertaining to this item? Thank you.

Dr. Padayachy: Fees to Chairman and members of Board and Committees –

- (a) The Chairperson is Mr Cartier – Rs50,000 monthly;
- (b) Mr Dowoonauth – Rs20,000;
- (c) Mr Ramkaloan – Rs20,000 monthly;
- (d) Mr Hittoo – Rs20,000 monthly;
- (e) Mr Thoplan – Rs20,000 monthly;
- (f) Mr Jeeanody – Rs20,000 monthly;
- (g) Mr Ramasawmy – Rs20,000 monthly;
- (h) Mr Beegoo – Rs20,000.

You have also got fees for training. There are provisions made to meet expenses in relation to training of staffs. There is also in-service training for Statistical Officers, Senior Statistical Officers. The different training is –

- Certificate in Advanced Statistics;
- Certificate in Data Science and Programming;
- Training in Advanced Excel;
- Civil Service College Mauritius Course.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. On page 224, I will come back to the studies and surveys, Item 22130 – *Studies and Surveys*, the Minister just gave a reason for the decrease but I will ask him every year there is a huge amount, last year it was Rs300 m., this year Rs100 m., what are the details and the components of such a huge figure?

Dr. Padayachy: So, for the surveys –

- Rs30 m. – Housing and Population Census;
- Rs29.7 m. – Household Budget Survey;
- Rs13.7 m. – Census of Economic Activities;
- Rs17.8 m. – Continuous Multipurpose Household Survey;
- Rs3.2 m. – Survey of Inbound, Outbound and Domestic Visitors;
- Rs1 m. – Consumer Price Index;
- Rs3.6m. – Living Condition Survey, and
- Rs1.1m. – Census of Agriculture.

The Chairperson: Thank you. We now move to page 225. Hon. Mrs Luchmun Roy!

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under Item *31132.103 – Statistical E-Platform (Maustats)*, can we have a status on this please? Thank you.

Dr. Padayachy: The implementation of Maustats is co-funded by Statistics Mauritius and the UNDP as follows -

- Statistics Mauritius - USD 500,000, and
- UNDP - USD 100,000.

A part payment of USD 500,000 by Statistics Mauritius has already been effected in Financial Year 2021-2022. A tender to procure the service of a solution provider was launched by the UNDP. No bid was retained by UNDP since price quoted was higher than the project value. Consequently, UNDP re-launched the bidding exercise. New bids received have been evaluated by UNDP. The contract has already been allocated and the supplier has already started to work since May 2023.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Yes, Mr Chairperson. Thank you. Item *31122.802 – Acquisition of IT Equipment*. Last year we voted a sum of Rs10 m., and this year we are asked to vote a sum of Rs5 m. Could we know who is the supplier for last year?

Dr. Padayachy: The provision was made for the purchase of IT Equipment for new offices. The supplier is Leal Communications and Informatics Ltd and Softel Computer Services Ltd.

The Chairperson: We now move to page 226.

Vote 7-4 Statistics Mauritius (Rs 281,800,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(11.15 a.m.)

Vote 7-5 Corporate and Business Registration Department was called.

The Chairperson: Here we are talking of 8 minutes and we have 3 pages, 227, 228 and 229.

We start with hon. Ms Tour!

Ms Tour: Thank you Mr Chairperson. Vote Item 22900.036 – *Expenses icw Extensible Business Reporting*. May we have the details of this reporting system?

Dr. Padayachy: Provision made for payment to Mauritius Network Services for electronic filing of financial statements in XBRL format for large companies as to create a standardised format for financial reporting. The decrease in provision is due to turnover threshold for small private companies which has increased from Rs50 m. to Rs100 m.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Item 22030 – *Rent*. There is an amount of Rs23 m. May we have the details and the breakdown of this figure?

Dr. Padayachy: Increase in provision as per existing contractual agreement. Rental of building as renting of –

- Office space at a monthly all-inclusive rent of Rs1.184 m. at One Cathedral Square, Port Louis;
- Office space at One Cathedral Square at a monthly all-inclusive rent of s143,000;
- Office space at One Cathedral Square at a monthly all-inclusive rent of Rs346,000;
- Rental of 2 parking slots, payable to Maxcity Property Ltd, and
- Rental of facilities for events.

Provision made to meet expenses with workshop to be organized by CBRD.

The Chairperson: Hon Quirin! Welcome back!

Mr Quirin: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22060 – *Maintenance*, an amount of nearly Rs12 m. has been budgeted for 2023-2024. Can we have some details regarding this amount please?

Dr. Padayachy: Yes, provision made for maintenance, cost of building, plants and equipment. So –

- Building, Rs50,000;
- Plants and equipment, Rs100,000;
- Vehicles and motorcycles, Rs135,000;
- For IT equipment, there is a provision of Rs11,700 for the maintenance.

The Chairperson: Hon. Nagalingum!

Mr Nagalingum: Item 22070 – *Cleaning Services*, I see there has been an increase. Can I know details of that item and who is the contractor?

Dr. Padayachy: Provision made for payment of cleaning fees to Mauriclean Ltd and Hygiene Team Services for a monthly amount of Rs25,000 as per new contract agreement.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Yes, Item 22120 – *Fees*, may I know this Rs1 m. is payable for what purpose?

Dr. Padayachy: Increase in provision as more officers will be attending training courses. Fees to Chairperson and Members of Boards and Committees. The Chairman is Jean Paul de Chazal, the members are Mr Jugurnauth, Mr Chung, Mr Sok Ping, Miss Bundhun.

The Chairperson: We now move to page 228. We start with Hon. Mrs Luchmun Roy.

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under Item 31132.401 – *Upgrading of ICT Infrastructure Corporate and Business Registration Integrated System 3.0*. This seems to be a new item in this budget. Can you please provide more details with regard to this ICT infrastructure upgrading? Thank you.

Dr. Padayachy: So, the Corporate and Business Registration Integrated System 3.0 was developed in 2006 to enable online incorporation of companies. This platform consisted of only an online form for incorporation and online data base.

Over the years, the CBRIS was upgraded and modules were added to the platform to cater for the new roles of the CBRIS. However, the current system has some structural issues which need to be addressed for a more efficient process to start a business. The online payment module is outdated –

- lack of statistics;

- inability to reconcile data from the MNS from end and the CBRIS in some cases, and pushing data from CBRIS to MNS;
- inability to view certificates issued by the CBRD;
- updated in an addition of new modules on the CBRIS is a lengthy process, and
- one system in different portals and frequent system downtime.

Taking into consideration the issues mentioned, a new architecture, the CBRIS 3.0, incorporating the front end and the back end of the system has to be developed to cater for all the activities of this CBRD. This programme will cost approximately Rs30 m. and will be implemented over three years.

The Chairperson: So, we move to page 229. Dr. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson. The position titles are funded but there are three posts which are yet to be filled; vacancies exist.

The Chairperson: Which number?

Dr. Boolell: Vote 7-5, you will see that there are three vacancies that need to be filled.

The Chairperson: You are talking about the total?

Dr. Boolell: Yes, the total. Can you tell us when these vacancies are going to be filled?

Dr. Padayachy: The Scheme of Service is being finalised.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Under Item 11 – *Deputy Official Receiver*, there is no amount budgeted to fill this position. So, may I know from the hon. Minister the number of cases that is currently being handled by the Official Receiver and whether he feels that it is adequately staffed? Why are we not appointing this Deputy?

Dr. Padayachy: there is no provision as the Scheme of Service for the post is under process. One Chief Compliance Officer has been assigned the duties of the post against payment of an allowance.

The Chairperson: Time is over!

Vote 7-5 Corporate and Business Registration Department (Rs157,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(11.25 a.m.)

Vote 7-6 Registrar-General's Department was called.

The Chairperson: We have got five minutes for this Vote and we have got three pages 230, 231 and 232. On page 230, we have got a question from hon. Ameer Meea.

Mr Ameer Meea: On page 230, Item 21110.005 – *Extra Assistance*, may I have the details and breakdown of this figure?

Dr. Padayachy: Provision is made for the recruitment on contractual basis of an Attorney for a period of one year who will be responsible for the recovery of arrears of taxes and duties.

The Chairperson: Hon. Nagalingum!

Mr Nagalingum: Item 22060 – *Maintenance*, there has been an increase, can we have more details?

Dr. Padayachy: The increase is mainly due to a rise in the cost of maintenance of plant and equipment mainly, air conditioners and of IT equipment, and increase in exchange rate.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms J. Bérenger!

Ms J. Bérenger: Thank you. Item 21110 – *Personal Emoluments, peut-on savoir qui est à la tête du Registrar General's Department, s'il vous plaît?*

Dr. Padayachy: Mrs Deoyani Hurrinag is the Registrar-General since her appointment of 17 February 2021.

The Chairperson: We move to page 231. Hon. Dr. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much. Capital expenditure Item 31132.401 – *Upgrading of ICT Infrastructure* with a budgetary provision of Rs32 m. Will the Minister be kind enough to inform the House as to whom the contract has been awarded, whether it was an open bid or a restricted bid? Thank you.

Dr. Padayachy: The increase is due to the provision being made for renovation work and upgrading of toilets and installation of handrails on three ledges of the 6th floor of the Emmanuel Anquetil Building. The contract has not been awarded yet.

The Chairperson: Hon. Doolub!

Mr Doolub: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 31122.802 – *Acquisition of IT Equipment*, we note an increase of around Rs6.4 m. Can we have the reasons thereof? Thank you.

Dr. Padayachy: Acquisition of Norway Registers Development equipment at GOC reaching end of life and needing replacement. We have got the –

- (i) SAN system: Rs350,000;
- (ii) SAN Storage: Rs1,500,000;
- (iii) Controller including the licence: Rs6 m.;
- (iv) Switch network: Rs100,000;
- (v) 36 PCs: Rs2.1 m.;
- (vi) 19 all-in-one: Rs1.4 m., and
- (vii) 30 tablets: Rs600,000.

The Chairperson: Hon. Quirin!

Mr Quirin: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. On the same Item 31132.401 – *Upgrading of ICT Infrastructure*, for 2022-2023 an amount of Rs33,945,000, was earmarked. Can we know how much from this amount was spent and to whom was the contract awarded?

Dr. Padayachy: Upgrading of ICT infrastructure in Financial Year 2022-2023, the MeRP Enhancement Mastercard Payment Gateway Service. Implementation in May 2023: USD 22,272.

The MeRP Enhancement Interest Rate Module: 29,400 USD.

The Chairperson: We move to page 232. No questions?

Vote 7-6 Registrar-General's Department (Rs166,500,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(11.32 a.m.)

Vote 23-1 Centrally Managed Expenses of Government was called.

The Chairperson: We are on page 474 and we have 10 minutes for this Item. Hon. Mayotte!

Mrs Mayotte: Thank you, Mr Chairperson, Item 22180 – *Mission Expenses (Ministers, Delegates and Officials)*. Can the hon. Minister give us more details about that Item? Thank you.

Dr. Padayachy: The provision is required as follows –

- (i) Rs113 m. for meeting the cost of air tickets, hotel accommodation, and per diem for overseas mission undertaken by Ministers, delegates and officials, and
- (ii) Rs15 m. to meet the cost of participation of Mauritius in respect to G20 meetings in India.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: On page 474, on Centrally Managed Expenses of Government, can I ask the hon. Minister on Item 21210.002 – *Defined Contribution Pension Scheme*. There is an amount of Rs800 m. that is being budgeted. May we have the details and breakdown but also the mechanism behind how we arrive at this estimate, at this budget of Rs800 m., and also it is in respect to which Ministry, whether we have Local Authorities and Statutory Bodies included in it?

Dr. Padayachy: The Scheme is in respect of officers joining the Civil Service as from January 2013. The 2013 PRB Report recommended the implementation of a contributory defined Contribution Pension Scheme for all new entrants in the Public Sector Central Government, Local Authorities, RRA and all parastatal bodies as from January 2013 to ensure the long term sustainability of pension funds and the provision for all Ministries are centralised expenses.

The Chairperson: Hon. Members, just to avoid any confusion, I had already announced yesterday that keeping with past practices, the Votes for Centralised Services of Government would be taken out of turn.

So, let us give a chance to hon. Dhunoo now.

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under Item 28211.024 – *Transfers to Non-Profit Institutions, Financial Support to Religious Bodies*, can we have more details from the hon. Minister?

Dr. Padayachy: Provision made for payment of a monthly grant to religious bodies under two schemes, namely the Per Capita Subsidy Scheme and the Fixed Grant Scheme.

For the increase in provision, there is a high provision made to cater for a 15% increase in the grant to religious bodies as from July 2023. In addition, a one-off grant of Rs10 m. will be provided to religious bodies from the National Resilience Fund. Presently there are 11 federations that are benefitting from the Per Capita Subsidy Scheme. These federations are as follows –

- (i) Roman Catholic Diocese;
- (ii) Mauritian Sanatan Dharma Temples Federation;
- (iii) Board Of Waqf Commissioners;
- (iv) Mauritius Tamil Temples Federation;
- (v) Arya Sabha Mauritius;
- (vi) Mauritius Arya Ravi Ved Pracharini Sabha ;
- (vii) Mauritius Gahlot Rajput Maha Sabha ;
- (viii) Mauritius Telegu Maha Sabha;
- (ix) Mauritius Marathi Mandali Federation ;
- (x) Anglican Diocese of Mauritius, and
- (xi) Presbyterian Church.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Dr. Boolell, please.

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much. Item 22180 – *Mission Expenses (Ministers, Delegates and Officials)*, I see that there has been a provision being made for the next financial year and this is quite substantial, Rs128 m. Can we be apprised as to how this money is going to be spent? Who is flying, who will not fly, who will stay, who will use AI?

The Chairperson: The hon. Minister is saying that he just provided the information.

Dr. Boolell: Alright, provided they stay behind.

The Chairperson: Sorry?

Dr. Boolell: Provided they do not fly.

Dr. Padayachy: I just gave details. I can come back on it.

The Chairperson: No need to come back on it. We got several questions. Let us listen to hon. Quirin.

Mr Quirin: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22160 – *Overseas Training*, an amount of Rs12 m. has been budgeted for 2023-2024. Can we have some details regarding this Item?

Dr. Padayachy: Provision is required in respect of overseas training programmes for public officers. The provision is made up as follows –

- (a) Rs7 m. for payment of air tickets, and
- (b) Rs5 m. for payment of subsistence allowance.

Prior to Financial Year 2023-2024, the cost of overseas training was being met under Item 22180 – *Mission Expenses* to this vote.

The Chairperson: Hon. Assirvaden!

Mr Assirvaden: Je voudrais retourner sur la question de l'honorable Boolell à la page 474, l'Item 22180 - *Mission Expenses (Ministers, Delegates and Officials)* dont le ministre n'a pas répondu et...

Dr. Padayachy: Non, j'ai répondu.

Mr Assirvaden: Je peux ? Je peux ? *Can I ?* Je vois que l'augmentation de R 50 millions à R 128, est-ce qu'il y a des conférences qui ont apparus pour que le gouvernement décide de voyager à cette vitesse l'année prochaine ?

Dr. Padayachy: So, I am going to start again. Okay, I will come back on this.

Provision was required as follows –

- (i) Rs113 m. for meeting the cost of air tickets, hotel accommodation, and per diem for overseas mission undertaken by Ministers, delegates and officials, and
- (ii) Rs15 m. to meet the cost of participation of Mauritius in respect of G20 meetings in India.

So, if you want I can give some more details. As at 31 May 2023, Rs102.3 m. has been as follows –

- I. Rs47 m. for purchase of air tickets;
- II. Rs49 m. for subsistence allowance;
- III. Rs3.3 m. for hotel accommodation, and
- IV. Rs2.2 m. for other expenses such as travelling cost.

The provision for mission expenses was reduced significantly following the outbreak COVID-19 pandemic. In fact, in 2013 – ten years back – a sum of Rs113.6 m. were spent on overseas missions. Thank you.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, on this very same Item 22180 - *Mission Expenses (Ministers, Delegates and Officials)*, may I know from the hon. Minister, out of the Rs128 m. that is budgeted, what is the amount budgeted for mission relating to Parliamentary affairs of the Speaker and Members of Parliament?

Dr. Padayachy: I do not have this.

The Chairperson: You may be surprised. So, we take the Vote.

Vote 23-1 Centrally Managed Expenses of Government (Rs3,550,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(11.42 a.m.)

Vote 24-1 Centrally Managed Initiatives of Government was called.

The Chairperson: We have 15 minutes for this Vote and it starts from page 475 to 477. Hon. Osman Mahomed.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22900.098 – *Expenses icw Demolition of Building/Structure*, Rs100 m. has been budgeted this year. Could this be referring to the Emmanuel Anquetil Building by any chance? We have debated a lot on this in Parliament and the Leader of the Opposition has even qualified it as a *coup de tête*.

The Chairperson: You have put your question, let the Minister reply.

Dr. Padayachy: I am not going into the remarks. I am just going to give some information. Yes, provision is made to meet expenses in connection with the demolition of the Emmanuel Anquetil Building.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem.

Mr Uteem: Under Item 21110.010 – *Service to Mauritius Programme*, may I know from the hon. Minister the number of people who applied for a post and the number thereof which was given a position under that programme for next year?

Dr. Padayachy: The provision was made for payment of allowance to 300 interns under the Service to Mauritius Programme. Presently, there are 201 interns, including 7 laureates and 2 persons with disability who have been posted in various Ministries and

Departments. It is expected that some 99 interns would be enlisted in the next financial year.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Dhunoo.

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under Item 25210.008 – *VAT Refund Scheme for Planters, Breeders, Fishers and Other Specific Sectors*, can the hon. Minister state how many planters and breeders have benefited from this scheme?

Dr. Padayachy: As at May 2023, Rs4.5 m. have been refunded to some 305 beneficiaries as follows –

- Rs3.6 m. to 213 small planters;
- Rs0.8 m. to 80 fishermen;
- Rs7,500 to 1 breeder;
- Rs25,944 to apiculturist;
- Rs20,804 to 9 tea cultivators, and
- Rs11,523 to 1 cooperative.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Dr. Boolell.

Dr. Boolell: Thank you, Sir. Item 22120.040 – *Expert Skills Scheme*, a provision of Rs35 m. is budgeted, if we can be apprised as to how the fees have been paid and if we can have a breakdown in relation to fees paid to experts.

Dr. Padayachy: Provision is made for procurement of the services of experts and specialised professionals by Ministries and Departments for timely design, implementation and operationalisation of public sector policies, projects and schemes.

Presently, the services of 27 experts have been retained in some areas where there are a lack of skills and expertise. As at 31 May 2023, some Rs16 m. have been spent on the procurement of services of the 27 experts –

- Rs4.3 m. in respect of 4 experts in legal services;
- Rs3.5 m. in respect of 4 consultants for project implementation, management and design;
- Rs3.1 m. for the services of 4 experts in information technology;
- Rs2.2 m. in respect of 9 consultants in e-procurement;
- Rs1.6 m. in respect of 3 consultants for land surveying, and
- Rs1.3 m. in respect of 3 consultants in other priority areas.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Ameer Meea.

Mr Ameer Meea: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22030.001 – *Rental of Building*, it is a new provision of Rs100 m. every year, starting in 2023-2024. May I know this rent is in respect of which building to be rented?

Dr. Padayachy: Provision is made for rental of office space to accommodate Ministries and Departments presently located at the Emmanuel Anquetil Building.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms J. Bérenger.

Ms J. Bérenger: L'honorable ministre peut-il déposer la liste de ces consultants et experts, s'il vous plait ? Les 27 consultants experts qu'il a cités sous l'item 22120.040. Merci.

Dr. Padayachy: Yes !

The Chairperson: We move to page 476. Hon. Dhunoo.

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 28214.001 – *Mauritius Africa Fund Ltd*, can we know from the hon. Minister who are the members and their remuneration for the Mauritius Africa Fund?

Dr. Padayachy: The current Board composition is as follows, we have –

- Mr Servansingh who is the Chairman;
- Mr Ramyal;
- Mr Soormally;
- Mr Sonoo;
- Mr Vencatasamy, and
- Mr Sawmy.

They are members of the Mauritius Africa Fund. The Chairperson has a fee of Rs 40,000 and the other members Rs20,000.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Juman.

Mr Juman: Item 28213.029 – *State Trading Corporation*, je vois qu'il y a R 500 millions qui était allouées à la STC et maintenant R 250 millions. Peut-on savoir ces R 500 millions ont été utilisées pour faire quoi ?

Dr. Padayachy: Provision has been made for a contribution to the Price Stabilisation Account for Mogas, if required, so as to enable the State Trading Corporation to maintain the price of Mogas at Rs69 per litre.

You were asking for 2022-2023. So, as at date, Rs334.2 m. has been spent as follows –

- Rs275 m. as contribution to the Price Stabilisation Account;
- Rs59.2 m. to enable STC to supply edible oil at subsidised price of Rs75 per litre.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Ameer Meea.

Mr Ameer Meea: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. On page 476, Item 26323.205 – *National Resilience Fund*, there is an amount of Rs4 billion which is being budgeted this year. May I ask the hon. Minister, why is it that we are transferring again Rs4 billion when as at 30 June 2022, the Director of Audit mentioned that we have Rs4.1 billion in this Fund?

Dr. Padayachy: The provision is required to enable the National Resilience Fund to part finance schemes and programmes being implemented under that Fund.

For Financial Year 2023-2024, it is expected that some Rs7 billion will be required for financing of various schemes and programmes. This includes –

- Rs2 billion for refund of Registration Duty;
- Rs1.3 billion for Biomass Framework, and support to planters and farmers;
- Rs700 m. for Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority schemes;
- Rs408 m. for schemes being implemented by the Economic Development Board;
- Rs400 m. as scheme for companies under industrial electricity tariff;
- Rs288 m. for training and development schemes, and
- Rs200 m. for the development of vaccines and pharmaceutical sector.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Mayotte!

Mrs Mayotte: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 28216.011 - *Regional Multi-Disciplinary Centre for Excellence*. Can the hon. Minister give us more details about the Regional Multidisciplinary Centre for Excellence please? Thank you.

Dr. Padayachy: Provision made as per the host agreement between Government and RMC to meet operational expenses of the centre such as rental of building, utility, stationaries and salaries of staffs. As at 31 May 2023, Rs2.9 m. have been disbursed under this item. The RMC was incorporated on 29 March 2010 by three members, namely Government of Mauritius, COMESA Secretariat and Indian Ocean Commission. It is a

regional initiative driven by the Government of Mauritius and developed in consultation with the EU and the World Bank as well as Regional Trade Blocks namely COMESA, SADC and OIC Member States. The RMCE aims at improving the capacity for policy making in the Eastern and Southern African region and the small states.

The Chairperson: Hon. David!

Mr David: Item 28217.005 – *Refund/Payment of taxes icw projects and schemes financed by Development Partners or under Special Programmes of which (a) Refund Scheme for Recycling of PET Bottles.* Je vois qu'à partir de cette nouvelle année financière, il y a un budget de R 30 millions qui est prévu. S'agit-il de la mise en place du nouveau dispositif de *Deposit Refund Scheme* annoncé dans le nouveau budget et si oui, quelle est la base de calcul en termes de nombre de bouteilles collectées et recyclées pour arriver à ce montant ?

Dr. Padayachy: Higher provision has been made because the wait of refund for recycling of used PET Bottles for domestic purposes will increase from Rs15 per kg to Rs30 per kg and it's a policy decision.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under item 28214.001 – *Mauritius Africa Fund Ltd*, every year we are asked to vote around Rs20 m. for that company. May I know from the hon. Minister up to now how much money has been invested by that company in projects?

Dr. Padayachy: So, Government has to date –

- injected a total amount of Rs180 m. into the company as equity;
- signed G-to-G MoUs and Framework Agreements for the implementation of projects with the Government Authorities of Senegal, Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, Madagascar and Kenya for the development of Special Economic Zone Projects;
- developed the appropriate corporate structures and incorporated the special purpose vehicles to harbour the projects and facilitates investment into the development of the projects.
- established and consolidated partnership with multilateral agencies including World Bank, IMF, African Development Bank, Fond de Solidarité Africain, African Finance Corporation, Afreximbank.

That's it!

The Chairperson: Hon. Doolub!

Mr Doolub: Item 32145.200 – *Development Bank of Mauritius Ltd (Setting up of SME Parks)*, can we have more details for this item please?

Dr. Padayachy: Provision made for a loan to DBM in connection with construction of three SME Industrial Parks as follows –

- Rs50 m. for industrial park at Plaine Magnien;
- Rs18 m. for industrial park at Vuillemin, and
- Rs117 m. for industrial park at Solferino.

The Chairperson: Hon. Quirin! Last one.

Mr Quirin: On page 477, item 32255.108 - *Fonds de Solidarité Africain*, an amount of Rs160 m. budgeted for 2023-2024. Can we know if it is a new fund and can we have some details also regarding this item?

Dr. Padayachy: In December 2008, a new constitution of the fund was approved and provided for an increase of the authorised share capital of the fund from 10 billion Franc CFA to 30 billion Franc CFA. Mauritius has signed this constitution in 2008 and committed itself to subscribe to the share capital. The FSA currently has 16 Member States, namely Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Mali, Mauritius, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, Chad, Togo, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania and Guinea.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dr. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much, Sir. Item 28216.019 – *AFRITAC South and IMF Training Institute*, of course, the object is to turn Mauritius into a Regional Training Centre with the help of multilateral agencies. Now Rs183 m. budgeted in the Financial Year 2023-2024, if we can have a breakdown as to how this money is being spent and would the hon. Minister tell us whether the training institute is functional and operating? Thank you.

The Chairperson: Which item?

Dr. Boolell: 28216.019.

Dr. Padayachy: Provision...

The Chairperson: Just hold on, hon. Dr. Boolell, we are on page 477 already. I am sorry for that. Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. On page 477, item 32155.061 – *Metro Express Ltd*, last year an amount of Rs1.3 billion was budgeted and this year Rs1,375,000,000. Can I ask the hon. Minister what is and what has been the total amount that has been invested in Metro Express Ltd and also what is your expected rate of return in such a massive investment?

Dr. Padayachy: As at date, Government has made an equity injection of Rs13.8 billion into the Metro Express Ltd. The provision required for equity injection in Metro Express to enable the company to meet expenditure is as follows –

1. Rs575 m. for Phase 1, 2 and 3, consisting of the following –
 - (i) Rs150 m. for project supervision;
 - (ii) Rs262 m. for ancillary works;
 - (iii) R163 m. for refund of taxes.
2. Rs800 m. for Phase 4, consisting of –
 - (i) Rs220 m. for project supervision;
 - (ii) Rs97 m. for consultancy fees;
 - (iii) Rs303 m. for ancillary works, and
 - (iv) Rs180 m. for refund of taxes and other associated expenses.

The Chairperson: We have exceeded time by 4 minutes.

Vote 24-1 Centrally Managed Initiatives of Government (Rs20,475,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(12.01 p.m.)

Vote 25-1 Contingencies and Reserves was called.

The Chairperson: So, we got 8 minutes for this item and it is on page 478. Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Every year there is an amount of Rs800 m. that is budgeted. May I know from last year's figure how much has been paid in terms of recurrent and capital contingencies?

Dr. Padayachy: The provision made in line with Section 5 of the Finance and Audit Act to meeting urgent and unforeseen expenditure arising during the course of this year. As at 31 May 2023, out of the voted provision of Rs800 m., a total sum of Rs769.2 m. has been reallocated as follows –

- (a) Rs569.2 m. from the recurrent provision of Rs600 m., and
- (b) Rs200 m. from the capital provision of Rs200 m.

The purpose of reallocation Rs1069.2 m. has been reallocated for the following purposes –

- (a) Rs300 m. for the payment of passage benefits to public officers;
- (b) Rs168 m. for acquisition of security equipment;
- (c) Rs55 m. for meeting mission expenses following the easing of travel restriction worldwide;
- (d) Rs10 m. for the hosting of Commonwealth Law Ministers;
- (e) Rs2.4 m. for meeting expenses including the hosting of the Africa/Middle East Joint Group Meeting in Mauritius;
- (f) Rs1.2 m. for meeting expenses under a new vote for Judicial and Legal Service Commission.

The Rs200 m. has been reallocated as follows –

- (a) Rs61 m. for payment of subscription to *Fonds de Solidarité Africain* in respect of capital call and *fonds spécial de bonifications* ;
- (b) Rs79 m. for acquisition of security equipment;
- (c) Rs60 m. in respect of IMF/SDR purchase to finance a purchase by Seychelles.

The Chairperson: In fact for this Item, it concerns both pages 478 and 479. Any question on page 478? Hon. Ms Tour!

Ms Tour: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 26313.007 – *Civil Service Family Protection Scheme*, can we have some details on the increase of this provision?

Dr. Padayachy: Statutory Charge is not voted.

Ms Ramyad: Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson: Yes!

Ms Ramyad: Page 479 concerns the Statutorily Charged. So it's not voted. It is not a Vote Item.

The Chairperson: Okay!

Vote 25-1 Contingencies And Reserves (Rs800,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

The Chairperson: Hon. Members, I suspend the Sitting for 10 minutes.

At 12.06 p.m., the Sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 12.17 p.m. with the Deputy Chairman of Committees in the Chair.

The Chairperson: Please be seated!

Hon. Deputy Prime Minister, I understand you got a personal point of explanation.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

NSLD BOARD COMPOSITION – TABLED DOCUMENT

The Deputy Prime Minister: Thank you, Mr Chairperson; I have sought your permission to address the House on a point of Personal Explanation. Yesterday, in the course of the Committee of Supply, the hon. First Member for Vacoas & Floréal asked for the membership, the composition of the Board of the NSLD and the fees paid to Board Members. I was provided with a list which I read out in all good faith only to realise later that in fact I have been provided with the composition of the Board of the NHDC as opposed to the NSLD.

So, I do tender my apologies to the hon. Lady and I seek your leave Mr Chairperson to table the composition of the Board of the NSLD as I was requested and the information required. Thank you.

The Chairperson: Okay, thank you.

(12.19 p.m.)

(Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities)

Vote 8-1 Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities was called.

The Chairperson: We start with the Sub-Head 8-101 – General. We got five minutes for this Sub Head and we start at page 238. Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Yes, thank you, Mr Chairperson. On page 238, Item 21110.005 – *Extra Assistance*, there is an amount of Rs3.7 m. May we have the details and the breakdown of this figure?

Mr Lesjongard: Yes, Mr Chairperson, Extra Assistance concerns the payment of salary to four advisors namely –

- (a) Mr K. A. Lai Kong Ling, Advisor on Information Matter with a salary of Rs66,200;
- (b) Mr T. Moossun, Senior Advisor with a salary of Rs94,500;
- (c) Mr V. D. Jhummon, Technical Advisor with a salary of Rs85,250, and
- (d) Mr Murthoo, Public Relations Officer with a salary of Rs25,575

and other allowances in relation to the above, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Dhunoo!

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under Item 21110 – *Personal Emoluments*, can we have more details from the Minister, please?

Mr Lesjongard: You want more details? The provision is based on the actual trend.

This item, Mr Chairperson, caters for personal emoluments, including payment of increments, allowances, and other staff cost and social contributions in respect to 82 funded posts.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms J. Bérenger?

Hon. Nagalingum!

Mr Nagalingum: Next page.

The Chairperson: So, we move to next page, page 239. Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Thank you, Mr Chairperson! Item 26313.098 - *Utility Regulatory Authority of which Capacity Building Programme (Grant Funded)*, I see that the provision is being increased from Rs16.25 m. last year to Rs20 m. Can I ask the hon. Minister how is that so, when we were given to understand that future years will be better for the URA because it is income generating?

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Chairperson, the item caters for the operational costs of the URA where Government grants supplement license fees collected by URA during the transition period. Government grant has increased as it is from Rs5 m. in 2022-2023 to Rs20 m. in 2023-2024 to cater for the full operationalisation of the URA and it is expected that the URA will be self-financing over time.

Mr Chairperson, we need to approve grants for the URA because we are going through a transitional period and grants during that transitional phase will be provided by Government and this will be supplemented by license fees and revenues raised by the URA. Thereafter, the URA should generate adequate revenue to meet its running cost. I understand that the URA has worked out an estimated revenue plan over the medium term.

The Chairperson: You are done?

Mr Lesjongard: Yes, Mr Chairperson. Thank you.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms J. Bérenger.

Ms J. Bérenger: Item 22120 – *Fees*, can we have a breakdown, please?

Mr Lesjongard: This item provides for payment of fees to Chairman and Members of Boards and committees as follows –

- Departmental Bid Committee and Bid Evaluation Committee – Rs600,000;
- Fees for training – Rs150,000, and
- Subscription fees to professional bodies – Rs37,000, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Mrs Mayotte!

Mrs Mayotte: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22900.955 - *Other Goods and Services of which Gender Mainstreaming*, can the hon. Minister give us more details in regard to the Gender Mainstreaming, please?

Mr Lesjongard: Yes, Mr Chairperson, I understand that this Item is meant to cater for activities with regard to Gender Mainstreaming and in 2023-2024, it is proposed to organise a workshop on Gender Mainstreaming.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Time is over for this Sub-Head. We move to Sub-Head 8-102: Energy Services. We have got 10 minutes. It starts from the bottom of page 239 and it goes up to page 240.

Any question on page 239? No.

Page 240, hon. Assirvaden!

Mr Assirvaden: *Thank you, Mr Chairperson. A la page 240, l'Item 22900.009 (a) - Energy Efficiency Management Office, je vois que le budget pour ce Energy Efficiency Management Office, est de Rs800,000. Rs400,000 et Rs400,000. Donc, est-ce qu'on peut savoir du ministre pourquoi ce très importante institution de ce office a un budget aussi maigre de Rs400,000 et si ce Management Office a un directeur à plein temps ?*

The Chairperson: Hon. Member, you have got 2 questions, just limit it to 1, please. Help me!

Mr Lesjongard: Yes, Mr Chairperson, I understand that the provision is for expenditure relating to the organisation of Energy Efficiency Competiton that is cash prizes, procurement of shields and workshops, consultation meetings to be organised by the organisation. I understand also, Mr Chairperson, that during the Financial Year 2023-2024, it is planned to have 2 workshops which will be held for the EPC Framework Project while training will be held during the same financial year for the same project. And according to the terms of reference for the project, EEMO will bear the cost for logistics for the workshops and training sessions.

Yes, the office has a Director and the name of that Director is Mr O. Seetohul. I also understand that the Budget of EEMO is spread throughout various Items of the Budget including staff, projects, and other costs.

The Chairperson: Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: Page 240, Item 26313.139 - *Mauritius Renewable Energy Agency (MARENA)*, I see there is a reduction compared to last year, I do not know why. And secondly this MARENA, whether there is a Board, the composition of the Board, and whether there is a Chief Executive? Can he give us the name, what are the conditions of service, the monthly pay packet and when he was appointed?

Mr Lesjongard: Yes, Mr Chairperson. Let me, first of all, give the composition of the Board of MARENA, i.e. we have as –

- Chairperson – Mr D. Jahajeeah. His date of appointment was on 27 March 2023;
- Mr D. Bekaroo, a representative of the Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities, appointed on May 2022;
- Mrs S. Meeheelaul, a representative of the Ministry responsible for the subject of environment, appointed on January 2021;
- Mr Hemnish Urdhin, a representative of the Ministry responsible for the subject of finance, appointed in January 2016;
- Mr Kevin Ramkaloan, Chief Executive Officer Business Mauritius and he is a representative of the Joint Economic Council. He was appointed in April 2018;
- Dr. Roddy Lollchund, Senior Lecturer, Department of Physics at the Faculty of Science. He is a representative of the University of Mauritius, appointed in December 2020.

Then, we have two persons having wide experience in the field of energy sector, engineering, finance and management. They are appointed by the Minister. One is –

- Mr Irshad Ebrahim Saib, appointed in May 2021, and
- Mr Vishwanath D. Jhummon appointed in December 2020.

Then, we have two representatives of non-governmental organisations having as object the promotion of renewable energy. They are also appointed by the Minister. They were both appointed on December 2020.

One is –

- (i) Dr. Zaheer Allam, Urban strategist from the Port Louis Development Initiative, and
- (ii) Mr Roshan Seeboo.

We also have two members of the National Assembly who are appointed by the Speaker, that is, –

- (i) Hon. Osman Mahomed was appointed in January 2016, and
- (ii) Hon. Dhaliah, PPS, was appointed in September 2022.

We have two representatives from the Rodrigues Regional Assembly –

- (i) Mrs Rose Marie Franchette Gaspard Pierre Louis, appointed in April 2022, and
- (ii) Mr Franceau Aubret Grandcourt, appointed in April 2022.

And Mr Danen Beemadoo who is now the Chief Executive Officer of MARENA with a salary of Rs110,125.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms Tour!

Ms Tour: On page 240, Item 22130.001 – *Studies and Project Preparation (e) Promoting Sustainable Green & Blue Economy in Mauritius (Grant Funded)*. Can we have some details on the activities for the promotion of same?

Mr Lesjongard: This Item, Mr Chairperson, concerns the promotion of sustainable green and blue economy in Mauritius. I understand that under the Joint SDG Fund, Mauritius has been allocated an amount of USD 718,900 for the development of an enabling environment to catalyse public and private sector investment in the ocean renewable energy sector. The consultant, that is, the Technical University of Denmark, has been recruited in March 2023 to undertake the prefeasibility study on the potential sites for implementation of offshore wind followed by the conceptual design of the most economic implementation plan.

The offshore wind component of the project will be completed in September 2023. The other components of the project for the financing strategy and capacity building will be completed in April 2024.

The prefeasibility study for the implementation of offshore wind is conducted, like I said, by DTU for a total sum of USD 179,310. The remaining grant of approximately USD 540,000 will be used for other activities under the same project as follows –

- (i) financing strategy for development of ocean renewable energy in Mauritius, and
- (ii) data and capacity gaps for the deployment of ocean renewable technologies.

But all that will be addressed through a gender inclusive approach.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson: Thank you hon. Minister. Hon. David!

Mr David: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22900.099 – *Miscellaneous Expenses (a) Energy Efficiency Management Office*, the hon. Minister has already explained about the expenditure of Rs400,000 per year. Can I ask the hon. Minister to clarify if he can today, about when will the EEMO and the MARENA be merged as announced in the annex of the budget?

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Chairperson, we have proposed the merging...

The Chairperson: Hon. David, I do not think your question is admissible here. I am sorry for that.

Time is over! We move to Sub-Head 8-103: Water Services. We start at pages 240 to 243. We have got 10 minutes for this item. Let's listen to hon. Assirvaden.

If you do not have a question on page 240 let's go to hon. Quirin!

Mr Quirin: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 241 under Capital Expenditure...

(Interruptions)

There is only one Chairperson, please.

The Chairperson: There was no question on 240, in fact the Sub-Head starts at page 240, there were no questions.

Mr Quirin: Yes.

The Chairperson: So, you are on page 241. So, it is good. Do not listen to them. There is only one Chairperson here.

Mr Quirin: And it is you.

The Chairperson: Yes, that's me.

Mr Quirin: Under Capital Expenditure, Item 28223.010 – *Central Water Authority – Pipe Replacement Programme (a) Beau Bassin-Rose Hill*, from a project value of Rs491,620,000, for 2022-2023 there was an amount of Rs182,340,000 which was earmarked, can we know if that amount was totally spent and can we know where pipes have been replaced in Beau Bassin-Rose Hill, please?

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Chairperson, provision in 2022-2023 was made for completion of outstanding works at Rose Hill Zones 1 and 2. Hydraulic works have been completed in-house by the Central Water Authority in December 2022. Road reinstatement works have been outsourced and completed in March 2023.

Provision of Rs2.8 m. in 2023-2024 is meant for payment of retention money for road reinstatement works.

With regard to the list of the roads, Mr Chairperson, if you will allow me, I will have to circulate the list.

The Chairperson: Okay. Hon. Assirvaden!

Mr Assirvaden: Page 241 à l’item 28223.010 – *Central Water Authority – Pipe Replacement Programme*. Je vois dans la liste soumise par le ministre, 16 régions pour ce *replacement programme*. Est-ce que je peux savoir du ministre quels sont les critères pour la décision de ces 16 régions parce que dans la circonscription no.15 il n’y a même pas une région impliquée pour l’année financière en cours ?

The Chairperson: Hon. Assirvaden, this is also a policy matter, you better...

Mr Assirvaden: Non, non mais la somme de R 540 million est demandée à être votée, je voudrais savoir les critères pour ces régions. Quels sont les critères choisis par le ministère pour allouer ces régions ?

The Chairperson: You can have a question concerning the amount that has been earmarked.

Mr Assirvaden: Non, Non. Pas nécessairement !

The Chairperson: But concerning the reasoning behind, that is a policy matter, please. You have got up to 2 o’clock to send a question today.

Mr Assirvaden: *Mr Chairperson*, s’il vous plait! On nous demande de voter R 540 millions pour le *replacement of pipes*. Je voudrais savoir quels sont les critères utilisés pour ces R 540 millions.

The Chairperson : Next question ! *Vous n'arrivez toujours pas à me convaincre que votre question est admissible.* So, we move to hon. David!

Mr Assirvaden: Mais ça c'est une protection des ministres, pas possible !

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Chairperson, can you request the hon. Member to withdraw what he said? He said: '*c'est une protection du ministre*'.

Mr Assirvaden: Protection du ministre ! C'est une protection du ministre !

Mr Lesjongard: He cannot say that in Parliament!

The Chairperson: By whom? By me? Yesterday I was called a goalkeeper, today I am called a protector.

(Interruptions)

No, no, please withdraw!

Mr Assirvaden: R 540 million!

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Please withdraw! Please withdraw that word!

(Interruptions)

Mr Assirvaden: Mais on peut avoir des renseignements sur les R 540 millions ?

The Chairperson: You can have next week if you put your question by two o'clock today.

Mr Lesjongard: And, I am willing to reply.

Mr Assirvaden: On n'a pas envie de rire ! Je n'ai pas envie de rire !

The Chairperson: Moi aussi je ne suis pas en train de rire !

Mr Assirvaden: Mais, R 540 millions on n'a pas le droit de savoir ?

The Chairperson: Vous n'avez pas le droit de parole. Je vous demande simplement de *withdraw* ce que vous avez dit.

Mr Assirvaden: I withdraw, I withdraw.

The Chairperson: Okay, thank you. Hon. Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha!

Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha: Item 22120.008 – *Fees to Consultant (a) Review of Legislation for Water Sector (b) Technical Review of Dams and Other Water Resources Infrastructure Projects*, may we know to whom were the consultancies awarded?

Mr Lesjongard: Yes, Mr Chairperson, I understand with regard to the fees paid to the Consultant for the review of the legislation for the water sector that a sum of Rs5 m. was provided in 2022-2023 for the enlistment of the services of the consultant to work on the Water Resources Bill. Following an international bidding exercise, a consultant has been appointed, namely Mr Melvin Woodhouse to work on the Water Resources Bill, its regulations and operationalization.

Now, in view of the specialised nature regarding design and implementation of dam structures and the complexity of the works, the services of an international dam expert with adequate skills and experience, that one will be enlisted to assist the WRU and a provision of Rs8 m. has been made in this present budget. Now, the requirements for that dam expert shall be at least a Degree in Civil Engineering with a minimum of 20 years relevant international professional experience and the expert should have been involved in at least two projects related to dam design and two dam projects with regard to specific construction management and contract administration. This is the information that I have, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. Hon. Luchmun Roy!

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Thank you, Mr Chairperson, under Capital Expenditure, Item 28222.014 –*Water Tank Grant Scheme*, can the hon. Minister provide details with regards to the criteria and the number of beneficiaries under this?

The Chairperson: No, no, the criteria are policy matters.

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Okay, number of beneficiaries?

The Chairperson: Yes, this is admissible.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Chairperson, I understand that the provision is made for the operation and management of the Water Tank Grant Scheme by the DBM. The Scheme provides for a grant of Rs8,000 to families with a total household income of Rs50,000 for the purchase of a water tank, that is, for a maximum amount of Rs5,000 and a pump for a maximum amount of Rs3,000.

Now, there is a new provision in this budget. For 2023-2024, the grant for water tank has been increased from Rs8,000 to Rs15,000 and extended to households with a monthly income of less than Rs60,000. I also understand, Mr Chairperson, that the number of applications approved for Financial Year 2022-2023 at the level of the Development Bank of Mauritius (DBM) for water tank stands at 23,375 and for domestic water pump at 22,400.

Some additional information, Mr Chairperson, since the introduction of the Scheme in 2011, the total amount disbursed today stands at Rs637 m. for...

The Chairperson: Hon. Minister, excuse me, the question was the number of beneficiaries please and I think that you have replied. If you got additional information, please circulate it.

Mr Lesjongard: Yes.

The Chairperson: Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Yes, thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22120.008 – *Fees to Consultant (b) Technical Review of Dams and Other Water Resources Infrastructure Projects*, quite a lot of investment is going in there for the next three years. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether this includes studies on desiltation of dams because silt accumulation over time reduces storage capacity of reservoirs?

Mr Lesjongard: I will need the information to be able to reply to that question.

The Chairperson: Let us take another question in the meantime. We go on page 242, hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: I was waiting for that. Thank you. Page 242 Item 28223.015 – *Transfers to Non-Financial Public Corporations Central Water Authority Other Water Distribution Works. On nous demande de voter R 98 millions pour la CWA*. Can the Minister at least give us the composition of Board, who is chairing and especially who is the General Manager, his name, when he was appointed, what is his total monthly pay packet, the number of subcommittees, if he is a member or a Chairperson and how much he is remunerated for these...

The Chairperson: Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: Yes, yes, CWA!

The Chairperson: We are here to approve the amount.

Mr Bhagwan: No, no, we are approving the amount to give to the Board. It is the Board that is going to manage that Rs98 m. Public money, consumers' money...

The Chairperson: But, for today let us stick to the approval of the amount, okay?

Mr Bhagwan: No, I am asking. How can I approve an amount when I do not know who is on the Board?

The Chairperson: No, but your question is not relevant. Either you find another section under which you can put the question that you are putting...

Mr Bhagwan: No, it is on CWA!

The Chairperson: Yes, but it has nothing to do with the amount which you are requested to vote, hon. Member.

Mr Bhagwan: No, it has!

The Chairperson: It has nothing to do.

Mr Bhagwan: This is a new, you are protecting ...

The Chairperson: I was not protecting, you must withdraw this word!

(Interruptions)

I am not protecting anyone!

(Interruptions)

I am not protecting anyone!

Mr Bhagwan: It is consumers' money.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: I am not protecting anyone! If I have got someone to protect, it is the population of Mauritius!

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhagwan: MSM people!

The Chairperson: Hon. David!

Mr Bhagwan: It is not good. It is not fair!

The Chairperson: It is.

Mr Bhagwan: The Minister....

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: No, I am the Chairperson, I have to decide whether the question is admissible or not!

Mr Bhagwan: But you are protecting the Minister!

The Chairperson: I am not protecting anyone! If I have got someone to protect, it is the population of Mauritius and I repeat it again! Hon. David!

Mr David: Thank you, Mr Chairperson, under Item 28223...

Mr Bhagwan: *Protez Msm. Prakash Maunthrooa. Pa kav dir? Kiete sa?*

The Chairperson: Would you please keep quiet?

Mr Bhagwan: It is your first time, we are not new here.

The Chairperson: Hon. Bhagwan, withdraw from this House!

I am ordering you out!

Mr Bhagwan: For the day or now?

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: For now, for now.

Mr Bhagwan: I am sure, it is better to go out. You are protecting Maunthrooa, Prakash Maunthrooa! Everybody must know! The Minister was ready to give the reply.

The Chairperson: I am ordering you out for the whole of today's session.

Mr Bhagwan: Okay. I am not afraid!

Dr. Boolell: The Minister was willing to give the reply.

The Chairperson: Hon. David!

Mr David: Under Item 28223.010 – *Central Water Authority – Pipe Replacement Programme (j) New Plaine Lauzun pumping station to Upper Monneron reservoir*, I can see that during last year we had Rs30 m. earmarked and now Rs40 m. for this new financial year. May I know from the hon. Minister the status of this project?

Mr Lesjongard: Yes, Mr Chairperson, can I reply to an earlier question put by hon. Osman Mahomed with regard to whether the consultancy and studies included desiltation.

The Chairperson: Yes.

Mr Lesjongard: I understand that the studies funded in the budget do not include desiltation. Can I now react to hon. David?

The Chairperson: Yes.

Mr Lesjongard: Was it with regard to renewal of pumping main for new Plaine Lauzun pumping station? Was that the question?

Mr David: Item 28223.010 – *Central Water Authority - Pipe Replacement Programme (j) New Plaine Lauzun pumping station to Upper Monneron reservoir*.

Mr Lesjongard: Yes, Mr Chairperson, this is a new project to improve water supply in the regions of Vallée Pitot and Tranquebar. This project is expected to benefit some 4,000 subscribers with improved hours of supply from 10.00 hrs to 16.00 hrs daily. The objective of the project is to lay a dedicated pipeline from Plaine Lauzun pumping station to Upper Monneron reservoir in order to transfer some additional 2000 m³ of water.

Now, presently, Upper Monneron reservoir is receiving about 6,000 m³ per day from Plaine Lauzun pumping station. The scope of works mainly consists of –

- a supply and lay of 5.2 km of 400 mm Di pipe, that is, from Plaine Lauzun pumping station to Upper Monneron reservoir;
- supply and laying of 100 m of 500 mm Di pipe, that is, from the pure water tank at Pailles to existing pipe to Plaine Lauzun pumping station and associated works.

Road ring statement works – the expected launching date will be July 2023; the expected award date is October 2023; start of work is November 2023, and the duration of the contract is 15 months.

Now, let me give the reason for the delay, Mr Chairperson. In June 2021, bid document was floated and procurement proceedings were suspended due to challenge from a prospective bidder and thereafter cost estimates had to be revised due to increase in prices. I thank you, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Time is over. We move to the next sub-head, Sub-Head 8-104: Wastewater Services, which is on the upper part of page 244. It seems that we have a question from hon. Ms Tour? No. Hon. Osman Mahomed.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Thank you. Item 32155.316 – *Shares and Equity Participation Wastewater Management Authority*, it is an income generating department as well, can we know more about this Shares and Equity Participation? What is the return that Government is expecting from this over time and for example, how has it been for last year?

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Chairperson, I understand that funds are being provided under the Shares and Equity Participation to meet costs related to the following sewerage projects. There are a series of projects and I will enumerate them –

- (1) Pailles Guibies Sewrage Project Phase 2;
- (2) Grand Baie Sewerage Project Phase 1B;
- (3) CHA Estates and Low Cost Housing Sewerage Project;

- (4) Bain Des Dames Sewerage Project ;
- (5) Highlands Sewerage Project;
- (6) Camp Rouillard Sewerage Project;
- (7) Sewerage Project along Jawaharlal Nehru Avenue from junction S. Hossen Avenue to Athens Road;
- (8) Sewerage Project at Morcellement Goolamally;
- (9) Refurbishment of St Martin Treatment Plant;
- (10) Refurbishment of Montagne Jacquot Treatment Plant;
- (11) Procurement of vehicles in relation to taking over of NHDC sites;
- (12) Sewerage Project at Carreau Lalo, Vallée des Prêtres, that is for consultancy;
- (13) Sewer extension works at Phoenix, Quatre Bornes and Port Louis;
- (14) Camp Caval Sewerage Project;
- (15) Rodrigues Sewerage Project, that is consultancy;
- (16) Sewerage Project at Curepipe, that is, at Wooton and Abbe de la Caille;
- (17) Wastewater Rehabilitation works at Dubreuil;
- (18) Wastewater Project for connection at Flats Guillard, Pointe aux Sables;
- (19) Wastewater Project at Quatre Bornes, Phase 1 Route Bassin, Raoul Rivet and others;
- (20) Sewer Connection for the Victoria Urban Terminal;
- (21) Sewerage Project at Cité Vallée des Prêtres and Bernardin de St Pierre Road
- (22) Sewerage Project at Cité La Ferme;
- (23) Sewerage Project in the regions of Quatre Bornes, that is La Source, Ollier and Candos
- (24) Construction of new office at Curepipe;
- (25) Implementation of centralised SCADA system and control room;
- (26) Reconstruction of sewers septic tank and absorption pit at Chamarel Housing Estates;

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Silence, please!

Mr Lesjongard:

- (27) Sewer extension works;
- (28) Sewerage Project, Morcellement Goolamally, Terre Rouge;
- (29) Sewerage Project at Pointe aux Sables, that is consultancy;
- (30) Sewerage diversion works at Avenue Sivananda (Opposite Vacoas Market), and
- (31) House service connections.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. Hon. Quirin.

Mr Quirin: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 244, under Capital Expenditure, Item 32145.517 – *Wastewater Management Authority (c) Repairs/Maintenance/Upgrading of Sewerage Infrastructure*, for 2023-2024, there is an amount of Rs200 m. Can I know from this amount which has been budgeted for 2023-2024, Rs200 m., whether the regions where these upgrading works are going to be carried out have already been identified, if so, give details?

Mr Lesjongard: I can give the details, Mr Chairperson. I understand that the Wastewater Management Authority is presently implementing the contract for sewer repair works under the framework agreement. It is also undertaking upgrading works at the different pumping stations and treatment plants, and provision in the Budget 2023-2024 caters for expenditure related to the following projects, that is –

- framework for sewer maintenance works;
- supply, installation and testing of submersible water pumps, there are 11 sites concerned;
- supply, installation...

The Chairperson: Hon. Minister, can you table the list?

Mr Lesjongard: Yes, I can table but he is asking the details. I am giving him the details.

An hon. Member: You can table the details.

Mr Lesjongard: They should know what they want, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson: Let's have a question from hon. Ms Tour.

Ms Tour: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. It has already been canvassed.

Mr Quirin: But, please, table.

The Chairperson: Okay.

Mr Lesjongard: Can I interrupt you, Mr Chairperson? Hon. Quirin seems to be saying something. Can you please repeat?

Mr Quirin: I am just asking the Minister to please table the answer. Thank you. That is all I have said.

Mr Lesjongard: I will be very glad to do that, hon. Member. Don't worry.

Mr Quirin: Yes.

The Chairperson: Hon. David.

Mr David: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under Item 32145.517 – *Wastewater Management Authority (a) Kensington Sewerage Project (Pointe aux Sables)*, I can see that during the last financial year, there was a budget of Rs31.7 m. and no further budget is being earmarked for the next financial years. May I know from the hon. Minister the status of that project, please?

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Chairperson, the provision in 2022-2023, was made for settlement of claims from the contractor under a contract which was completed in September 2018 where negotiations have been conducted between WMA and the contractor. There are a series of information but as you said, Mr Chairperson, I will stop there.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem.

Mr Uteem: We are asked to vote under Item 32155.316 – *Wastewater Management Authority*, Rs1 billion of investment into Wastewater Management Authority.

We are asked to vote under item 32155.316 – *Wastewater Management Authority*, Rs1 billion of investment into Wastewater Management Authority. So may I ask the hon. Minister to give us the name and package of the General Manager and if there is no General Manager, when will a General Manager be appointed?

Mr Lesjongard: I understand that Mr Jowaheer is the Acting Officer in Charge since 2019. He is paid a basic salary of Rs103,875, with compensation of Rs1,400, travelling allowance of Rs13,200, a monthly fixed cost allowance of Rs2,460 and a monthly allowance to act as Officer in Charge of Rs45,000.

The Chairperson: Thank you hon. Minister. Hon. Assirvaden, please!

Mr Assirvaden Thank you, Mr Chairperson. A la page 244, à l’item 32145.517 – *Wastewater Management Authority (c) Repairs/Maintenance/ Upgrading of Sewerage Infrastructure*, on nous demande de voter R 200 millions *for this repairs and maintenance*. Est-ce que le ministre peut nous dire si un contracteur et quel contracteur a été choisi pour ce job ? Je demande au ministre de répondre sans être irrité ou être frileux ?

The Chairperson: Okay, you have made your point.

Mr Lesjongard: M. le président, il n’a pas à me qualifier, l’honorable membre. Je ne suis pas d’accord. *I will request him to withdraw what he just said.*

Mr Assirvaden: Il s’excite, vous voyez comment il est ?

The Chairperson: He is only reacting to what you said. So, please, *soyez gentil!*

Mr Assirvaden: Je retire les mots : « frileux », « irrité ».

The Chairperson: Merci.

Mr Lesjongard: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. I am very happy. Mr Chairperson, earlier I gave information with regard to this budget item and I also stated that the projects will be implemented under a framework agreement. Additional information requested is names of the enlisted contractors, they are –

- H. Padiachy Company Ltd.;
- Servan Limited;
- Onix Co. Ltd, and
- Safety Construction Co. Ltd.

Start of the works is as from January 2023 for a duration of 12 months, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. Time is over for this sub-head! We go to the last one. Sub-Head 8-105: Radiation Safety and Nuclear Security Services. We got 5 minutes for this sub-head; it’s on 2 pages, 244 and 245. Hon. Lobine!

Mr Lobine: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 244, item 21110.005 – *Extra Assistance*, may we have more details from the hon. Minister with regard to the budgeted sum of Rs550,000 for this item, please?

The Chairperson: Hon. Minister, it’s the next Sub-Head, 8-105.

Mr Lesjongard: Yes, I am on that page, I have the information. This is a new item, Mr Chairperson, to cater for the services of a Legal Adviser and a Communication

Officer on contract to support the RSNSA in delivery of its objective. Now, following the mission conducted by the IAEA in Mauritius, that is, the International Atomic Energy Agency, regarding radiation safety and nuclear security services, the experts have recommended the recruitment of a Legal Officer to provide assistance to the RSNSA for an effective enforcement of the RSNS Act 2018 and also the recruitment of a Communication Officer to promote activities to improve radiation safety and nuclear security awareness in the country.

I understand that they would be recruited on a contractual basis for a period of six months, both of them. The Legal Officer will be given a monthly allowance of Rs65,000 and the Communication Officer, an allowance of Rs30,000. I thank you, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. We now move to page 245 and I will request hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 31112.001 – *Construction of Buildings*, may we have more details about this please?

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Chairperson, the provision has reduced as the construction of the new offices for the RSNSA has been completed and handed over. However, some additional infrastructural works have to be carried out and provision is made accordingly and this concerns construction of a security post for Rs750,000, upgrading of landscaping and drainage work for Rs250,000 and yard lighting for Rs350,000. Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. I will now invite hon. Nagalingum for his question.

Mr Nagalingum: Item 26210.074 – *International Atomic and Energy Agency (Regular Budget)*, can we have some details?

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Chairperson, this item caters for yearly contribution to the IAEA in respect of membership fee, that is, for the year 2023, the contribution was 36,692 euros; technical cooperation and for the year 2023, the contribution was 16,668 euros. The increase, I understand, is due to fluctuation in foreign exchange rate. Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. We got time for a last question. Maybe it will come from hon. Dr. Boolell.

Dr. Boolell: Ah, how sweet! Item 22120 – *Fees*, if we can have a breakdown in relation to the fees, to whom these fees have been paid?

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Chairperson, I understand that this budget item provides for payment of fees to the chairperson and members of the RSNSA Board for an amount of Rs400,000 and for the training of RSNSA staff for Rs90,000. Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson: Thank you.

Vote 8-1 Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities (Rs3,780,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Hon. Members, I suspend the Sitting for one hour and a half.

At 1.11 p.m., the Sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 2.46 p.m. with the Deputy Chairman of Committees in the Chair.

The Chairperson: Please be seated!

Vote 9-1 Social Integration was called.

(2.46 p.m.)

The Chairperson: For this Section, we are going to take Sub-Head 9-101 – General and we got five minutes for that. Hon. Dhunoo!

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under Item 21110 – *Personal Emoluments*, can we have more details from the Minister?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Personal emoluments, you have Basic Salary, Salary Compensation, Allowances, Extra Assistance, Cash in lieu of Leave and End-of-year Bonus.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Item 21110.005 – *Extra Assistance*, may we know from the hon. Minister the name of the advisors and the amount paid to them?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Provision is made to cater for salary of one advisor, Mr Javed Soyfoo in public relations matters and his salary is Rs32,350 per month, allowance of Rs5,825 if he works beyond normal hours and Rs1,000 for telephone.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Luchmun Roy!

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Thank you, Mr Chairperson, Under Item 21110.004 – *Allowances*, can we have more details pertaining to this?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Provision is made for payment of other allowances, additional duty, responsibility and *ad hoc* allowance, internet as approved by the Ministry of Public Service, Administrative and Institutional Reforms.

The Chairperson: Thank you. You got a question on page 252?

Mr Ameer Meea: Yes, on page 252, I come back to Item 21110.005 – *Extra Assistance*. You mentioned about only one advisor, Rs32,000 x 13, it is approximately Rs400,000 but there is Rs800,000 that is budgeted. May we have the details for the remainder?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: It was catered to have an additional advisor as I have only one.

The Chairperson: Thank you. We now move to page 253. We start with hon. Dr. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson. Under Item 22130.004 – *Studies and Surveys*, budgetary provisions of Rs500,000. Can the hon. Minister inform us as to which studies and surveys have been carried out?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Provision is made for a survey to be carried out on Employment Support Scheme. It appears that consultancy services will be effected in this financial year and it will be Soft Skilled Consultants. I think it has already been awarded and for the study on the impact of training provided to beneficiaries on SRM.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms J. Bérenger!

Ms J. Bérenger: Item 22120 – *Fees*, can we have a breakdown, please?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Provision is made for the following –

- (a) Payment of fees to Chairperson and members of Committees namely –
 - 1) Departmental Bid Committee;
 - 2) Bid Evaluation;
 - 3) *Ad hoc* Committee, and
 - 4) Audit Committee;
- (b) Training fees for staff of the Ministry, and
- (c) Consultancy fees.

The Chairperson: Thank you, time over for this Item. We now move to Sub-Head 9-102 – Poverty Alleviation and Empowerment on page 253.

Hon. Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha!

Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 26313.135(b) - *National Empowerment Foundation: Upgrading of living environment in deprived regions*, may we know which regions have been benefitting from this programme please?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: It depends on demand from any constituency. For the past financial year, the setting up of an open gym at Grand Bois, upgrading of children playground at Rivière du Rempart and in the next Budget, I think we are working for an open gym at Avenue Berthaud.

The Chairperson: Hon. Juman!

Mr Juman: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 26313.135 - *National Empowerment Foundation*, can I know the composition of the Board and the monthly pay packet of the CEO.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: The CEO is Mr Alain Aliphon, his salary is Rs104,000 per month, travelling Rs11,500, cell phone allowance Rs2,000, passage benefits 5% of annual salary. You also asked for the composition of NEF. The Chairperson is Mr Raffick Sorefan, his salary is Rs65,000. Then, you have other members, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry, you have someone from the Finance Sector, Ministry of Finance, Lead Analyst, you have also from PMO and then you have independent members.

The Chairperson: Hon. Doolub!

Mr Doolub: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Same Item 26313.135(a) - *National Empowerment Foundation: Operating Costs*, I notice an increase of around Rs29 m. for the forthcoming year. Can we know from the Minister the reasons thereof?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Good question. The increase in Operating Costs is because I think the NEF will have more staff in Mauritius and Rodrigues to cater for the beneficiaries.

The Chairperson: Hon. Quirin!

Mr Quirin: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. On same Item 26313.135(a) - *National Empowerment Foundation: Operating Costs*, an amount of Rs155 m. was budgeted for the last financial year. Can the hon. Minister give us a breakdown of this amount?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: What I can provide for the time being is provision made to meet the operating costs of the NEF including salaries and allowances, cost of utilities, maintenance of equipment among others.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Mayotte!

Mrs Mayotte: Already canvassed, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson: So, we move to 254.

Hon. Mrs Luchmun Roy!

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under Item 27210.014(b)(iv) - *Poverty and Empowerment (Marshall Plan Against Poverty), School Materials*, there seems to be an increase in the amount for this budgetary year. Can we have the number of beneficiaries also please?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: It concerns some 11,541 children under SRM for a sum of Rs56 m. We have changed the policy, a cash grant would be provided in lieu of school materials but we are still working on the modality and there is an increase to cater for additional beneficiaries following the review of the poverty threshold from Rs10,500 to Rs14,650.

The Chairperson: Hon. Leopold!

Mr Leopold: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 26323.135(i) - *Construction of Social Housing Units*, does that imply all islands of the Republic of Mauritius?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Yes. Both Mauritius and Rodrigues, but I think for Rodrigues, they are still working on the concept. For the time being, construction of houses, as you all know, falls under the Ministry of Housing. However, we do have a scheme for SRM beneficiaries.

We have 3 types of schemes for SRM beneficiaries. Fully concrete houses for those who are owners of land, they have a plot of land and then the NEF construct a house for them. So, it is on demand. Then, we also purchase 10% NHDC houses to provide to landless beneficiaries and then, we have also the upgrading of existing houses. We upgrade houses of beneficiaries of NEF on demand.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dr. Gungapersad!

Dr. Gungapersad: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. May I ask the hon. Minister, page 254, Item 27210.014(b)(ii.) - *School Completion Premium*, there is an increase from Rs9 m. to Rs15 m. Will the hon. Minister give us further details regarding the beneficiaries?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Same answer. We have to cater for additional beneficiaries following the review of the poverty threshold. We will have to cater for more children. The school completion premium is provided to students who have successfully completed their NCE, SC, HSC or Diploma Degree. So, for NCE we give Rs15,000, SC Rs25,000, HSC Rs35,000 and for University Rs40,000 just to encourage the children to be in school and to complete their education.

The Chairperson: Hon. Duval!

Mr R. Duval: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under Item 27210.014(a) - *Poverty and Empowerment (Marshall Plan Against Poverty), Empowerment Support Scheme*, can the Minister provide information regarding the above allocation and items of expenditure.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Empowerment Support Scheme, provision is made for payment of subsistence allowance to eligible SRM households having signed the social contract. As you know, we do provide a subsistence allowance to our beneficiaries.

The Chairperson: Hon. Bodha!

Mr Bodha: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. On Capital Expenditure, grants, relating to upgrading of existing houses and housing units. May I ask the hon. Minister whether we still have the policy of giving corrugated iron sheets and wood?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: *Non. Non.*

Mr Bodha: Thank you.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: On page 254, Item 26323.135i. - *Construction of Social Housing Units*, can I ask the hon. Minister, how does this work under your Ministry? I mean how many housing units have been constructed and also if she can give the cost per unit for each housing unit.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: I think cost is Rs1 m. As I have explained, *si le bénéficiaire a une portion de terrain et il fait une demande au niveau du ministère, a ce moment-là la NEF construit une maison*. So, I think it should not exceed *R 1 million et quand nous avons des demandes, nous construisons*. We call it fully concrete housing. For the Financial Year 2022-2023, we have constructed 34 and during the next financial year, we will construct 47. As I have explained, for NHDC Houses, funds to the tune of *R 10 million* would be disbursed by NEF by mid-June to acquire 28 housing units at

Wooton. And then, NEF will acquire 20 NHDC housing units at Mare d'Albert. *Donc, chaque lot que la NHDC construit, nous achetons 10%.*

The Chairperson: Hon. Dhunoo!

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under the same item 26323.135 – *National Empowerment Foundation – Social Housing for Vulnerable Groups (ii) Upgrading of Existing Houses*, for year 2022/23, may we know from the hon. Minister how many beneficiaries have benefited from the upgrading of these existing houses?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Upgrading of existing SRM houses –

- 5 ongoing projects will be completed in the year 2023/24, and
- 3 new identified in Flacq, Port Louis and Black River.

So, it is on demand.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. We move to page 255. No question!

Vote 9-1 Social Integration (Rs879,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(3.03 p.m.)

Vote 9-2 Social Security and National Solidarity was called.

The Chairperson: Hon. Members, again we will go by sub-headings; we start by Sub-Head 9-201: General. We have got 5 minutes for that. We start at page 256. Hon. Juman!

Mr Juman: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 21110.005 – *Extra Assistance*, can we know from the hon. Minister a breakdown of the extra assistance of Rs3 m.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Payment of salaries for three Advisers on contract –

- (i) Mrs Louis Melissa Emilie: Rs62,200;
- (ii) Mr Chong, Public Relations Matters: Rs32,350, and
- (iii) Mrs Sahebally: Rs62,700.

The Chairperson: Hon. Nagalingum!

Mr Nagalingum: Item 21110.004 – *Allowances*, can we have a breakdown?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Provisions made for payment of extra duty, responsibility and other ad hoc allowances to staff.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: On page 257, under the Item 22030 – *Rent*, may we know where are the offices located at?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Provision is made for rental building –

- Social Security House Rose Hill at Rs5,747,000, yearly, roughly;
- Astor Court Offices: Rs2,358,000;
- Local offices: Rs8,678,000;
- Elderly Day Care Centres: Rs660,000;
- Rental of 6 parking slots – Beau Bassin, Port Louis, Astor Court: Rs340,000;
- Rental of vehicles for International Day for Older Persons and Persons with Disabilities: Rs500,000, and
- Rental of facilities for events: Rs1 m.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. On the same page 257, Item 22100 – *Publications and Stationery*, there has been a massive increase from Rs1.2 m. to Rs9.2 m. May we know why such an increase and also the details of this figure?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Provisions for the purchase of –

- papers, materials, photocopy papers: Rs400,000;
- printing and stationery – maybe there has been an increase in the items – toners, ribbons, photo conductors, books, magazines.

All the stationery!

The Chairperson: Hon. Minister, the question was: why last year it was Rs1,250,000 and this year it is Rs9,250,000?

We will come back on this. Let's take hon. Abbas Mamode for the time being.

Mr Abbas Mamode: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Concerning Item 22900.922 – *International Social Security Association Workshop*, there is a sum of Rs2 m. only for this financial year whereas for last year and the next financial year there is nothing. So, is there any special workshop to be carried out?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: *Il n'y a pas eu de workshop l'année dernière. Donc, cette année-ci il y aura un workshop par ISSA.* The workshop will be held in Mauritius on 27, 29 September 2023, that's why there is this item.

The Chairperson: Time is over for this Sub-Head. We move to Sub-Head 9-202: Social Production. We have 10 minutes for this.

Hon. Dhunoo!

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22120.001 – *Fees for Medical Boards and Domiciliary Visits*, can we have a breakdown from the Minister on how many doctors are attached to the domiciliary visits?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: *Nous avons 331 médecins*. It depends on the demand but we have sufficient doctors to visit our beneficiaries at home.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dr. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: Same Item, 22120.001 – *Fees for Medical Boards and Domiciliary Visits*, the Minister stated that there are 331 Medical Practitioners attached to deliver domiciliary visits. Now, as to – I hope you will not tell me it's policy – how many domiciliary visits have been effected? Can we have this, Madam?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Yes, hon. Member! 259,000 visits effected on a yearly period.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms J. Bérenger!

Ms J. Bérenger: Just to confirm, 259,000?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Oui.

Ms J. Bérenger: Okay, thank you.

The Chairperson: Ça c'est votre deuxième question-là ?

Ms J. Bérenger: Non, *sorry*, c'était pour confirmer.

Item 22090 – *Security*, can we have details about this and who is the contractor?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Provision made for payment of security services for –

- Foyer Trochetia: the contractor is Top Security Services Ltd.
- James Burty David Recreational Centre: Quick Security Guards Ltd;
- Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam Recreational Centre: Top Security Services Ltd.
- Lady Sushil Recreation Centre at Pointe aux Piments, Top Security Service Ltd;
- Riambel which will be opened soon, Rapid Security Services Ltd;
- Bois Savon Day Care Centre, Top Security Service Ltd;
- Social Security Offices, Rey & Lenferna Ltd;

- Social Security Offices, Brinks Mauritius Ltd.

The Chairperson: Hon. Quirin!

Mr Quirin: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. On page 257, Item 22140 – *Medical Supplies, Drugs and Equipment*, an amount of Rs25 million was budgeted for last financial year. Can the hon. Minister give us a breakdown of this amount and names of suppliers also, please?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Provision is made for the purchase of 55,000 doses of influenza vaccine to be used for elderly persons aged 60 and above, inmates of charitable institutions, licensed homes and SEN schools. There is a decrease because it is based on actual demand. And then, we also have purchase of equipment for blood sugar test, strips for elderly persons whenever there is a need.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. So, we move to page 258, hon. Armance!

(Interruptions)

J'ai donné la parole à l'honorable Armance, allez-y.

Mr Armance: Item 27210.012 – *Assistance and Training of Disabled Persons*, I can see the recurrent of Rs20 m. voted every year. May I know from the Minister how much has been spent in the last financial year and where is the training of these disabled persons? Can we have some details?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: The number of persons with disabilities that have been trained is 75 and the amount spent is Rs19 million.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Anquetil!

Ms Anquetil: Thank you, Mr Chairperson, Item 26313.056 – *National Council for Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons*. Can we know where matters stand in regard to the Disability Bill please?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: This is policy matter. So if I have to answer, I will answer.

The Chairperson: Exactly, hon. Doolub!

Mr Doolub: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 27210.017 – *Social Assistance Benefits in Cash, Social Aid for Assistive Devices*, I note an increase of more than Rs70 m. Can we know the reasons of? Thank you.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Yes, there is an increase because there has been an increase in the household income. So, it was those earning Rs30,000, *maintenant il y a eu une révision dans le dernier budget, donc c'est R 35 000*, that is why there is an increase.

The Chairperson: Hon. Nagalingum!

Mr Nagalingum: Yes, Item 26313.081 – *Senior Citizens Council*, can I know the Board members?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Yes, composition of Senior Citizens Council –

- (i) Mr Hanslall Seebaruth, MSK;
- (ii) Mrs Raseeda Bibi Hossenbaccus, Vice-Chairperson;
- (iii) Dr (Mrs) Soopal-Lutchmun.

Then you have representatives from different regions. This is the composition.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Mayotte!

Mrs Mayotte: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 28211.024 – *Financial Support to Religious Bodies (Water & Wastewater Bills)*, can the hon. Minister give us more explanation about that Item, the number of religious bodies and if possible, table the list? Thank you.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: We are only the paying agent; the list is sent to our Ministry by the CWA and Public Utilities. I may add that an average of Rs500,000 is disbursed every year. If I may add, *nous avons une liste de 1451* religious bodies benefitting from this service.

The Chairperson: Hon. David!

Mr David: Thank you, Mr Chairperson, *sous l'Item 28212.013 – Gifts to Centenarians, puis-je demander à la ministre le nombre de centenaires actuellement dans notre pays et l'âge de la personne la plus âgée actuellement en vie chez nous ?*

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: This is *question pour un champion*. So, we presently have 168 centenarians, yes, people are living longer now. So, 168, *nous avons 157 à Maurice, females - 140, les messieurs sont bien derrière, que 17.*

(Interruptions)

And then, in Rodrigues we have 11. *Donc, males, nous avons 2, females nous avons 9*, to answer to last question, the oldest is in the Constituency of my friend, my hon. colleague Kavy Ramano, so *109 ans*.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Let us move quickly to page 259. Hon. Armance!

Mr Armance: Thank you, Mr Chairperson, Item 22120.001 – *Fees for Medical Boards and Domiciliary Visits*. Can we know from the Rs22 million budgeted, how much was spent for Medical Board and...

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Sorry same page?

The Chairperson: No, we are on page 259. We are on the upper part.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: *On est sur quelle page ?*

The Chairperson: Page 259, the upper part. Still on the same sub-head.

Mr Armance: I have only one question on page 258.

The Chairperson: If you have to do that, then I better give hon. Ms Anquetil the opportunity.

Ms Anquetil: Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson, Item 31111.402 – *Dwellings, Upgrading of Recreational Centres...*

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Non, on est à la page 259. Il n'y a pas...

The Chairperson: Non, il n'y a pas de questions sur 258, alors on est resté sur 259.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Oh.

The Chairperson: 258.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: On retourne sur 258?

The Chairperson: On n'est pas retourné parce qu'il n'y avait pas de questions, alors on est restés sur 258.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: So, what do we do? Back to?

Ms Anquetil: Alors c'est, Item 31111.402 – *Dwellings, Upgrading of Recreational Centres*, donc, pour l'année 2023-2024, il y a une somme R 25 millions qui a été *earmarked*. Je voudrais savoir s'il vous plait quand est-ce que ces centres qui sont actuellement à la disposition du ministère de la Santé...

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Yes, it is a very good question, hon. Member because maybe you are aware that we have had to close the recreational centres because they have been used as quarantine.

The Chairperson: Hon. Minister, the question is not admissible because it is pertaining to when the centres will be opened and it does not relate to...

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Major works are still ongoing, I do not have the dates but, hopefully, soon.

The Chairperson: We move to the next sub-head, Sub-Head 9-203: National Pension Management. We have 10 minutes for this. Yes, hon. Doolub.

Mr Doolub: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22120.004 – *Fees to Mauritius Post Ltd* for an amount of Rs9,800,000, can we have details for this item, please?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: The provision is made for payment of fees to Mauritius Post Ltd to pay those who cash their pension through the post. *Donc*, rate payable *c'est R 20* per beneficiary, and we have a pool of 58,000 beneficiaries who still cash their basic pensions through the post.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Uteem.

Mr Uteem: Item 22120.001 – *Fees for Medical Boards and Domiciliary Visits*, may I have an indication of the number of boards held by the doctors in connection with this?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: If I can give an example, from July 2022 to April 2023, the Medical Boards, *on a fait 1958 visits*. This is what I have. We have examined about 4500 cases.

The Chairperson: Hon. Armance.

Mr Armance: Thank you. Under the same Item, hon. Minister, 22120.001 – *Fees for Medical Boards and Domiciliary Visits*, I want to find out how much money we spent out of the Rs22 m. on Medical Boards as well as on the Domiciliary Visits?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Fees for Medical Boards and Domiciliary Visits, is Rs19 m.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dr. Gungapersad.

Dr. Gungapersad: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Hon. Minister, I find the Item 22120.001 – *Fees for Medical Boards and Domiciliary Visits* a second time under the heading National Pension Management and the same in Social Protection. Can you clarify?

The Chairperson: Please, hon. Member, address the Chair.

Dr. Gungapersad: Yes, Mr Chairperson. I would request the hon. Minister to explain how is it different because we find the same mentioned fees for Medical Boards and Domiciliary Visits under the heading National Pension Management, Rs22 m., and earlier, we saw the same Item under Social Protection, Rs240 m.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: The second one is for those falling under social aid; those who benefit from the social aid.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms J. Bérenger.

Ms J. Bérenger: Same Item 22120.001 – *Fees for Medical Boards and Domiciliary Visits*, under this Sub-Head, can we know how many visits have been effected?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: J'ai déjà répondu, non ?

Ms J. Bérenger: L'autre *Sub-Head*.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: C'est presque la même chose. From what I have, the number of sessions from July 2022 to April 2023 is 1958.

Ms J. Bérenger: Ce n'est pas pareil du tout.

The Chairperson: So, there are no more questions on page 259. We move to page 260. Let's give a chance to hon. Dr. Boolell.

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much, Sir. Item 27210.201 – *Payments i.c.w Injury at Work (Social Benefits)*, I see that there is a slight decrease from Rs30 m. to Rs25 m. and this is the amount earmarked in the Estimates 2023-2024. Can we be apprised as to the number of payments made and the number of beneficiaries in respect of injury at work?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: The provision is made for payment of industrial injury allowance to workers who sustain injury at work and whose incapacity exceeds two weeks. The decrease in provision is based on actual trend of expenditure. *Je crois que pour la dernière année financière on a dépensé R 18.6 millions.* That is why there is a decrease.

Dr. Boolell: Payé à combien de personnes ?

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Mayotte.

Mrs Mayotte: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 27210.301 – *Assistance to Ex-Servicemen*, can the hon. Minister state the number of ex-servicemen that we have actually in Mauritius and the reason for the increase in the budget for the next financial year?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Provision is made for payment of pension of Rs2,500 to ex-servicemen and Rs750 to widows of ex-servicemen, respectively. They are also paid a funeral grant. *Donc, ex-servicemen c'est R 6,500; widows c'est R 4,000.* The number of beneficiaries is 366.

The Chairperson: Hon. Armance.

Mr Armance: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 27210.105 – *Child Allowance*, can we know how many children have benefited from the allowance in the last financial year and what is your projection for this coming financial year?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Payment of Child Allowance was made to some 14,942 beneficiaries at the rate of Rs2000.

The Chairperson: Hon. Juman.

Mr Juman: Item 27210.101 – *Basic Retirement Pension*, can we have a breakdown of the different age groups and the number of beneficiaries?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Number of beneficiaries, *nous avons 251,513 à Maurice et à Rodrigues 5,607, ce qui vous donne un total de 257,320* beneficiaries. Concerning the details and categories, I do not think I have the information, but I can circulate it.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Any more questions on page 260? No. So, then, we move to page 261. Any question? Page 262? Hon. Ms Tour.

Ms Tour: Item 9 – *Social Security Attendant*, there is an increase in the number of Social Security Attendant.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: I will circulate the information. Maybe the Ministry needs more officers, as a plausible answer.

The Chairperson: When you are going to open the centres. Page 263? Page 262? Okay. Hon. Armance.

Mr Armance: At the bottom of the page, Item 6 – *Higher Social Security Officer*, I can see that there is a decrease in the number of Higher Social Security Officer from 96 to 79. Can we know why, please?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Let me see if my officers have the answer.

The Chairperson: If you don't have it, you can table later on.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Yes, I will table.

The Chairperson: In the meantime, we take hon. Ms J. Bérenger.

Ms J. Bérenger: Merci, section 11 – *Head, Disability Empowerment Unit*, je vois qu’aucune provision n’est faite pour le *Head, Disability Empowerment Unit*. Peut-on savoir la raison ?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: So, no filling of vacancies to answer to your question. It’s not funded.

Vote 9-2 Social Security and National Solidarity (Rs 51,075,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(3.33 p.m.)

Vote 10-1 Ministry of Industrial Development, SMEs and Cooperatives was called.

The Chairperson: So, for this item also, we are going by Sub-Heads. We start with Sub-Head 10-101: General. We got 5 minutes for that. It’s on page 268. Hon. Dr. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much. Item 21110.005 – *Extra Assistance*, slight increase in budgetary provision made in the Estimates for Financial Year 2023-2024. Now if the hon. Minister could assist us in relation to extra assistance and tell us what it all entails? Thank you.

Mr Bholah: It is provision made for payment of salary and allowances to one Adviser on Information Matters and one Adviser for SMEs.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dhunoo!

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. With regard to item 21111.002 – *Travelling and Transport*, can we have more details from the hon. Minister?

Mr Bholah: You want to know why there is an increase, because there will be more officers who will be entitled to travelling allowances.

The Chairperson: Any question on page 268? So we move to 269 under the same sub-head. Hon. R. Duval!

Mr R. Duval: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. At page 269, under item 22120.008 – *Fees to Consultants (COMESA Funded)*, can we have some details about it?

Mr Bholah: This refers to a development of leather value chain and we are going to engage a consultant but it’s good to know that it is funded by COMESA.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Under item 31132.117 – *Development of a Centralised IT System - Central SME Database*, may I know from the hon. Minister whether the contract has already been awarded and to whom it has been awarded?

Mr Bholah: The services of BDO IT Consulting Ltd. have been listed for this project.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dhunoo!

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 26210.067 – *African Asian Rural Development Organisation*, can we have more details on this?

Mr Bholah: Yes. Previously, this item was under the Ministry of National Infrastructure, now as from this year, it is going to be included in my portfolio. So, this refers to the fees that we have to pay to African Asian Rural Development Organisation (AARDO).

The Chairperson: Hon. Armance!

Mr Armance: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22070 – *Cleaning Services*, I can see that the budget has been reduced. Can we have the name of the contractor and the terms and condition of the contract as well?

Mr Bholah: Cleaning of offices, the offices are situated at Head Office 15th and 16th floor, Newton Tower and SME Registration Unit, Ground Floor, Pope Hennessy Building. The contractor is General Clean-Tech Ltd. The contract amount is Rs13,850 per month.

The Chairperson: Hon. Minister, the question was why has it decreased?

Mr Bholah: I don't have the reason why it has been reduced.

The Chairperson: Okay, let's take another in the meantime.

Mr Bholah: I will find out and table it.

The Chairperson: Hon. Nagalingum!

Mr Nagalingum: Under item 22030 – *Rent*, I see there has been an increase in the amount, can we have some details?

Mr Bholah: As per the contract of lease, provision has been made for increase, a yearly increase up to a certain percentage. This is why an increase has been provided under this item.

The Chairperson: Time over! We now move to Sub-Head 10-102: Industrial Development and for this sub-head we have 10 minutes. We start from hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Page 270

The Chairperson: No, page 269. No one? No question on 269? Okay we move to page 270. We are not coming back to that. So hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Yes, thank you. Item 26323.046 – *Mauritius Standards Bureau*, can we have the composition of the Bureau and the fees or salaries drawn by each member?

Mr Bholah: Yes, you want the names of all the members? We have –

- Mr Sanjiv Mulloo, the Chairperson.

Members:

- Mr Pritish Singh Seeboo;
- Mr Vasheel Seedoyal;
- Mr Dhanandjay Luximon;
- Mr Jagdeep Gangaram;
- Mr Yatindra Kumar Ramgolam;
- Mr Aboobakar Peermamode;
- Mrs Nishta Surajbali;
- Mr Guinness Beedasee;
- Mr Suttihudeo Tengur;
- Mr Hans Brunet, and
- Dr. Yousouf Ismael.

The members get a fees of Rs2,500 and the Chairperson has a monthly fee of Rs40,000.

Mr Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. Hon. Ms Tour!

Ms Tour: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 26313.011 – *Academy of Design and Innovation (formerly Fashion and Design Institute)*, can the hon. Minister explain the increase in the provision for the Academy of Design and Innovation?

Mr Bholah: They have earmarked a plot of land for the construction of their own building. So, lease is being paid for the land, I believe it is to Landscape.

Mr Chairperson: Hon. Lobine!

Mr Lobine: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 270, under item 26313.046 – *Mauritius Standards Bureau*, may we know who the General Manager is and what is the monthly pay package of that General Manager please?

Mr Bholah: Mrs Deveena Boygah, *c'est* Rs 119,500 *par mois*. Car allowance Rs35,000, Fuel allowance Rs14,720, Driver's allowance of Rs9,800, Communication allowance of Rs2,000. No entertainment Allowance.

The Chairperson: Hon. Yeung Sik Yuen!

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Item 26323.064 – *Enterprise Go Digital project*, can I have more information on this?

Mr Bholah: This project is being spearheaded by NPCC. It was initiated in March last year with the support of UNDP and the Government of Japan. In fact, they are going to provide a virtual platform which will act as a one-stop shop to enterprises. The applications that are being targeted are sales automation, inventory management, production management and enterprise marketing. The project will target around 30 enterprises.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you. Under Item 26313.011 – *Academy of Design and Innovation (formerly Fashion and Design Institute)*, may I know from the hon. Minister the number of students that are currently enrolled at that academy?

Mr Bholah: I don't think I have it but I will table it.

The Chairperson: Hon. Armance!

Mr Armance: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under the same Vote Item 26313.011 – *Academy of Design and Innovation (formerly Fashion and Design Institute)*, the Minister mentioned earlier that he has earmarked a plot of land.

Mr Bholah: Not me.

Mr Armance: Sorry?

Mr Bholah: The Institute. It is not me who has earmarked; it is the Institute that has earmarked.

Mr Armance: Can we know the status of this acquisition? Where has the land been earmarked?

Mr Bholah: It's Côte d'Or.

Mr Armance: Oh, and price?

Mr Bholah: They are going to have an eco-campus. The annual lease amount is Rs20,809,000 for a period of 30 years.

Mr Armance: The extent area?

Mr Bholah: The extent area I don't have it.

The Chairperson: Hon. Juman!

Mr Juman: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 26313.064 – *National Productivity and Competitiveness Council*, the composition of the council and the respective allowance?

Mr Bholah: The Chairperson is Mr Sujoy Busgeeth. Mr Sameer Chitbahal is the Vice-Chairperson. The members are –

- (a) Mrs Manna;
- (b) Mrs Madhavi Ramdin-Clark;
- (c) Mr Jugduth Seegum;
- (d) Mr Giandev Seewootoholl, and
- (e) Mr Geerish Bucktowonsing.

The members receive a monthly allowance of Rs15,000 whereas the Chairperson has Rs40,000 as fee plus and Rs10,000 as travelling allowance.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dr. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: On the same Item 26313.064 – *National Productivity and Competitiveness Council*, can the hon. Minister be kind enough to tell us when was the last report submitted by the Council?

Mr Bholah: I will check and I will let you know. I don't have it at hand.

The Chairperson: Any more questions? So, we move to the next Sub-Head 10-103 – Small and Medium Enterprises Development. It's on page 271. Hon. Armance!

Mr Armance: Item 26323.147 – *SME Mauritius Ltd*, I can see from the previous year that the budget has constantly decreased and will decrease again in the coming years. Can we know why and can we have some details of the grant as well, please?

Mr Bholah: In fact, this was meant for the purchase of CNC machine to be used at Coromandel in the offices of SME Mauritius. There is provision because there will be an increase in the acquisition of the machines.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Item 26313.147 – *SME Mauritius Ltd*, we are giving Rs64 m. to SME Mauritius Ltd. May we know the name and salary package of the CEO?

Mr Bholah: Yes, the CEO, Mr Ravin Rampersad. I have the salary, I will table it.

The Chairperson: Hon. Yeung Sik Yuen!

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Mr Chairperson, Item 26313.147 – *SME Mauritius Ltd*, I would like to know how many Trade Fairs did SME Mauritius organise in the current year and how many will be organised in the next year?

Mr Bholah: The thing is that SME Mauritius organises a Trade Fair every quarterly. So, I have to check because we had the pandemic and because of that, we could not hold these fairs but for the forthcoming year, we will have four Trade Fairs. That is one for every quarter.

The Chairperson: Thank you, anymore question under this Sub Head? So, we move to the next Sub-Head 10-104 – Cooperatives Development. It starts from page 271 and it goes up to page 272. We have five minutes for this. Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: On page 271, Item 21110.005 – *Extra Assistance*, may we know who is the advisor and how much he is paid?

Mr Bholah: Mr Ashvin Luchmun – monthly allowance is Rs27,400 and an allowance of Rs8,000 as well.

The Chairperson: Hon. Doolub!

Mr Doolub: Item 22030 – *Rent*, for an amount of Rs10,750,000, can we have the details?

Mr Bholah: Rent is for L.I.C Centre, then we have Rose Belle Cooperative Business Centre, Cooperative Business Centre at Port Louis, at the NPF as well. We have MCCI, Saint Pierre and at Rivière du Rempart and then Beau Champ. There are different offices out there are being rented.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dhunoo!

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under Item 21110.004 – *Allowances*, may we have a breakdown from the hon. Minister?

Mr Bholah: Okay, we have acting and responsibility allowances to officers performing higher duties. You have driver's allowance, allowances for tea making, copy, duty remission car allowance, payment of allowances to ACCA holders of the Cooperative Audit Cadre. Auditors are required to pay membership fees yearly. Payment of car allowance in lieu of official car to the Permanent Secretary.

The Chairperson: We move to page 272. Hon. Abbas Mamode!

Mr Abbas Mamode: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22090 – *Security*, There is a considerable rise.

Mr Bholah: In fact, we are renovating the *Maison des Pêcheurs* at Tamarin and therefore, we will need security services over there and provision has been made accordingly.

The Chairperson: Hon. Armance!

Mr Armance: Under the same vote Item, hon. Minister...

The Chairperson: Hon. Armance, je ne sais pas pourquoi à chaque fois vous vous adressez au Ministre. Il faut que vous m'adressiez.

Mr Armance: Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson: Pourtant je suis un beau gosse.

Mr Armance: The joke of the day.

The Chairperson: Please address the Chair.

Mr Armance: I will take it as a joke.

The Chairperson: Who is a *beau gosse*.

Mr Armance: Okay. Mr Chairperson, Item 22090 – *Security*, same Item as my previous friend. Can we know to whom the contract has been awarded because even if you say that you need it for the renovation of a site, it is quite amazing, it is double the amount of last year.

Mr Bholah: *Non*. If you listen to me carefully, renovation will be made. You will find the Vote under Capital Expenditure for *Maison des pêcheurs*. Once it is completed, then we will engage a security services' supplier.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Item 31112.430(a) - *Upgrading of 'Maisons des Eleveurs/Maisons des Pêcheurs' of which Tamarin.* Could we know the status of the project?

Mr Bholah: In fact, the contract has just been awarded, at the end of May, this year, after so many years, fortunately.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ittoo!

Mr Ittoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under Item 22120.008 - *Fees for Consultants (E-Cooperatives Project)*, there is a provision for Rs1 m. for a consultant for E-Cooperatives Project. Can we know from hon. Minister who is the consultant and what is the project about?

Thank you.

Mr Bholah: It is with regard to - we want to have a paperless office with regard to Cooperatives and they have taken that project as well. It is not yet awarded, so there is no service provider as at now.

The Chairperson: Hon. Quirin, last question.

Mr Quirin: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 272, Item 22090 – *Security*, for 2022-2023, an amount of Rs775,000 was budgeted for security. Can we know to whom the contract was awarded, please?

Mr Bholah: For last year?

Mr Quirin: Yes.

Mr Bholah: Top Security Services.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. Page 273, any question on this page? Page 274, 275? No. Time is over.

Vote 10-1: Ministry of Industrial Development, SMEs and Cooperatives (Rs 550,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(15.56 a.m.)

(Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change)

VOTE 11-1: Environment and Climate Change was called.

The Chairperson: Again, we are going by Sub-Heading, we start by Item 11101 – *General*. We have got 5 minutes for this.

Hon. Lobine!

Mr Lobine: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 280, Item 21110.005 - *Extra Assistance*, may we know from the hon. Minister who is or are those people benefitting from the extra assistance, please?

Mr Ramano: Mr Chairperson, so, the amount is provided for the payment of salaries compensation and end of year bonus to 4 Advisors of the Ministry. So, we have –

- 1) Mr Prakash Kowlessur, who has been employed on contract as Senior Advisor on environmental and solid waste matters for a period of 1 year with effect from 20 September 2021, which was renewed for a further period of 1 year up to 19 September 2023. He was formerly the Director of the Solid Waste Management Division and he retired on 23 July 2021 and he holds a MSc Environmental Health from the University of Surrey in England.
- 2) Second we have Mrs Marie Benjamine Christelle Chumroo, Advisor on Information matters. She is employed on contract as Advisor on information matters with effect from 02 February 2021 for a period of 1 year and her contract has been renewed for a further period of 1 year with effect from 02 February 2022 to 02 February 2023.
- 3) Third one is Mrs Sarita Rambha Ramkalawon, employed on contract as Advisor on public relations matters with effect from 20 May 2021 for a period of 1 year. Her contract has been renewed for a further period of 1 year with effect from 20 May 2022 and 20 May 2023 on the same terms and conditions.
- 4) We have Mr Gilbert Clyde Bastienne, Advisor on landscaping matters. Mr Bastienne has been employed on contract as Advisor on landscaping matters for a period of 1 year with effect from 08 November 2021. His contract has been renewed for a further period of 1 year with effect from 08 November 2022 on the same terms and conditions.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Dhunoo!

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. On Item 21110.004 – *Allowances*, can we have more details from the Minister?

Mr Ramano: The amount provided for the payment of allowances: acting, responsibility, *ad hoc* and other allowances as approved by the Ministry of Public Service, Administrative, and Institutional Reforms. So, the allowances relate to payment made to the officers in the administrative, finance, internal control, procurement and supply,

human resources and general services for performing higher duties during absence or on leave, training and missions of the higher officers. Some officers have continuously performed higher duties and these are funded vacancies and we have also allowances which have been paid during the Financial Year 2022-2023 to officers in several grades. We have about 10 grades where these allowances have been paid.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms J. Bérenger?

Ms. J. Bérenger: Item 22120 – *Fees*, can we have a breakdown and can we know the reason for the increase?

Mr Ramano: So, provision is made for payment of fees to Chairperson, Members of Board and Committees, including training of officers attached to the Ministry. Fees to Chairperson and members of the Board, fees for training and fees for consultants namely, for environmental management strategy for Mauritius.

If the hon. Member would like to have the details, no problem.

The Chairperson: You may table it.

Mr Ramano: Table the details. Yes, no problem.

Ms J. Bérenger: Thank you.

The Chairperson: Hon. Nagalingum!

Mr Nagalingum: Item 22070 - *Cleaning Services*, there has been an increase. Can I have some details on that?

Mr Ramano: Provision made for cleaning services of toilets and sanitary services of the Ministry, *Police de l'Environnement* at Ken Lee Building, National Environment Laboratory at Réduit, Living Environment Unit at Bois Marchand and Bell Village. And following a tender exercise, a one-year contract was awarded on 01 April 2023 for cleaning of toilets to Keep Clean Ltd.

The Chairperson: We now move to Sub-Head 11-102: Environmental Protection, Conservation and Monitoring. We have got ten minutes for this. Any question on page 281?

Hon. Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha!

Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha: Page 282, Item 22900.903 – *Awareness Campaign*. Every year there is provision for Rs2 m., can we know what awareness campaigns have been carried out and what is being planned?

Mr Ramano: Provision is made to conduct awareness campaigns to mark international days, namely –

- Clean Up The World on 21 September 2023, all the preceding years –
- Earth Day, celebrated on 02 April every year;
- World Environment Day, celebrated on 05 June every year.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ittoo!

Mr Ittoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under Item 22150 – *Scientific and Laboratory Equipment and Supplies*, an amount of Rs2.8 m. was earmarked for last year and Rs3.2 m. for next financial year, can we have more details on what was bought last year and what is to be bought this coming year? Thank you.

Mr Ramano: The increase is due to the increase in the price of chemicals. Provision is made for the purchase of equipment and other laboratory facilities and chemicals for the running of the National Environment Laboratory.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dr. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: Page 282, Capital Expenditure, Item 31122.804 – *Acquisition of Laboratory Equipment*, I see that the budgetary provision for the financial year, the estimates have gone down from Rs6 m. to Rs4 m. Can the hon. Minister inform the House as to the equipment acquired and whether the equipment is updated constantly and who runs the lab? Thank you.

Mr Ramano: For Financial Year 2023/24, the sum of Rs4 m. will be used for the acquisition of the following equipment –

- (i) one turbidimeter for the sum of Rs650,000;
- (ii) one toxic gas analyser;
- (iii) one analytical balance;
- (iv) replacement of one defective water still;
- (v) one washer dryer;
- (vi) acquisition of conductivity meter;
- (vii) acquisition of a hazardous chemical cabinet, and
- (viii) a chest freezer for storage of pesticide solutions.

For the year 2022/23, the amount was used for the upgrading of fixed stations through acquisition of gaseous analysers for other laboratory equipment.

And the last question was about who heads the Division, it is the Divisional Scientific Officer, Mr Dindyal.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Ms J. Bérenger!

Ms J. Bérenger: Thank you. Item 22900.099 – *Miscellaneous Expenses (Grant Funded) of which (e) – Review of National Implementation Plan*. There is a substantial decrease in the amount allocated for the next financial year, can we know the reason and can we have more details about this plan?

Mr Ramano: For year 2022/23, the amount was Rs2.3 m. and the amount voted for 2023/24 is Rs1 m., there is a subsequent decrease. The project implementation has not yet started and just as a background, it is good to mention that the Republic of Mauritius has ratified the Stockholm Convention of Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) on 13 July 2004 and the Convention consisted of 12 POP chemicals. However, over the years, new POPs have been included through amendments to the annexes of the Convention and as at January 2023, 19 new Persistent Organic Pollutants have been listed.

So, pursuant to the decision taken at the first meeting of the Conference of parties, whenever there are amendments to the Convention or its annexes, the party will need to review and update its National Implementation Plan.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. David!

Mr David: Merci, M. le président. Sous l’item 22060 – *Maintenance*, puis-je demander au ministre la raison de l’augmentation de R 3 millions à R 4.7 millions, la nature de la maintenance et les fournisseurs associés ?

Mr Ramano: Mr Chairperson, provision for maintenance of building, National Environment Laboratory and plant and equipment such as photocopying machines, computers, and fax machines etc.

Rs4.7 million will be used for regular maintenance and calibration of the laboratory equipment at National Environment Laboratory (NEL) in accordance to the Quality Management System at the NEL. The increase in cost is mainly related to the acquisition of new equipment that now requires maintenance.

For Financial Year 2022/23, external engineers carried out regular maintenance and calibration of the laboratory equipment in accordance with the Quality Management System at the NEL.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha!

Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 31132.112 – *Consumer Information System for Sustainable Consumption and Production - ECONO-Biz, Promoting Eco-Friendly Practices in Enterprises*. Can we have more details about this programme and how many persons and enterprises have benefited from this programme?

Mr Ramano: For this Item, there is an increase from Rs400,000 to Rs500,000. For 2022/23, the voted amount was used for undertaking a training programme for 10 Small and Medium Enterprises, the ECONO-Biz training programme in collaboration with the National Productivity and Competitiveness Council and the Human Resources Development Council.

The objective of the training programme is to empower the 10 participating enterprises to explore new and innovative green business opportunities through adoption of circular economy practices such as manufacturing using environment friendly and recycled raw materials and recycling and eco-design.

For the Financial Year 2023/24, a training programme is being sustained and the funds will be used to replicate the training programme with another group of enterprises and develop resource materials to raise awareness of other enterprises.

The Chairperson: Are you done, Minister?

Mr Ramano: Yes.

The Chairperson: Okay, thank you. Now we move to the next Sub-Head 11-103: Climate Change Resilience, Greening and Embellishment. We have ten minutes for that. Hon. Lobine!

Mr Lobine: Thank you, Mr Chairperson, page 283 Item 21110.005 –*Extra Assistance*, may we be provided with detailed information on same please?

Mr Ramano: Item 21110.005 –*Extra Assistance*, amount provided for the payment of salaries, compensation and end of year bonus to advisors on landscaping matters.

Mr Lobine: Detailed information.

Mr Ramano: The name of the advisors? The same that I have given before, it is Mr Bastien.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Tour.

Ms Tour: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Vote Item 22120.007 –*Fees for Training (Grant Funded) (e) Mitigation Strategy 2050*, can we have some information with regards to the fees for training earmarked for the Mitigation Strategy 2050?

Mr Ramano: So, for the Mitigation Strategy 2050, the amount voted for 2022-2023 is Rs30,000 and the amount voted 2023-2024 is Rs3 million. The objective of this project is to develop long term decarbonisation and adaptation trajectories in two sectors with the highest greenhouse gases emissions, namely energy and transport, and the two sectors most vulnerable to climate change, namely tourism and agriculture.

As a first step, long term visions will be set for the four key sectors coupled with capacity building to the Department of Climate Change and other key stakeholders. Regarding the status for the years 2022-2023, the voted amount was used for holding of consultations with Ministries and for 2023-2024, fund earmarked will be used for capacity building of key stakeholders on the process for the formulation of long term mitigation and adaptation plan.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Yes, thank you. Item 21111.002 –*Travelling and Transport*, last year we voted a sum of Rs18.8 m. and this year, we are being asked to vote the same amount. Could we have details on expenses incurred for last year?

Mr Ramano: Yes.

The Chairperson: We take another question in the meantime. Hon. Dr. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson. In respect of Item 22090 –*Security*, Rs4 m. budgeted for the Estimates 2023-2024. Now, can we know to whom this contract was allocated last year and whether there will be new tender called for allocation of the security contract?

Mr Ramano: Provision for security services for the sites at –

- (i) Le Dauguet;
- (ii) SSR Memorial Park;
- (iii) Signal Mountain;
- (iv) Petit Sable Beach ;
- (v) NEL Réduit ;
- (vi) NEU Bell Village and Mahebourg, and

- (vii) Air monitoring stations.

Following a tender exercise, a one year contract was awarded to RSL Security Services Ltd.

The Chairperson: Hon. Doolub!

Mr Doolub: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22120.008 – *Fees to Consultants (Grant Funded)*, (f) *Coastal Risk Assessment Study*. An amount of Rs9,600,000 is being voted. Can we have some details please?

Mr Ramano: So the objective of the project itself is to conduct a study of risks related to the two hazards namely, coastal erosion and marine submersion on mainland Mauritius and Rodrigues. *Agence française de développement* is providing financial assistance to the tune of 1 million Euros grant and the *Bureau de Recherches Géologiques et Minières (BRGM)* is providing technical assistance to the project.

And for the year 2022-2023 funds were used for fees for consultants for –

- (i) Stock taking exercise and preparation of Inception Report, and
- (ii) Preparation of phase 1 report on status of coastal erosion and marine submersion.

And for Financial Year 2023-2024, fund earmarked will be used as fees to consultants for preparation of phase 2 report on modelling and preparation of risk maps and development of Capacity Building Programme on use of GIS maps.

Mr Chairperson, with your permission for the reply for hon. Mrs Arianne Navarre-Marie, so, provision for refund of bus fares, mileage allowance, travel grant and commuted travelling and other travelling expenses.

The Chairperson: Hon. Armance!

Mr Armance: Item 22120.008 – *Fees to Consultants (Grant Funded)*, (a) *Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Action*, I can see that again, the budget has increased and will increase next year. Can we have some details about the fees paid to the Consultant and why have you planned such an increase this year and next year?

Mr Ramano: Yes, for this Item, Mr Chairperson, the objective is to ensure a low carbon path for Mauritius by establishing the National Capacity for formulating and prioritising mitigation actions to implement nationally determined contribution.

And for the year 2022-2023, the sum was used as follows –

- (i) Payments to Ecological Living In Action (ELIA) Ltd. for the development of mitigation strategy and action plans and enhance transparency framework;
- (ii) Funds were transferred to Central Electricity Board and Utility Regulatory Authority as per the signed agreements for implementation of activities to enhance implementation of renewable energy to achieve the NDC target.

And for year 2023-2024, the sum will be used for –

- (a) Final payment to Ecological Living In Action Ltd. for the development of mitigation strategy and action plans and enhance transparency framework;
- (b) Payment to renewable energy expert for the development of financial project proposals on renewable energy;
- (c) Payment to quality assurance expert for the NDC Registry Platform;
- (d) Payment to Editor for the development of mitigation strategy and action plans and enhance transparency framework, and
- (e) Transfer of funds to the Central Electricity Board for the completion of their activities to enhance the implementation of renewable energy to achieve a nationally determined contribution.

The Chairperson: Okay. So, we now move to page 284. Hon. Mrs Luchmun Roy.

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. So, we are on page 284. Under Item 22900.099 – *Miscellaneous Expenses (Grant Funded) – (e) Coastal Risk Assessment Study*, can the hon. Minister provide information on whether there are some specific regions which have been identified for the coastal risk assessment? Thank you.

Mr Ramano: The objective of the project itself is to conduct a study of risk related to the two hazards, namely, coastal erosion and marine submersion on mainland Mauritius and Rodrigues. We are doing this project in collaboration with the *Agence française de développement* (AFD) and the *Bureau de Recherches Géologiques et Minières* (BRGM).

The Chairperson: Time over.

Vote 11-1 Environment and Climate Change (Rs433,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(4.23 p.m.)

Vote 11-2 Solid & Hazardous Waste and Beach Management was called.

The Chairperson: We have 10 minutes for this Vote. We will be dealing with pages 287 to 289, that is, three pages. So, we start on page 287. Hon. Dhunoo.

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22070.009 – *Collection and Export of e-wastes*, can the hon. Minister give more details on this?

Mr Ramano: The provision is for the collection, storage and exportation of e-wastes. The contract was awarded to Neel Trading & Facilities Ltd. as from February 2019. The duration of the contract is 18 months, as from 01 March 2019 to 30 August 2020 and extended to 31 May 2021. The scope of services is for transportation of e-wastes collected by the local authorities from transfer stations and landfill to its warehouses.

Secondly, it concerns the exportation of e-wastes as whole units to licensed e-wastes recovery facility. The Contractor received around 46,000 e-waste items for exportation as whole items for recovery abroad, out of which, only 22,800 items were exported as at 31 May 2021. The total amount which has been paid to Neel Trading & Facilities Ltd. Rs2,920,000.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem.

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22070.001 – *Public Beaches*, may we have a list of all those who have been awarded the contract and the procurement method used to select the service providers?

Mr Ramano: Yes, it is true to say we have a whole list. I am going to table the list.

The provision is made for 20 main beaches for cleaning, refuse collection, maintenance of toilets and watchmanship. And we have 53 secondary beaches, including one popular beach: cleaning, refuse collection and maintenance of toilet blocks. I am going to tender the whole list concerning the different beaches, the name of contractors and the scheme of duty also.

The Chairperson: Hon. David.

Mr David: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under Item 22070.003 – *Operation of Landfill Sites*, I can see that for this new financial year, there is a budget of Rs180 m. which is being earmarked. May I know from the hon. Minister, whether this expenditure includes the vertical extension of Mare Chicose Landfill site?

Mr Ramano: Let me give you an update first just to give you a background because the tender has not yet been awarded. It is to be recalled that the bid for the major vertical expansion which was launched on 11 December 2020, with final closing date

which was on 18 June 2021, was cancelled in April 2022 following recommendations by the Central Procurement Board.

The bidding documents for the vertical expansion works were accordingly reviewed and updated by the Ministry's Consultant LuxConsult and was launched on 11 May 2023 after clearance from the Central Procurement Board. The closing date of the submission of bids is on 14 August 2023.

For the vertical expansion, the amount will be provided under the National Environment and Climate Change Fund.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Ms Tour.

Ms Tour: Still under Item 22070.010 – *Operation of Interim Hazardous Waste Facility*, can we have some information regarding the operation of interim hazardous waste facility?

Mr Ramano: For the interim hazardous waste facility, the Contractor presently is Polyeco S.A. The scope of work is for operation, management and maintenance of the Interim Storage Facility for Hazardous Waste at la Chaumière. The date the contract was awarded is 16 December 2016 for the period of 30 December 2016 to 21 January 2022. It was for an overall contract of Rs230,110,335.

For the scope of the services, the facility provides the necessary infrastructure and system for the safe collection, interim storage and exportation of hazardous chemical waste, such as waste acids, alkalis, heavy metal wastes, other hazardous inorganic wastes, pesticide wastes, sludges, organic wastes, pharmaceutical wastes, waste aerosols and waste gas cylinders for which there was no existing collection and management system.

The Contractor has a duty to visit premises of waste generators. Hazardous wastes and chemical wastes are collected for analysis by the Contractor, if found hazardous, bulk wastes are collected and brought to facility for sorting and grouping of all wastes. These are repackaged, relabeled and stored by the Contractor and subsequently exported to licensed facilities in Europe where these are recovered or disposed of.

The building housing facility has been developed over a portion of land of 4.5 hectares and comprises three buildings for storage of hazardous wastes –

- one quarantine and packaging building;
- one administration and laboratory building;
- weighbridge;
- contaminated surface water and roof water storage ponds.

And the facility is equipped with modern firefighting system, including adequate continuous water supply, heavy duty water pumps, sprinklers and deluge foam system to combat fire.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Ms J. Bérenger.

Ms J. Bérenger: Item 22030 – *Rent*, can we know why the amount allocated for the right has doubled, please?

Mr Ramano: So, the Solid Waste Management Division is presently located at Emmanuel Anquetil Building since 2017 and with a provision for, we have around 80 staffs of the Solid Waste Division, including Management, Technical Staff, Enforcement Unit, Administrative Staff, Waste Carrier License Unit with a Counter-Registry, Finance, Human Resource Unit and presently, the Department is in the process of a new tendering exercise which is presently being valued and eventually, the award will be done.

The Chairperson: Thank you. We now move to page 288. Hon. Ms Tour!

Ms Tour: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Vote item 26313.003 – *Beach Authority*, an amount of Rs6.5 m. earmarked, can we have some information with regard to it?

Mr Ramano: So, for this project we are concerned here with the reinstatement of Bato Ros at Rémy-Ollier Public Beach and the objective of the project itself is to preserve the historical monument of Bato Ros at Rémy-Ollier Public Beach and to ensure that there is no danger to beach users. The scope of works, the main components of the projects are for hoarding, demolition of damaged concrete parts, placing, reinforce, concrete and executing of the necessary restoration works, painting works. The works are to be carried out under the supervision of the Ministry of National Infrastructure and Community Development.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. R. Duval!

Mr R. Duval: Under the same item 26313.003 – *Beach Authority*, can we know the name of the contractor?

Mr Ramano: The project itself is only at the stage of design, so you should wait.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms J. Bérenger!

Ms J. Bérenger: Item 26313.003 – *Beach Authority*, can we know the composition of the Board of the Beach Authority and how many officers are working there?

Mr Ramano: Yes, composition of the Board, the Chairman is Mr Jean Marie Desire Levallant. We have as members, representatives from the Ministry of Environment

(Solid Waste Management Division, Climate Change Division), we have the representative from the Ministry of Housing and Land Use Planning, representative from the Ministry of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management, representative of the Ministry of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, from the Prime Minister's Office, representatives from the Ministry of Tourism, Rodrigues Regional Assembly, representatives of Police Department, representatives of Association of District Councils and we have three other board members namely –

- Mrs Kalleechurn;
- Mr Ramjit, and
- Mr Y. Imrit.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. Time is over.

Vote 11-2 Solid & Hazardous Waste and Beach Management (Rs801,500,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(4.36 p.m.)

Vote 12-1 Ministry of Financial Services and Good Governance was called.

The Chairperson: We are going by sub-heading. We start by Sub-Head 12-101: General. We got 5 minutes and this one starts from page 294 up to 295. Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: With respect to item 21110.005 – *Extra Assistance*, may we know from the hon. Minister the name of the Advisors and the remuneration package?

Mr Seeruttun: Yes, Thank you, Mr Chairperson. With regard to extra assistance, there are two Advisors for which provision has been made, one Advisor on Information Matters and one Public Relation Officer.

The Chairperson: Any other question on page 294? So, we move to page 295. Hon. Dhunoo!

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 26323.015 – *Financial Intelligence Unit*, can we have the composition of the board and remuneration package from the hon. Minister please?

Mr Seeruttun: Composition of the board of the FIU –

- Mr Dinay Reetoo, Chairman;
- Mrs Ragavoodoo, Member, and
- Mr Virahsawmy, Member.

And if you are looking also for their fees, the fees of the Chairman is Rs61,015, and for the Members, the fees are Rs36,915.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Dr. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson. Item 26313.140 – *Integrity Reporting Services Agency*, there is a slight increase in the budgetary provision in the estimates for the 2023-2024. Can the hon. Minister inform us as to the number of cases reported to the Agency and the cases dealt with? That seems to be an Agency which is very quiet.

Mr Seeruttun: Not at all, Mr Chairperson! The IRSA, in fact, if you look at the number of cases since its setting up, there have been 326 cases dealt by the IRSA; there have been 237 under investigation and 89 cases have been closed. So, they are doing their job.

Dr. Boolell: Any report submitted in relation to cases addressed?

Mr Seeruttun: Report submitted where?

Dr. Boolell: To the public! In respect of cases addressed by common people...

Mr Seeruttun: Reports are submitted annually. I think it's tabled at the level of the National Assembly.

The Chairperson: Hon. Lobine!

Mr Lobine: Thank you Mr Chairperson. Under the same item, page 295, 26313.140 – *Integrity Reporting Services Agency*, may we know who is the chairperson and who are the other board members of the Agency please and their package?

Mr Seeruttun: The Chairperson of the Integrity Reporting Services Agency is Lord Phillips and the two other members are former Judge Mr Domah and Mr Dev Phokeer. The package for the Chairperson is a retainer fee, an annual retainer fee of 50,000 British Pound Sterling and also an attendance fee of 5,000 British Pound Sterling per day if spent in Mauritius. As for the other members, its Rs90,000 per month.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Mrs Luchmun Roy!

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under Item 26313.114 – *National Committee on Corporate Governance*, can we have more details with regard to the committee, the composition itself? Thank you.

Mr Seeruttun: Well the committee of the National Committee of Corporate Governance is chaired by Mrs Radhakeesoon and the members are –

- (a) Mrs Lakshmi Appadoo;
- (b) Mr Sunil Benimadhu;
- (c) Mr Navindsing Jugmohunsing
- (d) Mr Matthew Lamport;
- (e) Mr Sridhar Nagarajan;
- (f) Mrs Madhavi Ramdin-Clark;
- (g) Mrs Hemlata Sadhna Sewraj-Gopal;
- (h) Mr Dhanesswurnath Thakoor;
- (i) Mr Shailen Ramgoolam, and
- (j) Mr Viswajithsing Tuhobol.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 26313.140 – *Integrity Reporting Services Agency*, may I know from the hon. Minister in the year that just went through in which we had voted Rs41 m., may I know from the hon. Minister how many unexplained wealth order has this agency been able to secure?

Mr Seeruttun: In terms of cases that are being dealt with by the agency; for the year 2022-2023, there were 76 cases being dealt and the number of unexplained wealth order applied for as at date is 8. Applications before court as at date – 5 and obtained 3.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Time over. We move to the next Sub-Head 12-102 – Financial Services and it's in the top part of page 296. We got five minutes for that as well. Hon. Ms Tour!

Ms Tour: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22120.008 – *Fees to Consultants - Consultancy Services for Development of ESG Framework*), may we know the amount of Rs9 m. earmarked for the development of ESG Framework? Can we have some information?

Mr Seeruttun: Yes, with regard to fees, in fact the Ministry is contemplating to come up with an ESG Framework. For that we are seeking the services of a Consultant and that is why we have provided that sum to be able to secure the services of that Consultant.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Page 296, Item 21110.005 – *Extra Assistance*, may we have the details and the breakdown of this figure and the advisors’ pay packet?

Mr Seeruttun: For this particular item, provision has been made for the payment of allowances to the Chairman and two members of the Review Panel. So this is provided for that.

The Chairperson: Hon. Lobine!

Mr Lobine: Thank you, Mr Chairperson, page 296, under Item 21110.005 – *Extra Assistance*, may we be provided with more details as to who is or are benefitting from this budgeted sum, please?

Mr Seeruttun: I have just replied. They are payment of allowances to the Chairman and two members of the Review Panel. The Chairman is Judge Angoh and the two members are Mr Ramsurn and Mr Hossenee. The Chairman draws a monthly salary of Rs167,355 and the other two members draw a monthly salary of Rs38,500.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dhunoo!

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Vote Item 26313.152 – *Extra Budgetary Units, Financial Services Institute Co. Ltd*, may we know who the director is and his package and also the Chairperson and all the board members and their package?

Mr Seeruttun: In fact, the Chief Executive of the FSI resigned recently for health reasons and at the moment we have an acting Chief Executive and with regard to the composition of the board, we have as Chairman one Mr Manikion and the members are –

- (a) Mrs Audit;
- (b) Mr Balnock;
- (c) Mr Jugmohunsing;
- (d) Mrs Pillay;
- (e) Mr Pachoo;
- (f) Mrs Sujiwon – Parug;
- (g) Mr Rawoteea;
- (h) Mr Sookdawoor, and
- (i) Dr. Sukon.

The Chairperson: Hon. Doolub!

Mr Doolub: Thank you, Mr Chairperson, same Item 26313.152 – *Financial Services Institute Co. Ltd*, I note an increase of Rs3.3 m. Can we get the reasons, please?

Mr Seeruttun: In fact, it was announced that it is the training arm of the Ministry. Now, we are converting it into an awarding body. So, this is the cost of the setting up for it to become an awarding body so that henceforth it is going to be able to award degrees to those following courses at the level of this institute.

The Chairperson: Thank you. We now move to Sub-Head 12-103 – Public Sector Governance Reforms and again, we have five minutes for that. It starts at the lower part 296 and upper part of 297. So, we start with hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Page 296, Item 21110.004 – *Allowances*, Rs900,000, it was Rs500,000, there has been an increase. May we know the composition of this figure and why this sudden increase?

Mr Seeruttun: For that, provision is being made for the payment of acting responsibility allowances to officers called upon to assume higher duties and other *ad hoc* allowance and also for cash in lieu of duty free to eligible officers. I believe the increase is because the number of persons who are eligible now have gone up and also there has been an increase in the amount due to the revision of the PRB.

The Chairperson: Thank you. We move to page 297. Hon. Dhunoo!

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Vote Item 22070 – *Cleaning Services*, there has been an increase. Can we have more details from the hon. Minister?

Mr Seeruttun: In fact, provision is made for services to be provided at the new office. In fact, the Office of the Public Services Governance is going to move to a new premise. Currently, they are located at the Emmanuel Anquetil Building.

So, they are going to look for some new locations. That is the amount provided for the cleaning services.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22120 – *Fees*, the fees for next year has almost doubled this year's fees. So, may we have an explanation for the increase in fees?

Mr Seeruttun: Fees for training is the same. Isn't it? Rs150,000

Mr Uteem: From Rs415,000, the fees has become Rs950,000.

Mr Seeruttun: Alright. Okay. So, fees, there is one new item which is fees to Consultants amounting to Rs500,000 that has been provided for and so, they are contemplating to appoint a Consultant to prepare specifications and evaluation bids to procure the services of a software engineer to develop an online web based software that will allow parastatals to input both financial and non-financial information thus, enabling OPSG to have an overall monitoring of the site over the performance of the public sector organisations. So, this is the amount that has been provided for to appoint a Consultant.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Yes, thank you, Mr Chairperson. On same Item 22060 – *Maintenance*, can I ask the hon. Minister what is being maintained that has increased from Rs60,000 to Rs1.3 m.?

Mr Seeruttun: Well, in fact provision is made for the maintenance of a photocopy machine and the setting up of IT infrastructure regarding connectivity to GINS upon relocation of the new building where they are going to move into. So, it is a new Item and also there are provision made for the maintenance of computers, printers, and other IT equipment and also provision is made for fit out works at the new office; for furniture, fixtures and fittings.

The Chairperson: Thank you. We now move to Sub-Heading 12-104 – Anti-Money Laundering and Combating the Financing of Terrorism. Again we have got 5 minutes for that and here we are going to deal with the bottom part of page 297 and page 298.

Any question on page 297? So, we move to page 298.

Hon. Dr. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson. In respect of Item 22120 – *Fees to Consultants*, can we be informed about fees paid and to whom?

Mr Seeruttun: Well, fees for the National Risk Assessment, this is being conducted by the World Bank. So, this is fees paid to the World Bank Consultants. As regard the fees to Consultants for Independent Assessment of AML/CFT Framework, this is something that we are contemplating to carry out to at least have a mid-term review of our system. So, we are looking for expert from the ESAAMLG Group to assist us in carrying out that review.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dhunoo!

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Vote Item 22900 – *Other Goods and Services of which Training - FATF Standards and ESAAMLG Mutual Evaluation Assessors*, can we have more details on this from the hon. Minister?

Mr Seeruttun: So, provision of Rs3 m. is made for training, conferences, venue, air tickets, hotel accommodation and also for the arrival of the ESAAMLG experts who are going to come and conduct those training to our officers. So, this is the amount that is catered for to carry out the training.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Yes, on this very same Item of training, may I know from the hon. Minister whether an agreement has already been signed with ESAAMLG for the provision of these trainers or it is now that the request will be made for trainers to be delegated to Mauritius?

Mr Seeruttun: As you know, we first have to secure the budget before embarking in any discussion with the ESAAMLG but, we do have as you know a very close relationship with the ESAAMLG experts. So, we felt that the best people with whom we have to seek these kinds of training will be these experts from the ESAAMLG.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Any question on that?

Vote 12-1 Ministry of Financial Services and Good Governance (Rs 362,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(04.58 p.m.)

(Attorney-General's Office, Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security)

Vote 13-1: Office of the Solicitor-General was called.

The Chairperson: We are on page 304. We have got 5 minutes for that.

Hon. Lobine!

Mr Lobine: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 304, Item 21110.005 – *Extra Assistance*, may we be provided with more detailed information as to who is or are providing those extra assistances, please?

Mr Gobin: Yes, Mr Chairperson. I have one PRO, Public Relations Officer, Mr Omveer Soorjee. He is on a one year contract which is renewable. He is paid allowances as per recommendations of the PRB.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ameer Meea.

Mr Ameer Meea: Yes on page 304, Item 21110.004 – *Allowances*, from Rs14 m. to Rs18.5 m., may we have the details on the breakdown of this figure?

Mr Gobin: Yes, this provision represents, Mr Chairperson, allowances paid to officers in terms of acting allowance, responsibility allowance, *ad hoc* allowance paid to public officers called upon to assume higher responsibilities or who are working in specialised units. Also, provision for payment of judicial and legal allowance, commonly called robing allowance, special legal service allowance to law officers, allowance to officers of the Legal Assistant Cadre and provision for payment of a monthly stipend to those persons doing pupillage and we have therefore an increase in all these out payment of allowances and also increase in pupils, so, therefore explaining the increase in the provision.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dhunoo! On page 305.

Mr Dhunoo: Under Item 26210.101 – *Asian-African Legal Consultative Organisation*, can we have more details from the hon. Minister?

Mr Gobin: This represents the contribution we pay to AALCO with its headquarters situated in New Delhi and therefore, this increase from Rs400,000 to Rs420,000 is due to fluctuation in foreign exchange rate.

The Chairperson: Hon. Lobine!

Mr Lobine: Page 305, Item 22120.032 – *Fees for Legal Outsourcing*. May we be provided with more detailed information as to this item, please?

Mr Gobin: This represents the fees payable as the name suggests on a case to case basis. There are quite a number; I will not be able to provide this at this stage. Legal outsourcing depends on the cases, some are pending, and some have been already dealt with.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dr. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson. Item 26313.029 – *Law Reform Commission*, a budgetary provision of Rs19,700,000. Now, if the hon. Minister could tell us who the members of the Commission are and if you could unbundle the sum to the how it is being used in relation to the Law Reform Commission.

Mr Gobin: The Chairperson of the Commission is Mr Gunness Ramdewar, Senior Attorney, GOSK.

The members are as follows –

- (i) Representative of the Judiciary: Judge Nicholas F. Oh San-Bellepeau;
- (ii) Representative of Solicitor-General: Mr Ramloll Rajeshsharma, Senior Counsel;
- (iii) Representative of the Director of Public Prosecution: Mr Abdool Rashid Ahmine;
- (iv) Representative of Barristers: Mr Yatindra Nath Varma;
- (v) Representative of the Notary: Mr Nicolas Boulle;
- (vi) Representative of Attorneys: Mr Marie Thierry Koenig, Senior Attorney;

Two members of the Civil Society namely –

- (vii) Ms Ashna Devi Gunpath;
- (viii) Mr Mohamed Idbal Torabally.

Chief Executive Officer –

- (ix) Mr Sabir Kadel.

As to their activities, I will refer the House to the annual report which is tabled before the House.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: May I insist again on the question that has been asked by hon. Lobine under Item 22120.032 – *Fees for Legal Outsourcing*. Last year, a budgeted amount of Rs80 m. was voted, so, at least with respect to this Rs80 m., may we have a breakdown of the fees that have been paid and to whom those fees have been paid?

Mr Gobin: Mr Chairperson, every year, I say the same thing, some cases are still pending; some cases have been dealt with. In any event, all these payments are duly audited and are paid by the Ministry. They represent fees for legal outsourcing for payment of Court cases including arbitration cases, ICSID cases – a number of those. So, at this stage, I will not be in a position to give the information.

The Chairperson: I understand. Hon. Mrs Luchmun Roy!

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. I don't know if this item has already been canvassed, Item 22120.008 – *Fees to Consultants*. Can we have details the consultants, please?

Mr Gobin: The Office employs the services of one Legal Consultant namely, the former Solicitor General, Mr Dhiren Dabee. He is acting as Legal Consultant for the Office for a period of two years. His date of appointment is 15 October 2021 up to October 2023. He is paid as per his contract according to recommendations of the PRB and needless to say that he is providing services to the Office on a number of cases including Chagos, ITLOS, etc.

The Chairperson: Time is over!

Vote 13-1 Office of the Solicitor-General (Rs332,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(5.06 p.m.)

Vote 13-2 Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions was called.

The Chairperson: Vote item 13-2 at pages 308 to 310. We have got 5 minutes for that.

Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Item 22120.012 – *Retainer Fees to Counsel*, may we know the identity of the counsels who are providing services to the DPP's Office?

Mr Gobin: There are so many of them. These are prosecuting counsels retained by the DPP for case to case basis. It is a very long list.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Are they public officers?

Mr Gobin: No.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Off-site?

Mr Gobin: Yes.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Gobin: Mr Chairperson, please bear with me, I am just checking the retainer fees to counsels, whether it is correct are not.

I can have some other questions in the meantime.

Mr Uteem: Item 22120.011 – *Fees icw Privy Council Cases*, may I know from the hon. Attorney General whether these fees are paid to Counsels or to Solicitors in connection with the Privy Council cases?

Mr Gobin: A combination of both. There are Privy Council agents and also counsels on a case to case basis.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dhunoo!

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under Item 22030 – *Rent*, I can see there is a substantial increase. Can we have more details from the hon. Minister?

Mr Gobin: This represents payment of –

- (i) Rent for the office space of the NPF Building, Renganaden Seeneevassen Building on the ground floor for Certificate of Character Unit of 131 square metres and yearly rental includes service charges that is Rs1,600,000.
- (ii) Rental for parking slots: Rs3.1 m. payable to DBM Properties and the SIFB.
- (iii) CCTV cameras line rental fee: Rs600,000 payable to Brinks Ltd. The increase as from January 2023, in rental of CCTV camera line with the entry into effect of the new contract as from July 2023.

With your permission, Mr Chairperson, coming to the question of hon. Osman Mahomed for the retainer fees, I am informed that for prosecuting counsels there are about 10 of them. The fees will encompass for all of the 10. Details, however, are not available at this stage.

The Chairperson: We move to page 309 and we take a question from hon. Osman Mahomed.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Item 31122.802 – *Acquisition of IT Equipment of which (b) Enhancement of the Certificate of Character Online Application*. May we know the appreciation of the hon. Minister following the implementation of this project, whether things are going faster?

Mr Gobin: It was launched this year by the DPP himself, in my presence and in the presence of the Commissioner of Police. I understand there was one hiccup in the beginning, *un peu comme un rodage*, but I think it is in the running in period.

I am informed that there will be additional features that will be included, namely, for integration with an instant payment system, *MoKloud* and also applicants will be able to apply and download their copy of their Certificate of Character.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dr. Gungapersad!

Dr. Gungapersad: Thank you, Mr Chairperson, may I ask the hon. Minister, the same Item 31122.802 – *Other Machinery and Equipment, Acquisition of IT Equipment, (c) Video Conferencing Unit*. For this current year, I find no budgetary provision.

Mr Gobin: Yes, this was for purchase of video conferencing equipment. The project is complete, so the equipment is there, it is already running.

The Chairperson: Thank you, time is over!

Vote 13-2 Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (Rs190,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(5.13 p.m.)

Vote 13-3 Office of the Parliamentary Counsel was called.

The Chairperson: We got five minutes for this item and we are on page 311. Hon. Ms Joanna Bérenger!

Ms J. Bérenger: Item 22120 – *Fees*, can I have a breakdown please?

Mr Gobin: The meagre Rs100,000, this represents the fees for training of staff and the refund of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) fees.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Luchmun Roy!

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Thank you, Mr Chairperson, under Item 21110.004 – *Allowances*, can we have further details with regard to which allowances we are referring to?

Mr Gobin: Yes, Mr Chairperson, allowances mean allowances such acting allowance, responsibility allowance, *ad hoc* allowance payable to public officers assuming higher responsibilities or working in specialised units, also representing payment of judicial and legal allowance, special legal service allowance. Increase in the sum is due to increase in allowance paid in accordance with the annual increment. Thank you.

The Chairperson: Okay, no question? Page 312, no question?

Vote 13-3 Office of the Parliamentary Counsel (Rs 24,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(5.15 p.m.)

Vote 13-4 Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security was called.

The Chairperson: We are going by sub-heads. Sub-Head 13-401: General from page 317. We got five minutes for that. Hon. Dr. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson. In respect of Item 21110.005 – *Extra Assistance*, I see that there is a budgetary provision of Rs2,400,000. Can the Minister enlighten us as to the *Extra Assistance* which is being extended and who they are?

Mr Gobin: Yes, I have four advisors –

- (i) Mrs Sanjanah Kader Valloo, Advisor on Information Matters, on a contract of one year, renewable. Her first initial contract was in May 2020 renewed and the contract is still in force;
- (ii) Mr Avnish Ramotah, Advisor on Extension Services and Customer Relations, on a contract of one year, renewable. The first date of appointment was January 2020, he is renewed annually and the contract is still in force.
- (iii) Technical Advisor, Mrs Shivrani Oree, annually renewed, first contract was in July 2021 being renewed annually, and
- (iv) Mr Luximikant Damar, Advisor in zero-budget natural farming, on a contract of 1 year renewable, first contract was in November 2021 and the contract is still a running one.

That is it, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson: Thank you, any other questions on this page 317? Hon. Joanna Bérenger! The same page.

Ms J. Bérenger: *Same page, thank you.* Je vais poser ma question sous l’item 21110 – *Personal Emoluments*, peut-on savoir du ministre combien d’officiers travaillent au *Pesticides Regulatory Office* puisqu’aucune section n’est allouée spécifiquement à ce bureau et que l’année dernière j’avais posé la même question, il m’avait dit qu’il allait circuler l’information, mais il ne l’a jamais fait ? Donc, j’espère qu’il ne refera pas la même chose cette année d’autant plus que toutes mes questions parlementaires sur le sujet des pesticides sont restées sans réponse.

Mr Gobin: Under this Item, Mr Chairperson, Sub-Head 13-401, we are talking of a total of 289 employees. Now, for Pesticides Regulatory Office if the information is forthcoming, I can provide it.

The Chairperson: But, please make sure that you submit the information once you get it, okay? Hon. Juman! We move to page 318.

Mr Juman: Thank you, Mr Chairperson, Item 22120 – *Fees*, can I know from the hon. Minister a breakdown of the Rs2,135,000?

Mr Gobin: Yes, *Fees*, this represents payment of fees to members of boards and committees, namely –

- (i) Bid Evaluation Committee;
- (ii) Departmental Bid Committee;
- (iii) Land Conversion Committee, and
- (iv) RAMSAR Committee.

So many members, if you want, we go one by one, this should take me some time.

The Chairperson: Are you going to table it or you are going to name it one by one?

Mr Gobin: Well, for the first two Bid Evaluation Committees, this is on an *ad hoc* basis as and when there are bid evaluations to be held. For the Departmental Bid Committee it is the same thing. Regarding Land Conversion Committee, this is a committee composed of 26 persons which is chaired by the Senior Chief Executive of the Ministry and then we have representatives of the Ministry of Housing and Land, representatives of District Councils, representatives of Municipal Councils, representatives of SIFB, representatives of the Irrigation Authority, representatives of Land Use Division, representatives of the Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities, Ministry of Environment, representatives of the Cane Industry Authority, representatives of Land Drainage Authority.

So, the fees will be payable to all of them. For the RAMSAR, it is a committee of 18 persons plus a secretary chaired by the Senior Chief Executive of the Ministry and it is composed of representatives of the Ministries of Education, Housing, Tourism, Environment, Local Government, Blue Economy, representatives of National Park Conservation Service, representatives of Mauritius Wildlife Foundation, representatives of Waste Water Management Authority, CWA, University of Mauritius, MIE, it goes on and on. It is quite long list.

The Chairperson: Please table it.

Mr Gobin: This represents therefore fees payable to those persons.

The Chairperson: Okay, thank you. Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Thank you, Item 22030 – *Rent*, Rs17 m. for rent. May we have the details of this please?

Mr Gobin: There are three buildings –

- 1) NPF Building, Renganaden Seeneevassen Building, that is, level 8 and 9;
- 2) Blendax House in Port Louis, and
- 3) Sterling House in Port Louis.

The Chairperson: We now move to the next sub-head, Sub-Head 13-402: Competitiveness of the Sugar Cane Sector. It starts on the bottom part of page 318 and the top part of 319. Again, we have 5 minutes for this. Hon. Ms J. Bérenger.

Ms J. Bérenger: Page 319, Item 28213.021 – *Mauritius Cane Industry Authority of which Research and Development i.c.w Biomass Framework*, an allocated amount of Rs8 m., can we have more details about this amount, please? *Et est-ce qu'on a pu avoir le chiffre des officiers du Pesticides Regulatory Office ? Merci.*

Mr Gobin: Of course, the Biomass Framework has been announced in this year's Budget. The sum of Rs8 m. will represent Research and Development in connection with Biomass Framework for the setting up of a laboratory for chemical and physical analysis of all local biomass to certify that same can be burnt in high-pressure boilers for energy production. The budgeted amount will enable the MCIA to avoid sending samples abroad for tests.

For pesticides, I will try to get it before the end of my time.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dhunoo.

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 319, Capital Expenditure, Item 26323.028 – *Irrigation Authority of which (a) Supporting Climate Smart Agriculture for smallholders (EU funded)*, can we have the status of this project, hon. Minister?

Mr Gobin: The provision here is Rs19.7 m. for sheltered farming to improve productivity of smallholders of land and adaptation to climate change, thereby reducing the exposure of farmers to risk and contribute to Climate Smart Agriculture.

This project is directly benefiting 439 small planters occupying a cultivated area of about 200 hectares of land under vegetable plantation in the regions of Triolet, Solitude and Pointe aux Piments.

As the hon. Member said, it is an EU funded project which started in 2019 with the objective to build resilience of small vegetable growers against the effects of climate change. The total project value is Rs 30.9 million. excluding VAT.

The contribution of the EU is at 80%, amounting to 24.1 million and Government contributes the remaining 20% plus VAT, which amounts to 11.3.

As at date, an amount of Rs3.4 m. has been disbursed by the EU. We are expecting another Rs10 m. to be disbursed by end of this financial year coming from the EU. Thank you.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. Hon. Juman.

Mr Juman: Item 26313.028 – *Irrigation Authority*, can I know from the hon. Minister the composition of the Board and the pay packet for the CEO.

Mr Gobin: The Chairman is Mr U. Dhuny. The representatives are of course of other Ministries. There is no CEO. In fact, there is a General Manager. Mr Dhuny is the Chairman and the monthly fee is Rs40,000.

Representatives of Ministries are: Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security, Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development, Ministry of Industrial Development, SMEs and Cooperatives, Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities, Ministry of Housing and Land Use Planning. There is also representative of Central Water Authority, and then, we have representatives of Agricultural Community. It is Rs2,500 per sitting for all other members. For the General Manager, I will give it in the course.

The Chairperson: We now move to Sub-Head 13-403: Development of Non Sugar (Crop) Sector. It starts on page 319 and it goes up to page 320. Any question on page 319? Okay, page 320.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Item 25210.029 – *Fruit Ripening Scheme*, does this use agro chemicals? Can you please tell us more about it?

Mr Gobin: This represents payment of grant. A grant of 50%, up to a maximum of Rs500,000, is being provided for setting up of fruit ripening facilities, that is, for the purchase of fruit ripening equipment allocated to farmers. In respect of the Financial Year 2022-2023, a budget of Rs5 m. was voted but we received only one application. The applicant was therefore given a grant of Rs467,000. His payment is under process. So, this payment represents grant to buy equipment. We give the grant to the farmer and the farmer buys the equipment.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Thank you. Item 22900 – *Other Goods and Services*, I would like to know what the amount of Rs12 m. is meant for because out of this only Rs2 m. is being earmarked for the Green Agricultural Certification/Certification of Fresh Agricultural Produce (Mauritius Standard Bureau) and Rs1 m. for the *Salon de L'Agriculture*.

Mr Gobin: Green Agricultural Certification is for the payment to Mauritius Standard Bureau, because the Mauritius Standard Bureau gives the certification of MauriGAP, that is, good agricultural practice. For those farmers who wish to have the MauriGAP certification, we provide them with this financial assistance.

For the *Salon de L'Agriculture*, although for the past year only Rs1 m. was provided and Rs2 m. is being provided for this year, we do it in partnership with other institutions. For this year, the *Salon*, it costs more than one million. We did it in collaboration with the EDB at Côte d'Or.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms Tour.

Ms Tour: Item 25210.012 – *Seed Purchase Scheme*, can the hon. Minister explain the considerable increase in provision for Seed Purchase Scheme?

Mr Gobin: The considerable increase is due to the fact that traditionally the Seed Purchase Scheme concerned only potatoes and onions but, as has been announced in this Budget, it will be now extended based on the promising figures we see for potatoes and onions. It will be extended for other products and we will include SMEs, cooperatives and others, as announced in the Budget. This therefore explains the increase in the budgeted amount.

The Chairperson: Hon. Assirvaden.

Mr Assirvaden: À la page 320, à l'item 25210.020 – *Fruit Fly Suppression with Environment Friendly Techniques*, can we have a breakdown how this fund is being used?

Mr Gobin: So, the amount represents funding for purchase of lures and insecticides for fruit fly suppression programme. Fruit fly control materials: lures, insecticides, traps and protein baits will be procured for area wide fruit fly control with a bait application technique, also male annihilation technique – please don't ask me what is male annihilation technique – in planters' fields and in selected areas. We also purchase chemicals and Methyl ...

Mr Assirvaden: C'est bon! C'est bon!

Mr Gobin: For the places where they have been applied, we have Esperance, Quartier, Rose Belle, Réduit, number of places...

Mr Chairperson: We move to Sub-Head 13-404: Livestock Production and Development. It starts at page 322 and ends at page 323. Again we got 5 minutes for that.

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Vote item 22900.027 – *Animal Feed*. We see that there is a decrease. Can the hon. Minister explain why?

Mr Gobin: So, the good news is that there is an increase in local fodder production, therefore reducing the amount required to meet the expenses to purchase animal feed from other sources.

Mr Chairperson: Okay. Hon. Dr. Gungapersad!

Dr. Gungapersad: Page 322, item 22130 – *Studies and Surveys*, hon. Minister, we find that there is a remarkable increase in budgetary allocation to Rs3 m. Would you enlighten us on the studies and surveys that are concerned?

Mr Gobin: This will represent expenses for implementation of the National Livestock Information System in respect of livestock tagging and monitoring.

Mr Chairperson: Sorry, hon. Dr. Boolell.

Dr. Boolell: No tagging of stags!

Mr Chairperson: Keep your thoughts for yourself! No, you are disturbing me!

Mr Gobin: No, I can provide details if you want. I have a whole annex on this.

Mr Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Page 322, item 21110.005 – *Extra Assistance*, can we know the name of the Advisors and the amount please?

Mr Gobin: No, from memory, we have to recruit veterinarians from abroad. In March last year, there was an advertisement by PSC, there was only one applicant. I understand that vets are very happy in the private sector, they do not want to come to the LPD. So we need to recruit, in fact we have contacted SADC Secretariat to obtain the services of veterinarians from other countries.

Mr Chairperson: We move to page 323 and we listen to hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 323, item 25110.003 – *Mauritius Meat Authority*. In relation to live cattle importation, may I know from the hon. Minister the sum that is budgeted this year and also the sum that has been spent last year?

Mr Gobin: Unfortunately, I will have to refer the hon. Member to the Annual Report of the MMA which is tabled before the House. For the import of cattle as the hon. Member is aware, for this year, this has not been successful now, for Eid ul-Adha. We will keep trying, I can assure you. If the figure is forthcoming I will provide it but definitely the figure, the amount was provided for this time by the Ministry of Finance but was not utilised, so we will return it.

Mr Ameer Meea: How much?

Mr Gobin: Rs60 m. was earmarked but was not utilised.

Mr Chairperson: Hon. Minister, you are allowing supplementary questions, it's not a PQ.

Mr Gobin: Yes.

Ms Tour: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Vote item 28225.007 – *Capital Transfers (Livestock) of which (d) Scheme for Veterinary Services*, there is a new provision for the scheme for veterinary services. Can we know why this new provision?

Mr Gobin: Breeders often times have recourse to private veterinary services. So, we are going to provide them with a subsidy as and when they have recourse to private veterinarians and the subsidy will be to the tune of Rs1,000 for a maximum of two vouchers per breeder. There are around 3,700 breeders registered with the FAREI and they will be eligible for this new scheme.

Mr Chairperson: We now move to Sub-Head 13-405: Forests. We got 5 minutes for that. Page 324.

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson. Item 22090 – *Security*, same budgetary provision, if the hon. Minister could apprise us as to how this money is being spent? Whether tender was called for? Thank you.

Mr Gobin: Tender, always. There are a number of sites. Security is always by tender. So, last bid, 10 bids were received for 12 sites: Souillac, Abercrombie, Curepipe Head Office, Curepipe Nursery, Curepipe Timber Store, Pamplémousses, Vuillemin, Eau Bouillie, Quartier-Militaire, Mahebourg, Mare La Chaux, Sophie. Tender after tender, the

offer of ASL Security Services has been retained for the provision of security services for period 14 March 2023 to 13 March 2024. Total amount: Rs2,660,580.

Mr Chairperson: Hon. Dhunoo!

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you Mr Chairperson. Under Capital Expenditure, vote item 31111.001 - *Construction of Quarters and Barracks*, can we have more details from the hon. Minister?

Mr Gobin: This is for the new quarters at Curepipe. The existing building dates to the colonial days; health and safety wise, it is not suitable. So, this will represent the construction of new office building at Curepipe. The estimated cost is Rs56.6 m. The design works for the construction has been undertaken by the MNI. First phase estimated cost: Rs12.6 m. Second phase will be in Financial Year 2024-2025, estimated cost: Rs34 m., and third phase Financial Year 2025-2026, estimated cost: Rs10 m.

Also there will be construction of bathroom and toilet block at Souillac Office. It will be contracted out over there. Estimated cost Rs400,000.

The Chairperson: Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Item 31113.014 – *Landscaping Works - Motorway/Public Roads*, for which only Rs200,000 is being voted.

Mr Gobin: The forestry is responsible. I know I get the question often. RDA takes care of part of it but forestry provides the plants which you find in the hard shoulder, au milieu.

The Chairperson: Any more questions on page 324? No question. So we move to Sub-Head 13-406 – National Parks and Conservation Service which is at page 325 and 325. We got five minutes for this. Hon. Ms J. Bérenger!

Ms J. Bérenger: Thank you. Under the Item 21110 – *Personal Emoluments*, can we know the composition of the Native Terrestrial Biodiversity and National Parks Advisory Council and the allocations given and how many recommendations have been made?

Mr Gobin: It is constituted under the Native Terrestrial Biodiversity and Reserves Act. I will provide the information.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms Tour!

Ms Tour: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Vote Item 26313.129 – *Extra-Budgetary Units, Vallée d'Osterlog Endemic Garden Foundation*, can we have some information

with regard to the Vallée d'Osterlog Endemic Garden Foundation, the provision made for same?

Mr Gobin: The funds are to cater for staff, of course you have 38 employees. So, the funding will be for –

- (a) emoluments;
- (b) travelling;
- (c) overtime;
- (d) sick leave;
- (e) uniform;
- (f) utility charges (water, electricity);
- (g) maintenance of the building.

The office is at Wooton, Curepipe. The Chairperson is Mr Dorasami, he is the Chairperson since October 2018. He draws an allowance of Rs27,414 and the members of the Foundation are paid Rs1,500 per sitting and Sub-Committees, if any, Rs1,350. That's it.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dr. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson. In respect of Grants, Item 26210.092 – *Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)*, for the contribution to CITES, if we can be apprised as to why there is that slight increase in the estimates for year 2024?

Mr Gobin: Well, I venture to say that it will be due to currency fluctuation. I stand to be corrected but this small figure it has to be currency fluctuation, *R 65,000 à R 70,000*.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Luchmun Roy!

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Thank you, Mr Chairperson, under item 31113.014 – *Landscaping Works within Black River National Park/Bras D'Eau National Park/Public Gardens*, can we know the status of same? Thank you.

Mr Gobin: The sum provided for the upgrading and maintenance of the Visitors Centre at both places namely, Le Petrin and Bras D'Eau. I think it is completed.

Ms J. Bérenger: Mr Chairperson, I am still waiting for my answers.

Mr Gobin: I will come back.

Ms J. Bérenger: I have asked two questions – on the Council and the pesticides and I did not have any answer.

The Chairperson: You will get it. I cannot just waste time. You will get it in due time. The hon. Minister said he will circulate it. Have you got a question under this heading?

Ms J. Bérenger: No, on the next page, please.

Mr Gobin: I will make sure to give it to you personally, don't worry.

The Chairperson: Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Thank you. Item 31410.408 – *Mauritius from Ridge to Reef (EU Funded)*, quite a substantial amount is being asked. Can we have more information about this, please?

Mr Gobin: This is an EU funded project. We have received 4 million Euros from the EU delegation here and I seize this opportunity to thank them. Ridge to Reef is for restoration works in our native and endemic forests. It is a project which started in 2021. It is on-going, the object is to restore and maintain about 800 hectares of forests including mangroves ecosystem, removal of invasive plants species etc. It will also include recruitment of General Workers on contract for this purpose and the project is on-going. It is jointly managed by representatives of the EU delegation here in Port Louis and representatives of the National Park and Conservation Service.

With your permission and to the satisfaction of the hon. Member, Mr Nazurally from the University of Mauritius is the Chairperson of the National Parks Advisory Council. They meet every three months. In so far you have the representative of the Ministry of Agro-Industry, the Forestry Service and two other members, *les noms m'échappent*, in so far as recommendations made to me they made quite a number of recommendations. I think that would be better addressed in a PQ. There was a PQ recently which was withdrawn.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms. J. Bérenger!

Ms J. Bérenger: Le ministre me dit qu'il va me donner la réponse personnellement mais c'est le public qui doit savoir, monsieur.

The Chairperson: Vous avez de la chance.

Mr Gobin: Je vais venir.

Ms J. Bérenger: Ce n'est pas pour moi que je pose la question, c'est pour le public et s'il n'y a plus de contrôle sur l'utilisation des pesticides, c'est dangereux. C'est pour ça que c'est un intérêt général.

Mr Gobin: Il y a des contrôles.

The Chairperson: Do you have any question on page 326?

Ms J. Bérenger: Yes, Item 31410.401 – *Rehabilitation of Nature Reserves & Parks*, may we know why there is a decrease in the amount allocated?

The Chairperson: You see how lucky you are. We have exceeded the time, I am giving you a question.

Ms J. Bérenger: Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

Mr Gobin: That is because two projects have been completed. One at Bras D'Eau is completed and one for the Pink Pigeon at Tamarin, yes, *c'est complété*.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. Time is over.

Vote 13-4 Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security (Rs2,630,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

The Chairperson: Hon. Members, I suspend the Sitting for half an hour.

At 5.51 p.m., the Sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 6.37 p.m. with the Deputy Chairman of Committees in the Chair.

The Chairperson: Please be seated.

(Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation)

Vote 14-1: Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation was called.

We will vote by Sub-Heads and we are on page 337, Sub-Head 14-101: General. We have got 5 minutes.

Hon. Quirin!

Mr Quirin: Yes, thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 337, item 21110.004 – *Allowances*. There is an amount of Rs2.6 m. earmarked for 2023-2024. Can we know to whom these allowances are going to be paid please?

Mr Toussaint: Yes, Mr Chairperson, *permettez-moi d'abord de souhaiter bonne chance à l'équipe nationale qui à l'instant commence leur match de foot contre le Djibouti à Côte D'Or.*

The Chairperson: Allez Maurice!

Mr Toussaint: Allez Maurice !

So, this fund is for the provision for payment of acting responsibility, *ad hoc* duty allowances to officers of the Ministry.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dhunoo!

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 21111.002 - *Travelling and Transport*, may we have more details from the Minister?

Mr Toussaint: Yes, this is provision for payment of petrol allowance, PRB travelling, refund of bus fares.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Mayotte!

Mrs Mayotte: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 21110.005 – *Extra Assistance*, can the hon. Minister tell us to whom will be paid this sum of money and why it increased?

The Chairperson: Which page? Which page are you?

Mrs Mayotte: 338

The Chairperson: Has any hon. Member got any question on page 337?

Okay, then we can move to 338. Hon. Mrs Mayotte, you can put your question now.

Mrs Mayotte: Okay, thank you Mr Chairperson. So, it is Item 21110.005 – *Extra Assistance*, can the hon. Minister tell us to whom will be paid this sum of money and why did it increase? Thank you.

Mr Toussaint: Which Sub-Head?

The Chairperson: We are still under Sub-Head 14-101. We are on page 338 under Sub-Head 14-101.

Hon. Juman!

Mr Juman: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22120 – *Fees*, can we have a breakdown, hon. Minister?

Mr Toussaint: These fees are the payment of fees to Chairperson and Board Members of Bid Evaluation Committee and Departmental Bid Committee. The increase is due to the 5% increase in rate payable.

The Chairperson: Hon. Doolub!

Mr Doolub: Yes, page 338, Item 22030 – *Rent*, Rs17,800,000, can we have more details please?

Mr Toussaint: This is rent for office space at the headquarters at Citadel Mall. The lessor is Orland Ltd. up to February 2024. Surface area is 24,760 square feet, 108 floors. We also have the mezzanine. The contract is up to February 2024.

The Chairperson: So, unless anyone has any question, we move to Sub-Head 14-102: Promotion and Development of Sports. We have 15 minutes.

Hon. Mrs Mayotte!

Mrs Mayotte: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. My question is on Item 21110.005 – *Extra Assistance*. Can the hon. Minister tell us to whom will be paid this sum of money and why did it increase? Thank you.

Mr Toussaint: Mr Chairperson, we are paying salaries to advisers, adviser coaches, and sessional coaching fees to medical staff. There is a long list of sports advisers and also for the medical staff.

The Chairperson: Hon. David!

Mr David: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under Item 22090 – *Security*, may I know from the hon. Minister the reason behind the increase from Rs7 m. to Rs11 m. yearly and maybe if he can table the list of security services providers?

Mr Toussaint: There are no service providers because there is a bidding exercise ongoing. The increase is due to, as per remuneration orders, application of the minimum wage.

The Chairperson: Hon. Abbas Mamode!

Mr Abbas Mamode: On Item 22140 – *Medical Supplies, Drugs and Equipment*, can the Minister elaborate on drugs and equipment?

Mr Toussaint: These are the medical items for athletes and these medical items are at the SMU of Vacoas where we give a series of treatment and we accompany our athletes. So, they are the usual medical equipment, straps and so on.

The Chairperson: Hon. Quirin!

Mr Quirin: Mr Chairperson, Item 22060 – *Maintenance*, Rs5.5 m. budgeted for 2023/24. Can the hon. Minister give us some details with regard to this item?

Mr Toussaint: This is for the maintenance of vehicles. As we all know, we have a lot of vehicles, vans and so on. It also includes the maintenance for buildings, plant and equipment, IT equipment, grounds and other structures and the increase is due to the increased cost for the maintenance of our vehicles.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms Tour!

Ms Tour: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22120 – *Fees*, may we know from the hon. Minister to whom the fees are being paid and why a slight increase in provision for this financial year?

Mr Toussaint: The increase is because of a 5% increase to all boards. This is for the Sports Arbitration Tribunal, for the Ombudsperson for Sports, fees for several trainings; fees in connection with the youth and sports.

The Chairperson: Hon. Juman!

Mr Juman: Item 21110.005 – *Extra Assistance*, can I request the Minister to table the list of Advisers and Coaches?

Mr Toussaint: Yes, of course, Mr Chairperson. I'll table it now.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Item 22030 – *Rent*, may we have the component of this figure?

Mr Toussaint: Yes, Mr Chairperson. These are rent for –

- (i) parking slots –
 - Orland Ltd.: 12 parking slots;
 - Mahmood Sooroorajally: 7 parking slots;
 - Garden Tower: 10 parking slots;
 - Hatville Investment: 8 parking slots.
- (ii) as and when the need arises, the rent of vehicles;
- (iii) rent of equipment, and
- (iv) rent for facilities for events.

The Chairperson: We move to page 339. Hon. Dr. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson. Item 26323.045 – *Mauritius Sports Council*, I see substantial increase in the budgetary item for year 2023/24. Can the hon. Minister inform us as to who is the Chairman of the Mauritius Sports Council,

members, the fees being paid to them and if he could unbundle the amount earmarked and tell us how the money is judiciously spent? Thank you.

The Chairperson: You reply to the first question only.

Mr Toussaint: Mr Chairperson, it is very difficult to reply to five in one.

The Chairperson is Mrs Sarah Rawat Currimjee on a part time basis: Rs32,000, and there are several members including those coming from other Ministries. All members receive an amount of Rs2,000 per sitting.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Luchmun Roy!

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under Item 28211.056 – *Football Clubs*, can the hon. Minister table a list of football clubs benefiting from this amount, please?

Mr Toussaint: In fact, the different football clubs will have to apply for the grants. So, we will receive it after the budget has been voted through the Federation. So, this will be afterwards.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha!

Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 28211.056 – *Football Clubs*, *il y eu une baisse d'un million de roupies du montant alloué aux clubs de foot. Peut-on connaitre les raisons ?*

Mr Toussaint: Yes, because the Federation will top up the difference of Rs1 m.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms Tour!

Ms Tour: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22900.939 – *Indian Ocean Island Games (IOIG 2023)*, there is a considerable increase. May we know how this budget will be used? Can we have a breakdown of the expenses related to this?

Mr Toussaint: Yes. Mr Chairperson, as we all know the Indian Ocean Island Games will be held in Madagascar in August and there is a list of around 19 sport disciplines we have also the *volée jeunesse*. The amount of Rs53 m. is to cater for all the participants, all the delegation from Mauritius for the payment of air tickets and for the different equipment that all the delegation will need to represent the country.

The Chairperson: Hon. Armance!

Mr Armance: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 28212.015 – *Allowances to High Level Athletes*, I can see that there is an increase of nearly Rs10 m. May we have the details of the allowances paid to the athletes?

Mr Toussaint: Mr Chairperson, we are very happy to announce – I have said it in my budget speech – that we will reinstate the high level allowance that we are giving to athletes to the pre-pandemic level. *Et je dois remercier les athlètes qui ont joué le jeu et qui ont fait un sacrifice pendant ces deux années de Covid.* There is a long list of athletes benefiting from this high level allowance. It can be tabled afterwards because we will need to calculate the new amount that will be given to all athletes.

The Chairperson: Hon. Léopold!

Mr Léopold: Thank you, Mr Chairperson, under the same Item 28121.015 – *Allowances to High-Level Athletes*, can I ask the hon. Minister whether there will be Rodriguan athletes who will benefit from these allowances?

Mr Toussaint: *Yes, of course, Mr Chairperson.* De mémoire donc il y a –

- (i) Christianne Legentil, qui fait partie des athlètes qui bénéficient du *High Level*.

Quelques exemples, ce serai difficile donner toute la liste.

- (ii) Sébastien Perrine du judo ;
- (iii) Liliane Potiron.

Donc, il y en a, les athlètes de Rodrigues sont dedans.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. David!

Mr David: Merci, M. le président, à l’item 28211.064 –, *Sports Federations*. Je vois qu’il y a un montant constant de R 50 millions qui est alloué chaque année. Est-ce que la constance de ce montant signifie qu’il n’y aura pas de nouvelle fédération qui sera financée ou subventionnée par le ministère ?

Mr Toussaint: S’il y aura de nouvelles fédérations, je ne peux pas savoir mais si cela arrive, s’il y a de nouvelles fédérations qui seront créées durant l’année, évidemment nous allons faire le nécessaire pour les aider financièrement, mais là, c’est par rapport à nos 43 fédérations qui sont déjà enregistrées avec le ministère et nous avons aussi sept *multisports organisations like the Aurally Handicapped Persons Sports Federation, Mentally Handicapped, Sport Coopératives* etc.

The Chairperson: Hon. Quirin!

Mr Quirin: Thank you, Mr Chairperson, on page 339, Item 26313.141 – *Mauritius Multisports Infrastructure Ltd*, we can see that there is a considerable increase in the budget from 2022-2023 to 2023-2024. Can the hon. Minister explain to us why there is such a considerable increase?

Mr Toussaint: Yes, the increase in provision is to cater for, first of all, the Liverpool Academy License Fee that we have to pay and also to cater for all the expenses of the High Performance Centre which is at Côte d'Or and which is giving several assistance and service to our athletes.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Doolub!

Mr Doolub: Thank you, Mr Chairperson, Item 22900.944 – *International/Regional Games, (f) Residential Training Programme for Olympic Games*. Can we have more details for this Item please?

Mr Toussaint: Yes, Mr Chairperson, this is a very new and innovative project. It is a pilot project where, on a residential basis, we will have some athletes who will be given the facilities to prepare themselves for the coming Olympics and Paralympics games. So, they will be receiving all the different facilities like their catering, food supplement, vitamins, equipment, and so on.

The Chairperson: Hon. Abbas Mamode!

Mr Abbas Mamode: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 28211.064 – *Sports Federations*, can the Minister provide us a breakdown because there are different Sports Federations?

Mr Toussaint: Unfortunately, for the moment I cannot give the breakdown of the amount of figures that will be allocated to each Sports Federation. Team Mauritius will be meeting the different Sports Federations where they will have to give their plan for the year and according to their plan, a quantum will be decided.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Yes, coming back to Item 26313.141 – *Mauritius Multisports Infrastructure Ltd.*, the hon. Minister mentioned Liverpool Football Academy but he did not give the breakdown of this figure. Can I ask him how much is being paid to Liverpool Football Academy and also if he can give a breakdown of this Rs91 m.?

Mr Toussaint: The license fees that we have to pay to Liverpool for the training of around 250 youngsters amounts to Rs14.8 m., *et comme je l'ai donc, dans les R 91 million, c'est R 14.8 million pour...*

(Interruptions)

Pa interop mwa! Là j'ai perdu le fil de ma pensée.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Please, please!

Mr Toussaint: Next time!

The Chairperson: Hon. Mayotte!

Mrs Mayotte: Thank you, Mr Chairperson, item 26313.141 –*Mauritius Multisports Infrastructure Ltd.*, we note a considerable increase from Rs57 m. to Rs91 m. Can the hon. Minister state how this budget will be used? Thank you.

Mr Toussaint: Yes, I already answered, Rs14.8 m. to cater for the Liverpool Academy License fees and for the recurrent expenses of the Côte d'Or National Sports Complex and also a special budget to be allocated to the High Performance Centre. *Voilà, j'ai retrouvé le fil de ma pensée.* Mr Chairperson, there is a long list of the different sports medical facilities and other things that the High Performance Centre provides to our athletes.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. Hon. Juman!

Mr Juman: Thank you, Mr Chairperson, item 28211.064 – *Sports Federations*, can we have the breakdown the amount spent last financial year to each Federation?

Mr Toussaint: I will table it. It is a very long list.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dhunoo!

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson, for seeing me. Item 26313.045 – *Mauritius Sports Council*, there has been an increase. Can we have more details from the hon. Minister?

Mr Toussaint: Yes, the increase represents additional staffing that the Council requires to work optimally. Cost of utilities, the Council now bears all the costs for the utilities for ten sites, including five swimming pools, four outdoor centres and the National Badminton Centre. Also, the MSC has appointed new security services which were catered for by the Ministry in the past for the four outdoor centres, five swimming pools,

Badminton National Centre, Bambous Stadium and also for the maintenance of our outdoor centres. There are the different outdoor centres at Pointe Jerome, Flic en Flac, Anse la Raie, Belle Mare where they have to cater for the different activities there and for the maintenance and servicing of equipment.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Uteem! Without making any comments to the Chair, put your question.

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. I would like to come back to Item 28212.015 – *Allowances to High Level Athletes*. I take note that the amount budgeted for next year would be increased to Rs23.9 m. and the hon. Minister explained why. But then, why is it reduced the following year to Rs18.9 m.?

Mr Toussaint: This is provision. Of course, if we need more, we will ask for more. *On connait la générosité du ministre des Finances pour les sportifs.*

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. We now move to Sub-Head 14-103: Youth Services. It is on page 340 to page 341 and we have got 15 minutes.

Hon. Ittoo!

Mr Ittoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson, Item 22090 – *Security*. Can we have more details please? Thank you.

Mr Toussaint: Yes, again, it is like for the Sports Infrastructure. There is a bidding exercise ongoing. This is to cater for security services mostly to our several youth centres.

The Chairperson: Let us give a chance to hon. Dhunoo.

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under item 22090 – *Security*, there has been an increase. Can we have more details from the hon. Minister?

Mr Toussaint: Yes, same as for the Sports Department, this is to cater for the remuneration order to apply the minimum wage. So, the service costs a lot, *un peu plus maintenant.*

The Chairperson: Hon. Juman.

Mr Juman: Item 21110.005 – *Extra Assistance*, can I ask the Minister, why is there such a drop in the budget from Rs1.8 m. to Rs1.050 m.?

Mr Toussaint: This is mainly for assistance to Advisors. I have one Advisor who resigned last year and during these six months, I had only three Advisors. So, this is the reason.

The Chairperson: Hon. Doolub.

Mr Doolub: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 26313.068 – *National Youth Council*, can we know from the Minister who is the Chairperson of the National Youth Council?

Mr Toussaint: The Chairperson of the National Youth Council is Ms Keshika Sohan. She derives an allowance of Rs2,095 per sitting.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha.

Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 26313.158 – *Mauritius Recreation Council*, there has been a substantive increase from Rs12 m. to Rs17 m., can we know why? Can we also get the composition of the Council, please?

Mr Toussaint: Mr Chairperson, as from 2019, my Ministry had the responsibility of Recreation and to cater for recreation activities, we created a Recreation Council. The increase is mainly because there will be the need to recruit more staff to promote recreational activities.

We also intend to enlarge inclusion programmes for disabled persons of the Republic. The will be provision for –

- more recreational activities in various regions of the country;
- purchase of more equipment like pedalo, kayak, bicycles, and so on;
- organisation next year of a bigger and more popular a cappella competition;
- sensitising more people on road safety through the activity *Pédaler en sécurité*;
- providing people the possibility to participate in nautical activities.

So, this is due to the increase in the different activities that the Council will hold.

The Chairperson is Mr Stéphane Rock and he derives an amount of Rs2,095 per sitting. There are several members coming from different Ministries and all the members...

The Chairperson: Hon. Minister, anyway, I am not allowing the second question. Only one question at a time! Hon. Dr. Boolell, please.

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much, Sir. Under Capital Expenditure, item 31112.407 – *Upgrading of Youth Centres (a) Pointe Jerome Residential Youth Centre - Phase II*, I see no budgetary provision in relation to Pointe Jerome Residential Youth Centre. Does that mean that the upgrading work is over?

Mr Toussaint: Yes!

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Mayotte.

Mrs Mayotte: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 28211.043 – *Mauritius Scouts Association*, we can see there is an increase in the budget of Rs1 m. on benefit of the Mauritius Scouts Association. Can the hon. Minister tell us why? Thank you.

Mr Toussaint: Mr Chairperson, the Mauritius Scouts Association had written to me and to the Prime Minister to ask for help because they will need to participate in the Jamboree for around 40 participants. This year's Jamboree will be held in Korea. So, as a gesture to our youth, we are providing Rs1 m. to help them to participate in the Jamboree in Korea.

The Chairperson: Hon. Quirin.

Mr Quirin: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. On item 26313.158 – *Mauritius Recreation Council*, an amount of Rs12 m. was budgeted for last financial year. Can the hon. Minister table a breakdown of the amount spent? Whether it is Rs12 m., less or more?

Mr Toussaint: M. le président, de toute façon, je n'ai pas les détails avec moi mais, certainement, il y aura aussi le rapport du *Mauritius Recreation Council*, tout comme le *National Youth Council*, qui est déposé à l'Assemblée avec tous les détails.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Uteem.

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 28211.042 – *Youth Clubs*, there is a substantial increase for next year for Youth Clubs, and then, the following year, again, it comes down to Rs53,000 only. So, may we know why there is an increase for this year's budget?

Mr Toussaint: There is a one-off grant of Rs10,000 that will be provided to all registered Youth Clubs of the Republic.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms Tour.

Ms Tour: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22900.951 – *Smart Youth Programmes (a) National Youth Volunteer Scheme*, may we know what does this entail? And we also see an increase in provision for this financial year.

Mr Toussaint: Mr Chairperson, the National Youth Volunteer Scheme is responsible to encourage our youth to volunteer for their country. Apart from the usual activities that they do, like first aid training, protection of fauna and flora, this time we are embarking in a very new and innovative project with the help of the Embassy of France. We are launching the *jeune sapeur-pompier* with the help of *des pompiers de France*. Et,

donc, il y a tout un travail qui a déjà démarré et j'espère que d'ici la fin de l'année on sera fier de voir nos jeunes sapeurs-pompiers. Merci.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ittoo.

Mr Ittoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under item 22900.951 – *Smart Youth Programmes (e) Zenes Montre to Talents*, can we have an update from the hon. Minister on how the sum was spent during the last financial year and how it is going to be spent next year? Thank you.

Mr Toussaint: Mr Chairperson, *Zenes Montre to Talents* was introduced so as to give a platform to our youth, to showcase their talents. This financial year, we are coming with a new and innovative way for our youth to show their talents. *Je réserve la surprise parce qu'il faut aussi faire un bon marketing après.*

The Chairperson: Hon. Dhunoo.

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under Capital Expenditure, Item 31112.407 – *Upgrading of Youth Centres (d) Other Youth Centres*, may we have from the hon. Minister the list of youth centres that will be upgraded?

Mr Toussaint: No, there is no fixed list. This is maintenance and upgrading as and when required.

The Chairperson: Any question on page 342? No. Page 343?

Vote 14-1 Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation (Rs870,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(7.11 p.m.)

(Ministry of National Infrastructure and Community Development)

Vote 15-1 National Infrastructure was called.

The Chairperson: We are on page 348. It will be by sub-head, Sub-Head 15-101: General. We have five minutes for this one. Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Page 348, can I ask the hon. Minister, item 21110.005 – *Extra Assistance*, Rs3 m., may we know the component of this amount?

Mr Hurreeram: Mr Chairperson, this is provision for payment of salaries of one Senior Advisor, one Advisor and one Public Relation Officer.

- One Senior Advisor, Mr Sudhir Kumar Ramnarain;
- One Advisor, Mr Shanmuga Allagapen, and

- One Public Relation Officer, Mr Veer Luck Seerungen.

Amount paid to each of them: it's as per PRB.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dhunoo!

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under same item 21110.004 – *Allowances*, can the Minister give more details?

Mr Hurreeram: This is provision for the payment of acting responsibility, *ad hoc*, duty, entertainment, hospitality, driver allowance to the Permanent Secretary, car allowance in lieu of duty remission to eligible officers.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. Any hon. Member has got question on page 348? No, so we move to page 349. Hon. Ms Tour!

Ms Tour: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Vote item 31132.111 - *E-Document Management System*, can we have some details on this system?

Mr Hurreeram: Mr Chairperson, provision for payment of retention money in connection with implementation of an electronic document management system. The EDMS has already been implemented and is operational since March 2023 for some functions. It is working in parallel with the conventional file system for some time. Gradually, the EDMS will take over. Thank you.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Enfin!

The Chairperson: Qu'est-ce que vous voulez dire par « enfin », l'honorable Madame?

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Depuis longtemps j'ai levé ma main.

The Chairperson: Je regarde la liste qui est devant moi, j'ai ensuite dit.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Vous regardez que devant vous.

The Chairperson: Je ne vais pas regarder l'heure, je ne vais pas suivre les questions ?

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Vous êtes *bias* !

The Chairperson: Je ne suis pas *bias* ! *You have to withdraw this word "bias"!*

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Yes, I withdraw!

The Chairperson: Thank you.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Item 26313.010 – *Construction Industry Development Board*, could we know the composition of the Board and the fees paid to each of the member?

Mr Hurreeram: Yes. So, it's Mr Cowaloosur who is the part-time Chairperson and payable monthly fees of Rs40,000 and all other members receive Rs2,000 per sitting. So it's –

- Mr Vasant Ramtohum, representative of the Ministry of National Infrastructure;
- Mr Ramsing Ghoopee, representative of the Ministry of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management;
- Mr Vidianand Toofanny, representative of SMEs Contractors;
- Mr Anand Juddoo, representative of the Professional Quantity Surveyors' Council;
- Mr Sailesh Beejadarsing, representative of the Building and Civil Engineering Contractors Association;
- Mrs Priya Chadee, representative of the Ministry responsible for Environment;
- Mr Rambassun Sewpal, representative of the Professional Architects' Council;
- Mr Chandansingh Chutoori, representative of Association of Consulting Engineers;
- Mr Dashwanyl Jhuboo, representative of Council of Registered Professional Engineers;
- Mr Nishal Kona Herkanaidu, representative of MEECA;
- Mr Georges Brasse;
- Mr Trilock Bhunjun, Manager, Corporate Services at CIDB.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. We now move to sub head 15-102: National Infrastructure Division. We got 10 minutes for that. Page 349, hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 21110.005 – *Extra Assistance*, may we know to whom this extra assistance is paid and how much is paid?

Mr Hurreeram: Mr Chairperson, provision for payment of allowances to 7 pre-registration trainee engineers, architects, 5 in post, list of 1 geotechnical expert on contract. So, this is it.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ittoo!

Mr Ittoo: Mr Chairperson, item under Capital Expenditure, item 31112.433 – *Refurbishment of Emmanuel Anquetil Building*, can we know from hon. Minister why an

amount of Rs40.8 m. has been allocated when it is proposed to demolish the building?
Thank you.

Mr Hurreeram: Mr Chairperson, you will appreciate that *les fonctionnaires qui travaillent*, they are not going to move as from the 01 July so meanwhile, this Government is providing for the welfare of our Public Officers until they move.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Yes, item 31122.829 – *Acquisition of Geotechnical Equipment*. Last year there was an amount of Rs150 m., this year Rs95 m. and next year Rs123 m. May I know from the hon. Minister what is the total value of this project and also do we have the expertise for these kind of equipment?

Mr Hurreeram: In fact, Mr Chairperson, for this financial year, there has been no expenses. This has been carried over for next financial year and the financial year after. So, the total amount remain the same and there has been delay in delivery of the specialised equipment which is due to the fact that they are not readily available over the shelf and have to be manufactured for the Mauritian context. So, the first batch of equipment will be delivered in March 2024. This is why the provision of part of the money and the rest of the item will be delivered in February 2025 so that's for next budget, the budget after. And yes, we do have the expertise and the Chinese Authority will be training our Officers.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dr. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson. Capital Expenditure item 31122.829 – *Acquisition of Geotechnical Equipment*, I see a substantial reduction in the budgetary provisions in the estimates for Financial Year 2023-2024. Now we know that the geotechnical equipment is a very important equipment, can the hon. Minister apprise us as to why there has been this substantial decrease, has that got to do with the equipment which is already available?

Mr Hurreeram: I have just replied to it.

Dr. Boolell: You have replied?

Mr Hurreeram: Yes, I have just replied. In fact, no expenses in this financial year...

Dr. Boolell: Apologies.

Mr Hurreeram: ... so we are spending next financial year and sorry I said earlier in my reply I said Chinese, no it is the Japanese Government, sorry.

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much.

The Chairperson: Hon. Quirin!

Mr Quirin: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22060.005 – *IT Equipment*, an amount of Rs10 m. was budgeted for last financial year. Can we know to whom the contract was awarded?

Mr Hurreeram: Mr Chairperson, this provision caters for the renewal of 156 licenses such as AutoCAD full version, AutoCAD LT and Architecture, Engineering & Construction (AEC) Collection used by architects, engineers and other technical officers of the Ministry and the contract awarded to Buromatic Ltd.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. Hon. Dhunoo!

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 350, Vote Item 31121.801 – *Acquisition of Vehicles*, I can see there was a provision of Rs5 m. that was provided for the Year 2022-2023. Can the hon. Minister explain how this money has been spent during this financial year?

Mr Hurreeram: Mr Chairperson, this amount has been earmarked for the payment in respect to a towing machine which is currently being commissioned and it is expected that payment will be effected before 30 June. So, as at today, we have not spent any of that money. So, we are expecting that we can receive the delivery and we pay for it, otherwise the whole sum has been transferred for next financial year.

The Chairperson: Hon. David!

Mr David: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under item 31122.999 – *Acquisition of Other Machinery and Equipment, Procurement and Installation of an IPBX (VoIP Telephony) System at Plaine Lauzun*, there is a small expenditure earmarked of Rs2 m. for procurement and installation of an IPBX system at Plaine Lauzun. This system is being earmarked for my constituency, may I have some background and details about this project?

Mr Hurreeram: This is the procurement and installation of an IPBX phone system for the Ministry/Department in Plaine Lauzun as the current system is outdated.

The Chairperson: So, we move to the next Sub-Head. We have two minutes which I can give you later on. Sub Head 15-103: Road Construction and Maintenance which starts at page 351 and ends at 352. We have 10 minutes for this. Hon. Dr. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. In respect of Item 26313.079 – *Road Development Authority*, there is a relative increase in the budgetary provision for Financial Year 2023-2024, can the hon. Minister apprise us as to why there is this increase by almost Rs6 m.?

Mr Hurreeram: Increase in provision, Mr Chairperson, is to cater for payment of compensation for the year 2023 and other administrative costs of the RDA such as travelling and transport and uniform allowances among others; provision for funding partly the administrative cost of the RDA including salaries, travelling allowances, utilities, fuel etc.

Dr. Boolell: Thank you.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 31113.003 – *Construction and Upgrading of Roads (b) De Caen Flyover, Port Louis*, there is a projected value of Rs376 m., could we know the status of the project?

Mr Hurreeram: No, there is no provision for the Financial Year 2023-2024 as the project has been completed.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ittoo!

Mr Ittoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Same item, 31113.003 – *Construction and Upgrading of Roads (c) B28 Road from Deux Frères to Bel Air*, can we know the status of the project and why the sum of Rs100 million has been provisioned for next year? Thank you.

Mr Hurreeram: Mr Chairperson, the phase one of this project from Deux Frères to Beau Champ has been completed.

The Chairperson: From Deux Frères to Bel Air.

Mr Hurreeram: No. The project was in two phases and now with the second phase from Beau Champ to Bel Air for which this Rs100 m. has been earmarked. It consists of widening of approximately 3.1 kms of existing road to a 6.4 metre wide carriage way and provision of 1.2 to 1.5 wide footpath within the inhabited areas.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Item 26313.079 – *Road Development Authority*, may we know from the hon. Minister the Chairperson and the composition of the Board of RDA?

Mr Hurreeram: The Board of the RDA –

- (a) is currently being chaired by Mr Joel Patron who is the Chairperson;
- (b) Mr Ganeswar Bundhooa who is the representative of the Ministry of National Infrastructure and Community Development;

- (c) Mrs Dassaye Preeyadarshanee who is the representative of the Prime Minister's Office;
- (d) Mr Ajay Ramdhany, Lead Analyst, Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development;
- (e) Mr Nathoo Dharamdev, Director, TMRSU,
- (f) Mr Nuvin Khedah, Director of the LDA;
- (g) Mr Navinchandra Luchoo, Chief Surveyor, representative of Ministry of Housing and Land Use Planning;
- (h) Mr Gangadin Dunraz, Superintendent of Police;
- (i) Mr Somai, and
- (j) Mr Bassawon Al Jameel Mohamad.

The Chairperson: Hon Dhunoo!

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 351, Vote Item, *31113.003 – Construction and Upgrading of Roads (e) La Vigie-La Brasserie Link Road*, can we have a status from the Ministry?

Mr Hurreeram: So, Mr Chairperson, this is an on-going project. The project value Rs750.8 m., the Contractor is General Construction – start date February 2021, expected completion is November 2023, status of the project as at June 2023 is 77% completed.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 351 item *31113.003 – Construction and Upgrading of Roads (q) Flic en Flac Bypass*, this has been a long announced project and of paramount importance for the decongestion of Flic en Flac with a project value of Rs1.2 billion. May I ask the hon. Minister what is the status of this project?

Mr Hurreeram: Provision has been made for this project, maybe you do not see any estimates there – that is why– has been made under the Project Development Fund and the project has already been allocated to Transinvest Construction Co. Ltd after a bidding exercise. It is due to start very soon and we are expecting to do a Ground-breaking Ceremony sometime soon.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms Tour!

Ms Tour: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Vote Item 31112.001 – *Construction of Office Building at Grannum, Vacoas*, a provision of Rs4 m., can we have some details on the building being constructed at Grannum Vacoas?

Mr Hurreeram: This is provision for the construction of a new sub office for the RDA staff and workers as there is no sub office in the district of Plaine Wilhems. The project is being worked currently.

The Chairperson: Thank you. We now move to page 352. Hon. Lobine!

Mr Lobine: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 352, Item 31113.003 – *Construction and Upgrading of Roads (w) Upgrading of part of Holyrood Road*, may we get more details, please? Does this project go in line with the construction of the bridge at Holyrood?

Mr Hurreeram: *Tout à fait*. This is the construction of a 0.6 kms new single carriage to realign part of the Holyrood Road. In fact, we are building a brand new bridge. Now we will connect this bridge to the phase two of the project linking the centre of the island to Flic en Flac. This road is being heavily used by the inhabitants of this region to go towards the west. So, we are providing you with a brand new road.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Luchmun Roy!

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under Item 31113.004 – *Construction and Upgrading of Bridges (g) Upgrading of Bridge along B28 Road at Grand Sable*, there is no amount being budgeted for this financial year. Can the hon. Minister update on the status of same? Thank you.

Mr Hurreeram: So, this is a new project. Provision has been made with effect from Financial Year 2024-2025.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ittoo!

Mr Ittoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 31122.999 – *Acquisition of Other Machinery and Equipment (b) Skid steer loaders with trailer*, so there is provision for Rs2 m. for the acquisition of other equipment and skid steer loaders with trailer. Can the hon. Minister explain what is this amount meant for?

Mr Hurreeram: Mr Chairperson, this is provision for the procurement of skid steer loaders to be used for the cleaning of drains, roads and carrying material. You will agree that in 2023 we can't have our general workers to go and lift those slabs – very

heavy slabs – which can also cause health hazards. So, *dans un soucis de bien-être de nos employés* we are mechanising the whole process.

The Chairperson: I totally agree with you.

Mr Hurreeram: Thank you.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Yes, still on page 352, Item 31113.403 – *Maintenance and Rehabilitation (a) Roads and Bridges*, there is an amount of Rs400 m. that is being budgeted. May I have a list of those roads and bridges that will be maintained and rehabilitated?

Mr Hurreeram: Well, we can circulate a list. We have a long list; here it is coming. Thank you very much.

The Chairperson: I can see it is a long list. We can circulate it.

Mr Hurreeram: I am not sure you want me to read all this but it is for upgrading of roads, bridges, footpaths, road marking, and routine maintenance across the island. It is all over the place.

The Chairperson: Hon. Doolub!

Mr Doolub: Same item number, Item 31113.403 – *Maintenance and Rehabilitation (e) Whole Life Asset Management System*, a new item, Rs40 m. earmarked. Can we have some details for this Item please?

Mr Hurreeram: This is a new item proposed under the Item – *Maintenance and Rehabilitation* for the management and maintenance of the road network under contract.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under the same Item 31113.403 – *Maintenance and Rehabilitation (c) Road Marking & Signage*, can the hon. Minister table a list of all the contractors who have been awarded the contract to provide those road markings and signage?

Mr Hurreeram: Yes, I will circulate.

The Chairperson: Time is over. We now move to Sub-Head 15-104: Electrical Services Division and it is on page 353. We have got 5 minutes for that.

Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Yes, Mr Chairperson, Item 22030 – *Rent*, there is an amount of Rs3.8 m., may we have the component of this figure?

Mr Hurreeram: This rent consists of rental of buildings for Rs3.4 m.; rental of parking slots for Rs175,000; rental of equipment for Rs200,000.

Rental of building, if you want to have the list, to meet –

- Rental of ESD offices in Pamplemousses, location in Camp Des Embrevades, Pamplemousses. Name of owner; Hung Tin Sam for a monthly rent of Rs21,760.
- ESD in Rose Hill, ground floor, Security Social Office in Rose Hill, and the owner is the Ministry of Social Security and the monthly rent is Rs51,072.
- ESD Plaine Lauzun, owner is National Agricultural Product Regulatory Office. Monthly rent is Rs99,000 and parking slots.

The Chairperson: Thank you.

No question? We move to page 354 to 358.

Mr Ameer Meea: ...hon. Minister for maintenance, Item 22060 – *Maintenance*, there is an amount of Rs975,000. May I have the details and breakdown of this figure?

Mr Hurreeram: Maintenance consists of –

- maintenance of buildings: Rs300,000;
- plant and equipment: Rs250,000;
- vehicles: Rs300,000;
- IT equipment: Rs400,000, and
- the yard: Rs25,000.

The Chairperson: So, if you don't have any further question?

Vote 15-1: National Infrastructure (Rs3,325,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(07.38 p.m.)

Vote 15-2: National Development Unit was called.

The Chairperson: So, we are on page 359. Hon. Mrs Mayotte!

We have got 15 minutes for this Item.

Mrs Mayotte: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22100 – *Publications and Stationery*, can the hon. Minister explain the increase in the provision and what it caters for? Thank you.

Mr Hurreeram: For Publications and Stationery, the increase in provision is based on trend of expenditure. This is for paper and material, printing and stationery, public notices, publications, provision made for the purchase of newspaper, magazine and other publications.

The Chairperson: Thank you.

Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22030 – *Rent*, there is a huge amount of Rs27 m., may I have a detailed breakdown of this figure, that is, what and where we are renting with each specific amount?

Mr Hurreeram: This is for rental of building which is Rs25,600,000 and rental of office spaces in Citadelle Mall, Port Louis. Parking slots Rs1,685,000.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Luchmun Roy!

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under Item 22090 – *Security*, can the hon. Minister explain why no provision has been made for the Financial Year 2023-2024? Thank you.

Mr Hurreeram: No provision has been in fact, been made here, Mr Chairperson, regarding this Item because there are 35 Citizen Advice Bureau is being transferred to the Prime Minister's Office.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Thank you. Under Recurrent Expenditure, Item 22090 – *Security*, no sum is being earmarked for next year. Could we know the reason thereof?

Mr Hurreeram: I just replied.

The Chairperson: He just replied to this question.

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22170 – *Travelling within the Republic*, I can see that there is an increase from Rs250 m. to Rs325 m. Can the hon. Minister explain the increase?

Mr Hurreeram: The increase in provision is to cater for visits to Rodrigues for monitoring of capital projects. Provision is made for passage costs, accommodation and

subsistence allowance payable to officers on mission Rodrigues in connection with implementation of capital projects.

Maybe you would also want to know that currently in Rodrigues, there are 15 projects being implemented to the tune of Rs555 m.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Item 22120 – *Fees*, may we have a breakdown to whom those fees are paid?

Mr Hurreeram: Fees to chairperson and members of boards and committees. Provision is made for the payment of fees to Departmental Bid Committees and Bid Evaluation Committees. Provision is made for fees for training of staff. Refund of subscription fees to professional bodies – here it is subscription fees to Registered Engineers as recommended in the 2021 PRB Report.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. If you do not have any question on page 359, we move to page 360. And I see the name of hon. Lobine on top of the list.

Mr Lobine: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 26313.155 – *Drains Infrastructure Construction Ltd.*, may we have a detailed account as to the composition of the board and members of this company, please?

Mr Hurreeram: This board is currently being chaired by Mr Avinash Gopee. The representative of the Ministry of Finance is Mr Suhootoorah. The representative of the State Law Office is Mr Seetaram, Mr Boodeea and Mr Diolle.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. Hon. Dr. Boolell.

Dr. Boolell: Under Capital Expenditure, Item 31113.045 – *Construction and Upgrading of Amenities of which Small Development Projects (Indian Grants)*. I see a substantial increase in respect of budgetary provision by Rs75 m. I am sure the list of projects is quite long notwithstanding the grant from the Indian government. So, if the hon. Minister can either table the list in respect of projects completed or ongoing projects and projects to be identified?

Mr Hurreeram: In fact, the list of projects is in the Estimates at Appendix G. Nevertheless I will table.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dhunoo!

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under Item 26313.144 – *Land Drainage Authority*, can we know how many staff are there, who is the CEO and what are their remuneration package?

Mr Hurreeram: Regarding LDA, the Board is currently being chaired by Mr Purmessur. The Executive Director is Mr Nuvin Khedah. There is a long list of people who sit on that Board, if you want me to go through the list –

- (i) Mrs Kawol, representative of the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change;
- (ii) Mr Budhoo, Officer-in-Charge, National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Centre;
- (iii) Mr Aukhjee, Lead Analyst, Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development;
- (iv) Mr Bhikajee, Principal Town & Country Planning Officer, Ministry of Housing and Land Use Planning;
- (v) Mr Rambhujun, Deputy Permanent Secretary of the NDU;
- (vi) Mr Teeluckdharry, Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management;
- (vii) Mr Jhuboo, Director, Ministry of National Infrastructure and Community Development (National infrastructure division);
- (viii) Mr Jahajeeah, Ag. Director (Technical Services), Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities;
- (ix) Representative of the Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities (Water Resources Unit);
- (x) Mr Nunkoo, Chief Project Manager, NDU;
- (xi) Mr Jankee, Divisional Manager, RDA;
- (xii) Mr Frichot, Superintendent of Police;
- (xiii) Mr Domah, and
- (xiv) Mr Mungra.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms J. Bérenger!

Ms J. Bérenger: Still on Item 26313.155 – *Drains Infrastructure Construction Ltd.* L'honorable ministre a donné la liste des membres du *Board* mais peut-on savoir leurs rémunérations respectives ?

Mr Hurreeram : Le président est payé à R 75 000 par mois et les autres membres à R 25 000 par mois.

The Chairperson: Hon. David!

Mr David: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under Item 31113.003 – *Construction and Upgrading of Roads*, I can see that there is an amount of Rs300 m. earmarked for this coming year. May I ask the hon. Minister to table the corresponding list of projects for Constituency No. 1 under this item?

Mr Hurreeram: The PPS of the Constituency is currently working on the list and as soon as this is done, the Member can come with a PQ and I will reply.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Mayotte.

Mrs Mayotte: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 31122.999 – *Other Machinery and Equipment*, can the hon. Minister explain substantial increase in the Estimates for Financial Year 2023/24, please? Thank you.

Mr Hurreeram: The increase in provision is for the purchase of a specialised tool treatment to be used by engineering staff. Here the provision is for the specialised tool called the Dumpy Level, – you will understand better, Mr Chairperson – Plotter, Trimble, Total Station Set, high-performance computers to be used by the engineering staff and photocopy machines and equipment for fieldworkers such as ranging rods, measuring tape etc.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: In relation to Item 26313.144 – *Land Drainage Authority*, there is an amount of Rs41 m. Can I ask the hon. Minister if the list of flood prone areas, that is, residential land that is classified as flood prone areas, has been circulated? Is it public? Or are you still working on it?

Mr Hurreeram: Even if this is a policy matter...

The Chairperson: It is a policy matter, that's what I was going to say. So, we rule out this question. Hon. Doolub.

Mr Doolub: I would like to the same Item 26313.144 – *Land Drainage Authority*, can the hon. Minister give us details about the staffing of this department – the total number of staff working for the LDA?

Mr Hurreeram: Currently at the LDA, we have one Director, one Assistant Director, three Senior Managers, seven Land Drainage Officers, two Geographic Information System Database Officers, one Administrative Officer, one Accounts Clerk, one Assistant Procurement and Supply Officer, one Confidential Secretary, two WPO, two Attendants and three Drivers.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dhunoo!

Mr Dhunoo: Under the same Item 26313.155 – *Drains Infrastructure Construction Ltd.*, there is an amount of Rs24.3 m. Can the Minister inform the House, what this provision is meant for?

Mr Hurreeram: This provision is to meet the operating cost of the DICL, Mr Chairperson –

- compensation of employees;
- rental of office;
- cost of utilities;
- maintenance of vehicle;
- office equipment and furniture, and
- other expenses.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister.

Vote 15-2 National Development Unit (Rs781,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(7.51 p.m)

Vote 16-1 Ministry of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation was called.

The Chairperson: So, we are going by sub-heads. We start by Sub-Head 16-101: General and we got five minutes for this. We start now.

Hon. Ms Joanna Bérenger!

Ms J. Bérenger: Item 21110.005 – *Extra Assistance*, can we have the list of the advisors and their remuneration, please?

Mr Balgobin: Yes, Mr Chairperson, the provision is made for two advisors currently in service –

- (i) Advisor on Information Matters;
- (ii) Advisor in ICT Promotion and Project Implementation, and
- (iii) An additional provision for an Advisor in ICT matters yet to be recruited.

Ms J. Bérenger: Their names and their remuneration, please?

Mr Balgobin: The names –

- (i) Advisor on Information Matters: Miss Avishka Ferag;
- (ii) Advisor on ICT Promotion, Mr Rishi Jhuboo.

The Chairperson: Are you done?

Mr Balgobin: Done.

Ms J. Bérenger: Et leurs rémunérations?

Mr Balgobin: Yes, I am sorry, the remuneration is as per PRB but it is Rs66,200 for the *Attachée de presse* and Rs62,700 for the Advisor.

The Chairperson: Hon. Navarre-Marie.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Yes, Item 21110.004 – *Allowances*, can we have more information on that?

Mr Balgobin: The allowances are due to the increase of annual increment, provision for acting allowance, responsibility allowance, *ad hoc* allowance, duty allowances etc.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Paid to whom?

Mr Balgobin: Paid to the staff of the Ministry.

The Chairperson: Page 367, hon. Dr. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson, Item 22120 – *Fees*, there is a substantial increase in the budgetary provision. If the hon. Minister could give us a breakdown as to whom the fees are paid and the quantum paid please?

Mr Balgobin: Yes, Mr Chairperson, the fees here are broken into two –

- (i) Firstly, the membership fees that are payable to Gartner and that is being paid in US dollars, and

- (ii) Secondly, there are fees to the Consultant; we have launched a tender for the ICT blueprint for the Ministry.
- (iii) Moreover, you have fees here for the ICT Advisory Council payable for Bid Evaluation Committee etc.

These are the fees paid for.

Dr. Boolell: Can you state the amount paid to those specifically?

Mr Balgobin: Exact amount paid to those fees? It is mentioned there, *Fees* Rs5.6 million, it is for Gartner. You have Rs4 m. for the ICT blueprint and the rest is used for the others.

The Chairperson: Hon. Luchmun Roy!

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Thank you, Mr Chairperson, under Item 22900.904 –*Running cost of Government Online Centre (GOC) of which Rental for Disaster Recovery Site*. We see that there has been a drastic drop in the amount. Can the hon. Minister provide further details pertaining to this Item? Thank you.

Mr Balgobin: Yes, Mr Chairperson, this is for the Government Online Centre and the decrease here is mainly for the payment of increments, compensations.

The Chairperson: No, hon. Minister, her question was why is there a drop.

Mr Balgobin: Why there is?

The Chairperson: There is a drop in the amount.

Mr Balgobin: No, but there is no drop, Mr Chairperson, it is an increase in fact...

The Chairperson: It was 20 m. to 10 m.

Mr Balgobin: From 96 m. to 98 m. There is no drop.

The Chairperson: No, no, the *Rental for Disaster Recovery Site*...

Mrs Luchmun Roy: For *Rental for Disaster Recovery Site*, it is Rs20 m. and then to Rs10 m.

Mr Balgobin: Okay, so, the decrease is to establish continuity of the Government Services and to maintain business operation. In the event of failure, the GOC is seeking to procure co-location services to host the GOC infrastructure to implement this facility. So, instead of having one full location, we are looking at the possibility to have co-location services for the GOC.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Chairperson, under Item 26313.159 –*Mauritius Emerging Technologies Council*, the budgeted amount is Rs15 m. which is three times more than what was budgeted last year. So, may we know why the increase?

Mr Balgobin: Yes, very simple, Mr Chairperson, it is because the institution was created last year. So, we had a very minimal amount to run operations and this year, it is taking up shape. So, provision is being made now for the recruitment of staff, office space and the whole payments of Board fees, office expenses, rental etc.

The Chairperson: Thank you, time is over! We now move to Sub-Head 16-102: Central Informatics Bureau which starts at the lower part of page 368 and the upper part of page 369. We have 10 minutes for that and the time starts now. Start.

Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Chairperson, under Item 22030.007 –*Rental of Lines for Network System*. A budgeted amount of Rs85 million, may we know who is the service provider?

Mr Balgobin: This rent is for provision for the GINS network; the service provider is Mauritius Telecom.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dhunoo!

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson, Item 21111.002 – *Travelling and Transport*, can the hon. Minister give more details?

Mr Balgobin: Travelling and transport, what details would you like to have?

The Chairperson: You need a breakdown?

Mr Balgobin: Why it is reduced?

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Hon. Minister, you need to address the Chair. Maybe he is looking for a breakdown.

Mr Balgobin: The transport is payment of petrol allowances, travelling, bus fares, mileage....

The Chairperson: Can you table it? You can table it afterwards.

Any other question on page 368? So, let us take hon. Tour.

Ms Tour: Thank you, Mr Chairperson, Item 22120.023 – *Licence Fees for Oracle Technical Support*, there is an increase in the license fees for Oracle Technical Support. May we know from the hon. Minister why this increase?

Mr Balgobin: The increase is mainly based in the fluctuation in the exchange rate because it is paid in US dollars. So, the provision is mainly to cater for that rate.

The Chairperson: Hon. David!

Mr David: Thank you, Mr Chairperson, under Item 22060.005 – *Maintenance of which IT Equipment*, may I know from the hon. Minister the background of the significant increase from Rs19 m. to Rs31 m. per year?

Mr Balgobin: Yes, Mr Chairperson, provision is made to cater for the payments of managed services like the Info Highway and the *MoKloud* platform.

And also maintenance agreement for projects like the Certification Authority, which is already live; the National Authentication Framework, live in December 2020; and the Electronic Queue Management System, which is live since February 2021. So, these are the provisions made for maintenance services.

Also, the increase is to cater for the payment of enhancement of the Certification Authority in the context of the MNIC project.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. Hon. Mrs Mayotte.

Mrs Mayotte: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 31132.401 – *e-Government Projects of which Digital Document Management System*, which seems to be a new item, can the hon. Minister give us more information about that? Thank you.

Mr Balgobin: Yes, this is indeed a new project. The Digital Document Management System will be implemented in the Ministry. It is in fact an Electronic Document Management System whereby instead of having files, everything will be handled online. So, it is a new project that is being implemented in my Ministry to specially streamline of process and documents in the Ministry.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. Hon. Ms J. Bérenger.

Ms J. Bérenger: Item 22120.008 – *Fees to Consultants*, can we have a list of the consultants for the allocated budget of Rs1 m., please?

Mr Balgobin: The Fees to Consultants is in fact for the consultant for the training of Central Informatics Bureau staff because they need to be kept in line with specially emerging technologies. The consultant has not been appointed yet, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Uteem.

Mr Uteem: I would like to come back to this Item *31132.401 – e-Government Projects of which Digital Document Management System*. Is there a time frame as to when this project is going to be implemented?

Mr Balgobin: Well, once you vote for this budget, we will definitely launch the tender any time soon.

The Chairperson: Any other question? So, we move to Sub-Head 16-103: Central Information Systems Division, which starts at page 369 and ends at page 370. We have 10 minutes for this. No question on page 369? We move to page 370. Hon. Ms Tour.

Ms Tour: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item *31122.802 – Acquisition of IT Equipment (e) Government Email solution (Phase 1)*, a new provision has been made. Can we have some clarification on this Email solution system?

Mr Balgobin: Mr Chairperson, this provision is made for the purchase of Email solutions for our friends, the civil servants, for around 10,000 emails on Microsoft Exchange Solution. This will be given to our *fonctionnaires* friends because there is a big demand for emails. So, we have a budget to start at least 10,000 additional emails on top of what we have already.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. Hon. Uteem.

Mr Uteem: Under Item *31122.802 – Acquisition of IT Equipment (c) Setting up of a cutting edge data store at CISD*, may I know from the hon. Minister whether the contract has already been awarded and, if so, to whom?

Mr Balgobin: The project is in two phases, Mr Chairperson. The first part is, of course, to do all the civil works, cablings, electric and others. The fund that is being provided for this financial year is to complete this exercise. The servers have already been purchased from SIL during the last financial year and this amount is just to complete the whole sever room of CISD. We are calling it very fancy, cutting edge data store, if you allow.

The Chairperson: Address the Chair, I am just sitting opposite to you and you have to turn your back. Hon. Dhunoo.

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under the same Item *31122.802 – Acquisition of IT Equipment (b) Revamping of CISD payroll system*, can we have an update on the project, hon. Minister?

Mr Balgobin: The project is to have the payroll revamped and the project was awarded to State Informatics Limited last year. This amount is for the completion of whatever is left, the core payroll system which will be integrated in the e-payroll system.

In fact, now, our friends, the civil servants can download their payslip instead of getting a copy every month. When they need their payslip, they download it, so we save on paper and environment.

The Chairperson: Anyone with any question? If you don't have any question, I got one.

Vote 16-1 Ministry of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation (Rs927,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(8.09 p.m.)

(Ministry of Labour, Human Resource Development and Training and Commerce and Consumer Protection)

Vote 17-1 Labour, Human Resource Development and Training was called.

The Chairperson: Again, we are going by sub-head and we start with Sub-Head 17-101: General. We have five minutes for this and we start from page 378 to page 379. We got five minutes. Hon. Ms J. Bérenger.

Ms J. Bérenger: Thank you. Item 21110.005 – *Extra Assistance*, there is an allocated amount of Rs11 m. Can we know the list of the Advisors and their package, please?

Mr Callichurn: Yes, Mr Chairperson, the budget allocated under this item is for the payment of salary for Advisors. Actually, there are six Advisors and also, provision is for the Vice-President and the President of the Redundancy Board. The names of the Advisors are –

- Mr Gungadeen, Chetan;
- Mr Bundhoo, Lajputh;
- Mr Caremben, Mariahven;
- Mr Jouan, Herbert;
- Mr Mareemootoo, Deevalen and
- Mr Sungeelee, Alwin.

As regard to the President of the Redundancy Board, Mr Hossen Abdul Rashid and Mr Marie Bernard as Vice-President.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Mrs Mayotte.

Mrs Mayotte: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22900.032 – *Organisation of Labour Day and other Event*, can the hon. Minister give us more details on that item? Thank you.

Mr Callichurn: Provision is made for the organisation of liberty and other events that is symposium, printing of banners, advertisement workshop and miscellaneous.

The Chairperson: Thank you hon. Minister. Dr. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: Item 22900.967 – *National Wage Consultative Council*, if we can be apprised as to whom is the Chairman, the members of the Council and fees extended or being paid to them?

Mr Callichurn: The list is quite long. I will circulate. As for the fees, the Chairman derives a monthly fee of Rs63,400 and a telephone allowance of Rs2,000 as for other members, the Chairperson of the Technical Committees, they draw a fee of Rs2,200 and member of the Board Rs2,000 and members of sub-committees Rs1,700.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Item 22030 – *Rent*, may we know to whom this rent is paid?

Mr Callichurn: Rent, provision is made for the payment of rental space at Victoria House and also for parking slots. The building belongs to JOLIMA Ltd., represented by one Mr Swaleh Ramjan and parking spaces – there are several – belonging to Mrs Oozeer Tahebab Cassam Salma and one parking slot at Garden Tower belonging to the Prime Minister's Office.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. Hon. Dhunoo!

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under Item 22060 – *Maintenance*, can the hon. Minister give more details?

Mr Callichurn: Provision is made for the payment in connection with the maintenance of buildings, plant and equipment, vehicles, IT equipment, furniture, fixtures and fittings. More details?

The Chairperson: Do you need more details?

So, time is over anyway. We now move to Sub-Heading 17-102: Labour and Employment Relations Management, which start at page 379 and ends at 380, we got 10 minutes for this and we start hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: I will need some details on page 379, Item 22030 – *Rent*, Rs28 m. is being budgeted, may I have the components and some details on this amount?

Mr Callichurn: These are for rental of office space at Victoria House, Silvercrest Court and Regional Labour Offices across the island. Basically the list is long, I will table it.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dhunoo!

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 21110.004 – *Allowances*, can the hon. Minister give more details please?

Mr Callichurn: Provision is made for the payment of *ad hoc*, acting and responsibility and duty remission car allowance.

The Chairperson: That's your answer. Thank you. If you do not have any question on page 379, we move to 380. Hon. Ms Tour!

Ms Tour: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22120 – *Fees*, may we know to whom these fees are payable and the increase in amount?

Mr Callichurn: Its provision is made for the payment of fees to Chairperson and members of boards and committees, fees for training, refund of subscription fees to professional bodies as follows –

- Fees to Chairperson, that is, for the National Tripartite Council;
- Advisory Council for OSH;
- Boiler and Machinery Inspectors Board;
- Lodging and Accommodation Committee;
- National Remuneration Board;
- Commission for Conciliation and Mediation;
- Redundancy Board
- Bid Evaluation Committee, and
- Departmental Committee, amongst others.

Fees for training, fees to consultant and I have mentioned refund of subscription fees to professional bodies.

The Chairperson: Dr. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson. Now item 22900.974 - *Decent Work Country Programme (Second Generation)*, year in year out there is the same

budgetary provision and yet in relation to the decent work country programme, can the hon. Minister apprise us as to where matters stand?

Mr Callichurn: Mr Chairperson, provision is made to meet part expenses that are for the enlistment of the services of the National Consultant for the Second Generation Country Programme for the Republic of Mauritius. As regard to where matters stand, it is an on-going Programme, so, each consultant...

The Chairperson: No more discussion in between, please. Hon. Ms J. Bérenger!

Ms J. Bérenger: Thank you. Item 31132.113 - *Computerisation of Occupational Safety and Health Division*, can we have a status for this project please and the amount disbursed?

Mr Callichurn: 70% of the project cost is for SIL, that is, 70% of the project has been completed, testing and commissioning of the application software as well as there is a provision for the purchase of IT Equipment. The project is on-going so basically, a 30% is left to be completed.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dhunoo!

Mr Dhunoo: Under Grants, Item 26210.099 – *African Regional Labour Administration Centre*, can the hon. Minister give more details?

Mr Callichurn: Yes, the budget is for the contribution paid for year 2023 which amounted to Rs1,251,992.70.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Item 26313.092 – *Trade Union Trust Fund*, every year there is a budget of Rs4 m. which is transferred to the Trust, may I know from the hon. Minister the number of persons who receive training by this Trust because this is what this Trust is supposed to do, provide training?

Mr Callichurn: It is for workshop organised. Several workshops were organised and the amount that was disbursed is Rs243,800 specifically on the number of training carried out by Trade Union Trust Fund. Unfortunately, I do not have this information.

The Chairperson: Any question? So, now we move to Sub-Head 17-103 – Registration of Associations and Trade Unions which start at the bottom of page 380 and ends at the middle of page 381. We have five minutes. Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Page 380, under Item 21110 – *Personal Emoluments*, may I know from the hon. Minister who is the Registrar of Associations?

Mr Callichurn: Mr Sanasy.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Mayotte!

Mrs Mayotte: Item 22900.974 – *Decent Work Country Programme (Second Generation)*, can the hon. Minister give us more information about this programme? Thank you.

Mr Callichurn: The Decent Work Country Programme has been established by the International Labour Organisation under its Decent Work Agenda and that is the delivery of ILO technical support to its constituents.

The Chairperson: Have you got any question on page 381? Thank you. So, then if that is the case, we move to Sub-Head 17-104 – Employment Facilitation which starts at page 381 bottom part up to 382 and we got five minutes for this as well. Hon. Mrs Luchmun Roy!

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under Item 21110.004 – *Allowances*, can the hon. Minister provide a breakdown of the allowances paid?

Mr Callichurn: Provision is made for the payment of *ad hoc*, Acting and Responsibility allowances. Regarding the breakdown, I will circulate.

The Chairperson: Okay, thank you. Hon. Dr. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much. Item 21110.005 – *Extra Assistance*, quite a substantial increase compared to last year’s budgetary provision. Can the Minister apprise us as to the relevance of this Extra Assistance whether there has been any recruitment?

Mr Callichurn: Mr Chairperson, what has changed from last year, we had only one Consultant for migration. Now, we have enlisted the services of a Special Advisor in the Technical and Vocational Education and Training, TVET, and the name is Robert Holmes.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. Hon. Quirin!

Mr Quirin: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 382, Item 28212.028 – *Employability Enhancement Programme (a) Youth Employment Programme*, there is a decrease from Rs70 m. to Rs50 m., can we know the reason for this decrease, please?

Mr Callichurn: The decrease is based on the trend of expenditure for Financial Year 2022-2023. Furthermore, with the implication of the Scheme “Prime à L’Emploi” which targets the youth from 18 to 35 and women below 50, it is expected that the requested amount of Rs50 m. will be sufficient.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms Anquetil!

Ms Anquetil: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 28212.028 – *Employability Enhancement Programme (b) Women Back to Work Programme*, peut-on savoir combien de femmes en ont bénéficié pour l'année écoulée? Merci.

Mr Callichurn: I have this information. Since, the start of the programme in July 2015 up to 31 May 2023, a total of 1,445 women have been placed of which 1,204 have completed their one year placement and 721 got a permanent job whereas for last year 99 women were placed during the period from July 2022 to end of May 2023.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dhunoo!

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under same Item 28212.028 – *Employability Enhancement Programme (c) Trainee Engineer Scheme*, there has been a decrease. Can the hon. Minister inform why this decrease in the sum allocated?

Mr Callichurn: It is to be noted that there is a very low or no demand from employers for placement of graduates in the field engineering; specific field – aeronautical, bio resource chemical and there is a high demand for graduates in the field of civil engineering. However, supply in this field is relatively low. Therefore the decrease is based on the trend of expenditure for Financial Year 2022-2023 and we understand that the amount of Rs40 m. will be sufficient for this financial year to meet the budget for this item.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha!

Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha: Item 28212.028 – *Employability Enhancement Programme (d) Training and Placement of Persons with Disabilities*, can we know the number of persons with disabilities who benefitted from the training and placement?

Mr Callichurn: Mr Chairperson, this is a new item and it will be implemented to facilitate the inclusion of young persons with disabilities to be trained and placed. Circular dated 22 May 2023 has been issued to all Ministries/Departments to submit their request for placement of persons with disabilities.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 31132.122 – *E-Register of Skills*, may I know from the hon. Minister whether the contract has already been awarded? If so to whom and when is the schedule completion date of that project?

Mr Callichurn: I am informed that the procurement exercise will be carried out for the implementation of the project. So, we have not yet allocated the contract.

The Chairperson: Time is over. We now move to next Sub-Head 17-105 Technical and Vocational Education and Training which starts at page 382 and finish at page 383.

Hon. Dhunoo.

We have got 5 minutes for that.

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under Item 26313.027 – *Mauritius Institute of Training and Development*, may we have the Members of the Board and their remuneration package?

Mr Callichurn: Yes. The Chairperson is Mr Harrykrishna Vydelingum, Vice-Chairperson, the position is vacant at the moment and there are representatives of different Ministries, for example Ministries responsible for employment, education, Ministry of Finance, two members from the private sector, two members also with experience in technical and vocational training.

A sum of Rs40,000 as fee is paid to the Chairperson per month and Members of the Board get Rs2,500 per sitting.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Yes, under the same Item 26232.027 – *Mauritius Institute of Training and Development*, Mr Chairperson. Since we are giving Rs230 m. to that institution, may we know from the hon. Minister, the number of persons who are trained by this institution annually?

Mr Callichurn: I can circulate at a later stage. There are different departments and there are different courses; it's quite a lot

The Chairperson: Yes. You are doing a good job.

We move to page 383. Hon. Ms Tour!

Ms Tour: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 26323.027 – *Mauritius Institute of Training and Development (b) Equipment - Formation Professionnelle*, there is an amount of Rs4,700,000 yearly. May we know what is it about for the *Equipment - Formation Professionnelle*?

Mr Callichurn: Provision is made for the purchase of additional equipment for dispensing quality training in 16 different trades.

The Chairperson: Hon. Quirin!

Mr Quirin: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 26323.027 – *Mauritius Institute of Training and Development (c) Improvement/Refurbishment*, Rs4 m. was budgeted for last financial year. Can we have a breakdown of this amount, please?

Mr Callichurn: I need to get the information. I can circulate at a later stage.

The Chairperson: In the meantime, we then move unless you have some questions? No?

So, we now move to Sub-Head 17-106: Human Resource Development. It is on page 383. We have got 5 minutes for that.

Hon. Navarre-Marie!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 21110 - *Personal Emoluments*, could we know where matters stand regarding the Skills Development Authority voted in 2019 under the SDA Act because it is nowhere to be seen in the Budget?

Mr Callichurn: I know hon. Navarre-Marie asked a PQ on this issue. Well, you can still at a later stage put a PQ and I will come with the answer.

The Chairperson: Any other question?

So, you know when you don't have questions, I have the question.

Vote 17-1 Labour, Human Resource Development and Training (Rs 852,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(8.37 p.m.)

Vote 17-2 Commerce and Consumer Protection was called.

The Chairperson: Again we are going by Sub-Heading. We start by Sub-Head 17-201: General. We have got 5 minutes for this Sub-Heading which starts on page 390 and ends at 391.

Any questions on page 390?

Yes, hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Yes Item 21110.005 – *Extra Assistance*, may we have a list of the people who are getting paid under this item?

Mr Callichurn: Provision is made for the payment of basic salaries, salaries compensation, duty for the Advisor on Information Matters. The name of that person is Mr

Jean Francois Jerome Cossigny. He draws a basic salary of Rs67,600 as per the PRB Scale.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dhunoo!

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under same Item 21110.004 – *Allowances*, there has been an increase. Can the hon. Minister inform the House, why?

Mr Callichurn: The increase in provision is due to the salary increase of staff entitled for allowances.

The Chairperson: Any other question on this page? So, we move to 391. It seems that hon. Mrs Luchmun Roy has got one.

No, we are still under Sub-Heading 17-201.

So, we move to Sub-Head 17-202: Commerce and Trade Development. And we start with the hon. Mrs Luchmun Roy. We have 5 minutes.

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under Item 26313.008 – *Competition Commission*, can we have the composition of the Competition Commission and their allowances paid as well? Thank you.

Mr Callichurn: Yes –

- The Chairperson: Mr Mahmad Aleem Bocus;
- Vice-Chairperson: Mr Desiré Pierre Alberto Mariette;
- Commissioners –
 - (i) Mrs Vedwantee Bikhoo,
 - (ii) Mrs Sharda Devi Dindoyal,
 - (iii) Mr David Olivier Michael Cyril Lennon, and
- The Executive Director is Mr Deshmuk Kowlessur.

The Chairperson draws a monthly fee of Rs119,500 and the Vice-Chairperson: Rs88,250. As for the Commissioners: Rs66,050. They are all appointed for a period of five years.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Navarre-Marie!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Same Item 26313.008 – *Competition Commission*, Mr Chairperson, but now I would like to know the number of cases referred to the Commission and the number which have been settled.

Mr Callichurn: I am informed that from 2009 to June 2022, the Commission conducted some 335 enquiries and it is forecasted for this financial year to conduct another 20 enquiry.

64 investigations were conducted. Five market studies were conducted.

The Chairperson: Hon. Doolub!

Mr Doolub: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22060 – *Maintenance*, I note an increase of at least Rs1.2 m. for this item, can we have the reasons thereof?

Mr Callichurn: The increase in provision is to cater for the payment of minor repairs at the head office building.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Mr Chairperson, Item 22030 – *Rent*, may we have a breakdown on the rent, to whom it is paid?

Mr Callichurn: Rent is for office space at SICOM Tower, Ébène. The owner of the building is SICOM. Parking slots at the National Museum Port Louis.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dhunoo!

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under Item 22120 – *Fees*, can we have a breakdown from the hon. Minister?

Mr Callichurn: The payment of fees to members of the Departmental Bid Committee and the Bid Evaluation Committee: Rs100,000; training of officers: Rs500,000; fees to consultants: Rs500,000; refund of contributions to officers affiliated to professional body: Rs10,000; fees for inspection and audit for the legal metrology services payable to MAURITAS: Rs175,000; parking coupons at Rs5,000.

The Chairperson: Thank you, Minister. We now move to page 392. Hon. Ms Tour, you have got a question on that page?

Ms Tour: Yes. Item 31132.125 – *Computerisation of Legal Metrology Services*, I see a new budget allocated for the same. Can we have the details of this allocation?

Mr Callichurn: Provision is made for the installation of a new computerisation of the Legal Metrology Services estimated at around Rs19.5 m. by the Central Information Bureau. That is to develop and implement a new and fully computerised system with all required functionalities to streamline the business processes of the Legal Metrology Services.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. Hon. Dr. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: Item 31132.125 – *Computerisation of Legal Metrology Services*, do you know when tender will be called for this project? When?

Mr Callichurn: I don't have this information with me right now, but it will be done in due course.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. We now move to the last Sub-Head 17-203: Consumer Protection and Market Surveillance. We have got 10 minutes for this item. It is on page 392. Hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22120 – *Fees*, can we have a breakdown of this, please?

Mr Callichurn: Provision is made for the payment of fees to members of the Price Observatory Committee: Rs800,000 for this financial year. The Chairperson draws a monthly fee of Rs10,000 only and Members draw a membership fee of Rs5,000 monthly. The Secretary to the Committee gets Rs1,225 as fees.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms Tour!

Ms Tour: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22900.903 – *Awareness Campaign (Consumer Education)*, can we have the details of this campaign?

Mr Callichurn: Sensitisation campaign; awareness campaign; prepare, print and distribute pamphlets for consumers and relevant stakeholders; screen scroll on TV; clips for holistic consumer education. On the World Consumer Rights Day which is celebrated on 15 March, workshop and awareness campaign will be organised across the island in all regions to educate consumers on their rights and responsibilities. Booklets and files will also be prepared and distributed.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister.

Vote 17-2 Commerce and Consumer Protection (Rs205,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

The Chairperson: Hon. Members, I suspend the Sitting for one hour.

At 8.49 p.m., the Sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 10.02 p.m. with the Deputy Chairman of Committees in the Chair.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Please be seated.

(Ministry of Health and Wellness)

Vote 18-1 Ministry of Health and Wellness was called.

Again, we are going by sub-heads. We start by Sub-Head 18-101: General and we got five minutes. It starts at page 400 and ends at page 402. Hon. Dr. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson. Item 21110.004 –*Allowances*, I see that there is a substantial increase in respect of the allowance granted and if the Minister will be kind enough to tell us the allowances are due to what, whether there has been recruitment of new officers or whether there are advisors who were recruited and whether there is an increase in the wages given.

Dr. Jagutpal: Mr Chairperson, provision made to meet a payment of responsibility allowance, duty allowance, *ad hoc* allowance, driver's allowance. Increase in provision is due to actual disbursement and more officers becoming eligible as they progress on their salary scale.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. Hon. Lobine!

Mr Lobine: Thank you, Mr Chairperson, page 400, Item 21110.005 –*Extra Assistance*, there is a substantial increase in the budget, may we be provided with more information on *Extra Assistance*?

Dr. Jagutpal: Yes, Mr Chairperson, increase in provision is due to salaries paid to the Contract Officers as per PRB 2021 Report and recruitment of additional advisors for addictology and fertility clinic. I will give the names of the advisors –

- (vii) Dr. Catherine Gaud, Senior Advisor on Public Health matters;
- (ii) Dr. Nizam Fatehmamode, Advisor on Renal Transplant;
- (vii) Dr. Bundhoo, Advisor in Public Health and Primary Health Care;
- (iv) Mr Subdhan, Advisor in Bio Medical Engineer;
- (vii) Mr Palawan, Advisor in Andrology;
- (vi) Dr. Taukoor, Advisor in field of Addictology;
- (vii) Mr Tapessur, Advisor on Policy and Communication matters.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. We move to page 401. Hon. Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha!

Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha: Thank you, Item 25510.001 – *Medical Subsidies, Interest Subsidy on Medical Loans (Zero-Interest Medical Loan Scheme)*, can we know how many citizens have applied for this Scheme since its introduction?

Dr. Jagutpal: Mr Chairperson, as at date, two requests have been received by the Ministry from the State Bank of Mauritius for refund of interest on loans taken by individuals.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Ittoo, please!

Mr Ittoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson, Item 22130 – *Studies and Surveys, (d) Quality Assurance and Audit of Hospital Services*, there is a provision for Rs6 m. Can we know how this is going to be done and who is the service provider? Thank you.

Dr. Jagutpal: Mr Chairperson, facility assessment and clinical audit will be held at one specific hospital namely, Jeetoo Hospital by King's College UK and NHS Foundation Trust under the strategic Trade Partnership Agreement between Mauritius and the British High Commission. A first virtual meeting with the British High Commission and the Ministry of Finance has already been held.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Yes, thank you, Item 22120 – *Fees*, Rs8.5 m., can we have...

Dr. Jagutpal: The provision is for payment of fees for training of staff and fees to Chairperson and members of Boards and Committees. So, there are different departmental bid committees, 3 DBCs for drugs, Bid Evaluation Committee, Medical Disciplinary Tribunal, Dental Disciplinary Tribunal, Nursing Disciplinary Tribunal, Pharmacy Board, Ethics Committee and National Pharmacovigilance Committee, Clinical Research Regulatory Council.

The Chairperson: Thank you, we now move to page 402. Hon. Lobine!

Mr Lobine: Page 402, Item 26313.037 – *Mauritius Institute of Health*, may we be provided with detail with regards to the composition of this institute, with regards to its Chairperson, Board Members and their allowance and full package, please?

Dr. Jagutpal: Yes, there are 35 staffs who are employed at the MIH. I am tabling the list concerning the Chairperson and the members of the MIH Board.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. The time is over for this item. We now move to Sub-Head 18-102: Hospital and Specialised Services. We got 15 minutes for this sub-head and this starts at page 403, it goes up to page 405, up to the upper part. So, we have hon. Tour!

Ms Tour: Thank you, Mr Chairperson, Item 22120 – *Fees of which Transaction Advisor for Public Private Partnership Projects*, can the hon. Minister provide details on the fees allocated for this item?

Dr. Jagutpal: So, provision made for the payment of consultancy fees to the transaction advisor for the three BOT projects at Côte d’Or. The Project Unit and the MOFED have been contracted. So, the cumulative expenditure as at 19 May 2023 is Rs9,960,000.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: *Merci, M. le président, l’item 22070 – Cleaning Services*, we are asked to vote a sum of Rs131 m. for next year. *Vous savez que nous avons eu plusieurs plaintes ces jours-ci concernant les rats et les punaises dans nos hôpitaux. Je voudrais savoir si les services de nettoyage vont comprendre également la désinfection des punaises et des rats.*

Dr. Jagutpal: Mr Chairperson, this Item is provided for laundry services and cleaning of toilets, bathrooms sluices in the five regional hospitals and not provided for the *punaises* and all that.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Lobine!

Mr Lobine: Mr Chairperson, page 403 Item 21110.005 – *Extra Assistance*, may we be provided with the details with regard to the increase to Rs83 m. for this year?

Dr. Jagutpal: This is for the provision for payment of two advisors, three officers on contract against established post, that is, I will give you the details –

- (i) Dr. Kaizun, Advisor in breast services;
- (ii) Dr. Heetun, Advisor in Gastroenterology, and then

Officers on contract –

- (iii) Dr. May, Senior Specialist in Neurosurgery;
- (iv) Dr. Boodhoo, Senior Specialist in Neurosurgery;
- (v) Dr. Sitapa, Senior Specialist in Anesthesia.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Luchmun Roy!

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Thank you, Mr Chairperson, under Item 22140.005, *Medical Supplies, Drugs and Equipment, Medical Disposables and Minor Equipment*. Can the hon.

Minister provide further details pertaining to this Item? Item 22140.005 – *Medical Disposables and Minor Equipment*, there has been an increase.

Dr. Jagutpal: Provision is made for the purchase of surgical dressings, medical disposables such as syringes, gloves, masks, blood bags, medical gases, and minor surgical equipment such as pulse oximeter, stethoscope through competitive tendering. The increase is due to increase in prices and the trend of expenditure.

The Chairperson: Hon. Osman Mahomed.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22140.001 – *Medicine, Drugs and Vaccines of which Human Papillomavirus Vaccination Programme*, I see that last year there was no provision, is this a new programme and what are the target audience and the deployment plan? Because I see this year, it is beginning with Rs160 m. and scheduled over the next two years as well.

Dr. Jagutpal: Exactly, this is a new programme. Provision is made to pursue this vaccination for girls and to introduce vaccination for boys aged between 9 to 14 years. So, this is to introduce the vaccine for boys and the target would be some 80,000 children who would be vaccinated. I have a long list of details on this and I can forward it to you.

The Chairperson: Hon. R. Duval.

Mr R. Duval: Page 403, Item 22140.001 – *Medicine, Drugs and Vaccines*, can I have a breakdown about it?

Dr. Jagutpal: For this Item, provision is made for the purchase of drugs and vaccines through competitive tendering. Again, the main mode of procurement is Open National Bidding. I have a long list of different medications being purchased. So I think I will table the whole list comprising of some 161 items. It is good that I give the details of the different items being procured under this vote.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha.

Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha: It is on this Sub-Head 18-102 but it concerns the HR?

The Chairperson: We may come back to the HR later on if you want.

Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha: We never do it separately because it is on this sub-head.

The Chairperson: No, I give you the opportunity but you do not have questions.

Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha: But it is on this sub-head; the HR for this sub-head.

The Chairperson: Which Item?

Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha: Page 412, the HR for Hospital and Specialised Services.

The Chairperson: Which line you are talking of?

Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha: Item 50 – *Nursing Officer*, I can see the number of Nursing Officers under the Hospital and Specialised Services is being greatly reduced, a reduction of 118 Nursing Officers, can we know why?

Dr. Jagutpal: The Nursing Officers are first Trainee Nurses and you will see just after that, Trainee Nurse is 283. So, it means those Trainee Nurses will become Nursing Officers. So, we have to wait for three years until they become Nursing Officers that is why you will see there is a decrease of 118 in the number of Nursing Officers. Till the Trainee Nurses will become Nursing Officers, it will take maybe two more years.

The Chairperson: Hon. Abbas Mamode.

Mr Abbas Mamode: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22030 – *Rent*, there is a rise in value, can the Minister elaborate?

Dr. Jagutpal: The increase is due to renting of new buildings for warehousing at La Rosa and Health Office at Flacq, HR and Finance Cadre of Jeetoo Hospital.

The Chairperson: Thank you. We now move to page 404.

Mr Uteem: *3 paz nu ena. 15 minit sa, ena ankor letan.*

The Chairperson: *Ena 15 minit mais il y a trois pages.*

Mr Osman Mahomed: Item 31112.403 – *Upgrading of Hospitals (b) Dr. A. G Jeetoo Hospital*, we are being asked to vote for Rs8 m. this year and for the next few years even more. May I know from the hon. Minister the scope of work insofar as the upgrading for this hospital is concerned?

Dr. Jagutpal: The provision is for different upgrading works at Jeetoo Hospital –

- removal of termite infested partitions in H Block and Chemotherapy Ward;
- renovation of Physiotherapy Unit;
- partitioning works and internal painting at Physiotherapy Unit and Chemotherapy Ward;
- tiling of Wards 1-1, 1-2, 2-1, 2-3, 2-4, and 3-4, and also
- Chest Clinic, that is, water reticulation works.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Mayotte.

Mrs Mayotte: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 31112.403 – *Upgrading of Hospitals (h) Day Care Wards for Autistic Children*, can the hon. Minister give us more information on these Day Care Centres?

Dr. Jagutpal: The project will provide specific and specialised care to patients who are suffering from autism. The MNI has submitted the finalised drawings on 28 April. Following approval of drawings and funds, bidding documents will be prepared. So, this is where we stand as far as status of this project is concerned.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dr. Boolell.

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson. In respect of Item 31112.003 – *Construction/Extension of Hospitals of which (c) New Cancer Centre*, which has a project value of Rs1.5 billion. I see in respect of this year's estimate, there is a budgetary provision of Rs210 m. Now, can the hon. Minister apprise us as to when the contract was allocated, where does matter stand in respect of this Centre and when will it be operational if it is not operational?

Dr. Jagutpal: Mr Chairperson, the contract for the construction of the New Cancer Centre was awarded to Swadeshi Civil Constructions on 29 October 2018 for the contract value of around Rs1 billion. Construction works have been completed. Procurement of furniture and high-tech equipment, that is, radiology, radiotherapy, nuclear medicine is in progress. The project is funded under Saudi Fund for Development (SFD). I believe I have answered to all your questions.

Dr. Boolell: Yes.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ittoo.

Mr Ittoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under same Item 31112.003 – *Construction/Extension of Hospitals of which (e) Refurbishment of wards for New Out Patient Department at Victoria Hospital*, so, there was provision for project value of Rs101 m. Can we have an update on the progress and the status? Thank you.

Dr. Jagutpal: The contract for the refurbishment of the New OPD at Victoria Hospital was awarded two years back for the sum of around Rs56 m. Progress of works as at 31 May is 90%.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dhunoo.

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under same Item 31112.003 – *Construction/Extension of Hospitals of which (b) New Flacq Teaching Hospital (Phase 1)*, may we have the status of the project and the expected completion date?

Dr. Jagutpal: The physical completion of works as at 31 May this year is 70% and the building is expected to be completed by end of this year.

The Chairperson: We now move to page 405. Hon. Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha!

Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha: Item 31112.403 – *Upgrading of Hospitals (f) Brown Sequard Hospital*, can we have a status of the upgrade which is being done through this hospital please?

Dr. Jagutpal: Provision for different upgrading works comprising renovation of Wards 6 and old kitchen amount to Rs10,100,000.

The Chairperson: Time is over! So, we move now to Sub-Head 18-103: Primary Health Care and Public Health. We got 15 minutes. It starts at page 405 and ends at page 406. Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Item 22030 – *Rent*, there is quite a substantial increase from Rs9 m. to Rs12.4 m., may we know for which building these are referring to?

Dr. Jagutpal: Provision for rental of Health Offices and Community Health Centres: Rs12 m.; rental of parking slots for staff of Health Engineering Unit and Health Occupational Unit: Rs0.375 m.; rental of facilities for events in connection with action plans and sensitisation programme. The increase is due to relocation of the Community Health Facilities at Terre Rouge, Baie du Cap and Case Noyale.

The Chairperson: Hon. Lobine!

Mr Lobine: Yes, thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 405, under Recurrent Expenditure item 22090 – *Security*, there is an increase in the sum being provided. May we be provided with more details with regard to this item of security please?

Dr. Jagutpal: This provision is for payment of security services in Medi-clinics, Area Health Centres and some Community Health Centres. The increase is due to the coming into operation of new facilities at Pointe aux Sables, Grand Baie and Coromandel, including extended hours, similar to other Health Institution. That's why there is an increase in this value, Rs13 m.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Merci, item 22140.001 – *Medicine, Drugs and Vaccines*, le ministre est-il au courant qu'il y a en ce moment un manque de vaccins pour bébé, BCG, il me semble et nous dire si le budget fera provision pour cet item ?

Dr. Jagutpal: Yes, the procurement for BCG vaccine, Rotavirus vaccine, BCG vaccine different doses is covered under this item.

(Interruptions)

You can repeat your question. I will be...

An hon. Member: Repeat your answer!

Dr. Jagutpal: This item is for medicine, drugs and vaccine.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Exactly!

Dr. Jagutpal: Exactly! So, it is Rs72 m. and this is for the procurement of BCG vaccine, 10 to 20 doses vials with diluents, Rotavirus vaccine, live attenuated oral suspension with VVM, BCG vaccine 10 to 20 doses vials with diluents VVM plus 2 degrees and 8 degrees and then BCG vaccine.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: No comments on the answers please! Anyone has got any question of 405? Hon. Dr. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson. Now, the hon. Minister did give a comprehensive reply in relation to acquisition of medicine, drugs and vaccines for this item 22140.001 – *Medicine, Drugs and Vaccines*. Now can we know from the Minister who are the suppliers of these drugs? When was tender called for? I know it is a tedious exercise but if we can be given the appropriate reply in respect of suppliers of these Medicine, Drugs and Vaccines?

Dr. Jagutpal: So, it is for the four items that I described. It is a long list, so I will table it.

The Chairperson: Okay, hon. Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha!

Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha: Yes, it is again under the HR for this sub head, so it's on line 65 to 68 about the Rodent Control. I can see that the number of staff in Rodent Control has remained unchanged and hasn't increased and shouldn't it be increased as the problem of rodent in our health system is still a persisting one?

Dr. Jagutpal: The Rodent Control Exercise is being done on a contract out basis.

The Chairperson: We move to page 406. Hon. Ms Anquetil!

Ms Anquetil: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 31112.004 – *Construction of Area Health Centres (AHC) (a) Henrietta AHC*, can we know where matters stand please?

Dr. Jagutpal: Mr Chairperson, this project is funded by the Government of India. The design will be customised. The project is at design stage and under consultancy of HSCC. So, it is expected that contract will be awarded by end of this financial year or beginning of next year.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Dhunoo!

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under same item 31112.004 – *Construction of Area Health Centres (AHC) (e) Curepipe AHC*, may we know the status from the hon. Minister?

Dr. Jagutpal: Yes, this project is at tender stage.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Armance! 406!

Mr Armance: Item 31112.005 – *Construction of Community Health Centres (CHC) (d) Pointe Aux Sables CHC*, I can see there is an amount of Rs4.5 m. budgeted. Can we know what the sum is for as I understand the project has been completed last year?

Dr. Jagutpal: The contract value was Rs29.1 m. Now, provision has been made for retention money.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Mayotte!

Mrs Mayotte: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 31112.004 – *Construction of Area Health Centres (AHC) (g) Bambous AHC*, can the hon. Minister give us the status of this project please?

Dr. Jagutpal: Yes, procurement has been undertaken by Central Procurement Board. Notification for selected unsuccessful bidders has been issued on 05 June, one week back. Subject to no challenge, a letter of award will be issued by end of this month.

The Chairperson: Hon. R. Duval!

Mr R. Duval: Same Item 31112.004 – *Construction of Area Health Centres (AHC) (d) Plaine Magnien AHC*, can we have more details about the construction?

Dr. Jagutpal: This is under consultancy of HSCC. There would be a site visit conducted by my colleague Minister. It is planned by end of this month with all the

stakeholders prior to confirming the site. So, we are still confirming the site for this project.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms Tour!

Ms Tour: Thank you, Mr Chairperson, under the same Item 31112.405 – *Upgrading of Community Health Centres*, can we have the details of the Community Health Centres being upgraded for which a provision of Rs29 m. is allocated?

Dr. Jagutpal: The upgrading includes –

- waterproofing, flooring, minor repairs, finishing works, painting, electrical works, and plumbing at the Dr. A. G. Jeetoo Hospital; for all the AHCs, aluminium works at Dr. A.C. Quenum AHC and Dr. Bouloux AHC;
- for the SSRN Hospital region, again, electrical wiring, plumbing works, painting works, repair to leakages; provision for dumping sheds at Rivière du Rempart AHC;
- Dr. Bruno Cheong Hospital, the region: water proofing works and upgrading of kitchen and others at Montagne Blanche Area Health Centre;
- Nehru Hospital: the general paintings of all the Area Health Centres; aluminium works at Chemin Grenier and Rose Belle Area Health Centres, and
- the Region 5, that is the Victoria Hospital region: general paintings, tiling works and replacing of aluminium openings at Rose Hill and Castel Area Health Centres.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. Hon. Abbas Mamode you still got a question?

Mr Abbas Mamode: Yes, Item 31112.005 – *Construction of Community Health Centres (CHC) (b) Roche Bois CHC*, can the hon. Minister provide the percentage of works done?

Dr. Jagutpal: The construction started in June 2021. As at 30 April this year, the progress of works was at 14%. Due to poor performance of the contractor, the contract has been terminated. So, the Hospital Services Consultancy Ltd, the project management consultant, was requested to reassess the value of works yet to be completed following fresh bidding exercise that would be conducted obviously. This is in progress. To complete the project, the consultant is doing the work again.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ittoo!

Mr Ittoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. For Medi-Clinic of Grand Bois which is in Constituency of hon. Minister, under Item 31112.006 – *Construction of Mediclinics (f) Grand Bois Mediclinic*, there is Rs80.5 m. which is provisioned. Can we have a progress status and when this Medi-Clinic will be operational? Thank you.

Dr. Jagutpal: The progress of works as at 31 May is 30%. So, it is expected this project will be completed by next year.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. Hon. Mrs Luchmun Roy!

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under Item 31112.404 – *Upgrading of Area Health Centres*, an amount of Rs20 m. is being voted, can the hon. Minister table the list of Area Health Centres being upgraded? Thank you.

Dr. Jagutpal: Yes, I will table the list.

The Chairperson: Okay, thank you. We still got two minutes, so I will allow you a second question. You see how generous I am.

Mr Armance: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Same Item 31112.401 – *Upgrading of Health Offices*, Rs6 m., may we know where he intends to renovate Health Offices?

Dr. Jagutpal: This provision is for the upgrading of Government-owned Health Offices used by Public Health and Food Safety Inspectors around the island of Mauritius namely –

- Bambous;
- Mahebourg;
- Bel Air;
- SSRN Hospital;
- Vacoas;
- Curepipe;
- Communicable Disease Control Unit;
- Beau Bassin.

Works include –

- paintings;
- tiling;
- waterproofing;
- electrical wires installation, and
- air-conditioning works.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. We now move to the next Sub-Head 18-104: Treatment and Prevention of HIV, AIDS and Drug Abuse and it is only on one page 407. We got ten minutes for that. Hon. Ms Tour!

Ms Tour: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22140.001 – *Medicine, Drugs and Vaccines*, there is an increase, Rs30 m. earmarked for this item, can we have the details?

Dr. Jagutpal: Increase in provision is due to purchase of HIV Self-Testing Kits; HIV/Syphilis Combo Test and Paraphernalia kits. So, this is why there is an increase in this item.

The Chairperson: Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Thank you. Item 22900.982 – *Synthetic Drugs Prevention Programme*, may I ask the hon. Minister what is it about? Because we all know that the number of drug addicts with regard to synthetic drugs is on the rise. And based on this, I would like to know why is it that the figures keep remaining the same, is it working? What is the appreciation of the Minister on this? Thank you.

Dr. Jagutpal: The Synthetic Drugs Prevention Programme is made for sensitisation and awareness campaigns on synthetic and other drugs targeting mainly the youth in and out of schools as well as the community. The campaign comprises of a series of –

- video clips;
- sensitisation;
- through back of bus advertising;
- social media;
- TV and radio programmes.

These are the sensitisation programmes that will be conducted under this item.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms J. Bérenger!

Ms J. Bérenger: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22120 – *Fees of which Drug Offenders Administrative Panel*, can we know the composition of the panel and maybe how many cases have been considered?

Dr. Jagutpal: The composition of the panel is being finalised. So, soon the Board will be operational.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Mayotte!

Mrs Mayotte: Yes, Mr Chairperson. Item 22900.982 – *Synthetic Drugs Prevention Programme*, can the hon. Minister give us more details?

The Chairperson: He just provided that. Is there any additional information you want to provide on this?

Dr. Jagutpal: I have already given the information that I have on the prevention campaign.

The Chairperson: Hon. Yeung Sik Yuen!

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Item 22030 – *Rent*, can we know why there is a decrease?

Dr. Jagutpal: Provision is made for rental of buildings, Fooks House, Volcy Pougnet National Day Care Centre and the rental facilities of events. So here, the decrease is due to the possibility of housing the Drug Users Administrative Panel that will be soon operational within the MOH premises. That is why there is a decrease in the rent from Rs2.4 m. to Rs1.4 m.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dr. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson. In respect of Item 22900.915 – *Multi-sectoral Response to HIV/AIDS Programme*, with the same budgetary provision of Rs18 m., can the Minister apprise us as to targeting and reaching out and whether this programme is very effective because from information obtained, the incidence of HIV and AIDS is on the increase? So, can we be apprised as to how effective this programme is? Thank you very much.

Dr. Jagutpal: Mr Chairperson, I will give the information for the provision of this Rs18 m. So, this is for procurement of –

- (a) male condoms;
- (b) condom vending machines;
- (c) alcohol swabs;
- (d) methadone;
- (e) HIV Rapid Test;
- (f) CD4 reagents;
- (g) HIV self-test, and
- (h) viral loads.

And the activities in connection with the National Action Plan and Harm Reduction Strategies under the National Drug Control Master Plan, that is including the YEPAD, the

World AIDS Day and International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking. So, this budget is meant for all these activities and procurement.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Any other questions? Someone want a bonus? No. So, we move to the next Sub-Head 18-105: Prevention of Non-Communicable Diseases and Promotion of Quality of Life. It starts from the lower bottom part of page 407 and it ends at 408 and we have 10 minutes for this Sub Head. We start with hon. Lobine.

Mr Lobine: Page 408, Item 22130 – *Studies and Surveys*, there was a budgetary provision last year of Rs15 m. and then, we do not find any amount earmarked for this year. May we be given more information with regard to those studies and surveys, whether same have been carried out?

Dr. Jagutpal: Mr Chairperson, the item shifted to Sub-Head 18-101 under General Vote 22130. So, the studies and surveys where a provision of Rs12 m. has been made have moved to the other Sub-Head, that is why it is not present over here. It is meant for the NCD Survey and it is already completed. For the time being, the surveys have been shifted to the other surveys that will be done. Salt Intake Survey shifted to other items and under this item now there is no provision made.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Dr. Jagutpal. Hon. Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha!

Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha: Item 22900.903 – *Awareness and Sensitisation Campaign*, every year there is Rs20 m. earmarked for this item. Can we know what sort of campaign and what is the target audience of these campaigns, please?

Dr. Jagutpal: Provision is made for the payment of contract signed with the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation. The contract value is Rs20 m. yearly for two years. It is for 2023 and 2024.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Luchmun Roy!

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under Item 22030 – *Rent*, can the hon. Minister provide further information pertaining to the rent?

Dr. Jagutpal: Provision is made for –

- (i) rental of building - Health Promotion Shop, at Renganaden Seeneevassen Building;
- (ii) rental of vehicles in connection with NCD programmes and promotion of quality of life around the island;
- (iii) rental of facilities for events, and

- (iv) amenities in connection with activities organised to mark World Health Days, Cancer, TB, No Tobacco Day, Mental Day, Diabetes amongst others, to promote quality of life.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Dr. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson. In respect of Item 22900.903 – *Awareness and Sensitisation Campaign*, notwithstanding what the hon. Minister has stated, can he tell us what methods are being used to gauge outcome? Whether there is collaboration with the Institute of Health to ensure that studies are conducted, call it prospective and retrospective study? At least to have a clear understanding of where we are going and where we are heading and how well we are waging our sensitisation campaign to reach out and to have a better outreach. Thank you very much.

Dr. Jagutpal: Mr Chairperson, basically, the sensitisation campaign is being done through communication, that is, what stated I earlier, TV programmes and radio programmes. Essentially, it is meant for communicating to the public.

The Chairperson: Hon. Yeung Sik Yuen!

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Mr Chairperson. Item 22120 – *Fees*, can we have more details on the amount disbursed?

Dr. Jagutpal: Yes, provision is for payment of fees to freelance instructors –

- (a) Yoga;
- (b) physical exercise ;
- (c) aerobic, and
- (d) Tai Chi.

23 instructors were paid Rs260 per session for a total of 4,884 sessions from July 2022 to May 2023 reaching 74,156 participants.

The Chairperson: Thank you. You want a second question?

Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha: It is a question on Human Resources in general. I can see that there is a decrease in the total number of staff from 15,895 to 15,890, can we know the reason for this decrease, especially that it was announced in the Budget Speech that there will be an additional of 1,400 staff recruited this year?

Dr. Jagutpal: Mr Chairperson, there are many promotional posts. It all depends upon satisfying the criteria and how many can be promoted. As additional information,

there will be, of course, additional posts for those officers as a result of others going on retirement.

I will just give you brief figures that I have. 14,490 officers in post across all grades and, as mentioned in the Budget Speech, provision is made for the recruitment of 1,400 officers in all grades. The additional information I have is that the different grades are Doctors, Nurses, Pharmacists, Medical Laboratory Technologists, Minor and other Grades.

Obviously, with retirement, vacancies will be filled. But at the same time, for the promotional posts, if you do not satisfy the criteria for promotion, obviously, there will be a decrease at that higher end of the number of posts.

The Chairperson: I agree.

Vote 18-1 Ministry of Health and Wellness (Rs15,700,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(10.51 p.m.)

(Ministry of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping)

Vote 19-1 Blue Economy, Marine Resources and Shipping was called.

The Chairperson: So, again we are going by Sub-Head, we start by Sub-Head 19-101: General. It starts at page 424 and ends at 425 and we have five minutes. So, we start now. Hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Item 26323.040 – *Mauritius Oceanography Institute of which Acquisition of Oilmap and SARMAP Software (Funded by Australia)*, we voted a sum of Rs15.2 m. last year and we are asked to vote a sum of Rs10.8 m. for next year. Will the hon. Minister state when did the MOI lay its last Financial Statement in the National Assembly?

Mr Maudhoo: Mr Chairperson, in fact, this question was asked by hon. Ameer Meea last year during the budget, I think it was this time also. In fact, I know that at the MOI, the Accountant was suspended – there was a problem in 2017. In 2018, the MOI retained the services of one Mr R. V. K., Accountant at the Accountant-General for the preparation of the pending financial statements for 2016/17 to 2017/18. In fact, he did submit these two financial statements in July 2020.

Unfortunately, MOI and Mr R. V. K. could not ... there was a contention on the fees and then MOI re-advertised the post and recruited one Accountant. And again, unfortunately, after 3 months the Accountant has resigned. So, this post has been re-advertised and concurrently, the Ministry has already requested paid services of an Accountant from the Accountant-General and the Office of the Public Sector Governance for the preparation of the pending financial statement most urgently. So, we are still awaiting. I know there is an issue on that.

The Chairperson: Hon. Members, when we started the exercise yesterday, we mentioned about the time allocation and the protocol that we are going to use. So, please, stick to it. We are going by the headings but page by page. So, do not jump from one page to the other.

Mr Armance: For a matter of fairness, when Ministers take a long time for replies, would you be kind enough to allow us some more time?

The Chairperson: I am doing so. So, hon. Ms J. Bérenger, I understand you got a question on page 424? And which page?

Let's go to hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Thank you. On the same Item 26323.040 – *Mauritius Oceanography Institute of which Acquisition of Oilmap and SARMAP Software (Funded by Australia)*, couldn't the Ministry deploy...

Ms J. Bérenger: Mr Chairperson, it is not fair.

The Chairperson: Why is it not fair?

Ms J. Bérenger: Because I had a question under the same Item...

The Chairperson: It doesn't matter. You are two separate individuals. You are not attached together!

Ms J. Bérenger: Vous m'avez pris la parole pour donner ça à un autre député sous le même item !

The Chairperson: Vous allez repasser après ! On donne la chance aux autres.

Ms J. Bérenger : Mais je n'ai pas posé ma question, quelle chance j'ai eue là ?

The Chairperson: You cannot argue with me! Hon. Osman Mahomed, you have got the floor!

Mr Osman Mahomed: In a spirit of good governance, the Ministry could have deployed Finance Officer or an Accountant to do the accounting in the meantime so as...

The Chairperson: No, I cannot admit this question!

Hon. Tour!

Ms Tour: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 26323.040 – *Mauritius Oceanography Institute of which Acquisition of Oilmap and SARMAP Software (Funded by Australia)*, can we have some clarifications on the acquisition of the two software, that is, Oilmap and SARMAP? Can we get some details on these acquisitions of software?

Mr Maudhoo: In fact the Oilmap and SARMAP software is a funded project from Australia. It is the model which indicates the movement of oil over the surface of the sea. So, obviously, during oil spill events, the SARMAP is a model which can be used to execute search and rescue operations at sea. So, both models, be it the Oilmap or SARMAP, will use the same set of environment data. So this is under this project.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Ms J. Bérenger.

Ms J. Bérenger : Under the Item 26313.040 – *Mauritius Oceanography Institute*, peut-on savoir qui est à la tête de cette organisme et quelles sont ses qualifications et ses rémunérations ?

Mr Maudhoo : À la tête comme Directeur est Monsieur Marie, *l'acting Director*. Je n'ai pas ses qualifications avec moi. Je vais circuler.

The Chairperson: Hon. Duval!

Mr R. Duval: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 425, under Item 22120...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: No cross talking please! I am talking to both of you!

(Interruptions)

Ms J. Bérenger: Mr Chairperson, she accused me of bashing! Can she withdraw this please!

The Chairperson: That's why I said to avoid cross talking!

Ms J. Bérenger: Withdraw the word 'bashing' please!

The Chairperson: Is it a point of order?

Mr Maudhoo: Use your precious time to put questions!

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms Tour, did you utter that word?

Ms Tour: I didn't address the hon. Member; I was not talking to her!

The Chairperson: Okay.

Ms J. Bérenger: I was asking my question...

Ms Tour: I was not talking to you! I was not talking to you! If you feel...

She feels concerned about it?

(Interruptions)

Ms J. Bérenger: No, she must withdraw, Mr Chairperson!

Ms Tour: I was not talking to her, okay!

The Chairperson: Okay, hon. Ms Tour, even if it was not addressed to her, if you uttered that word in the Parliament, it is unparliamentary, so, please, withdraw that word.

Ms Tour: Okay, I withdraw. She feels concerned, I withdraw.

An hon. Member: *Perdi letan!*

Ms J. Bérenger: Unconditionally! Why is she ...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Let's not waste time!

(Interruptions)

An hon. Member: *Si to anvi al lakaz ale!*

Ms J. Bérenger: *Si to anvi al lakaz ale twa !*

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms Bérenger, that's why I said no cross talking! You accuse each other and then I have to rule on that. It's not fair. Please, have pity on me!

Mrs Luchmun Roy: I have a point of order!

The Chairperson: Yes? Let her have her point of order!

Mrs Luchmun Roy: On a point of order, the hon. Member said that you are allowing 'any one', we are not 'any one'; we are hon. Members! So, she has to know how to address us in this House! If she wants to go home, she can go home!

Ms J. Bérenger: I said you are allowing any remark!

The Chairperson: Hon. R. Duval, please continue!

Mr R. Duval: Page 425, under Item 22120.24 – *Fees icw Capacity Building Programme - Aquaculture (EU Funded)*, can we have more details about it?

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Silence, please!

Mr Maudhoo: Mr Chairperson, an amount of Rs6 m. has been allocated for innovative aquaculture under this budget. So, it is for purchase of aquaculture equipment, seawater pumps, customised containers, freshwater pumps, fibreglass and also laptops to replace the old outdated computers. So, this is for the Albion Fisheries Research Centre.

The Chairperson: We are already running short of time because of the disruption we had. Let's move to the other section.

Ms J. Bérenger: I didn't have the answer to my question...

The Chairperson: Are you addressing to the Chair? That's the only person you should be addressing to.

(Interruptions)

Silence please !

Ms J. Bérenger: À cause de toute cette altercation, je n'ai pas pu entendre la réponse du ministre à ma question sur les qualifications du président et ses rémunérations, s'il vous plait?

The Chairperson: The Minister will circulate these answers.

Let's move to the other section, Sub-Head 19-102: Shipping. We have got 10 minutes for that. It starts at page 426 and end on the upper part of page 427.

Mr David: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under Item 22090.007 – *Security, Maritime Communications Services*. I can see that we have an expenditure of Rs32 m. being earmarked for this coming year and that it was Rs30 m. for last year. Can I have a breakdown of these different services meant for maritime security communication?

Mr Maudhoo: Yes, Mr Chairperson. Mauritius is a party to the International Convention on Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) and as a contracting party, Mauritius has the duty to provide the Global Maritime Distress Safety System Services. So the Mauritius Telecom which has the necessary infrastructure and expertise is providing the service on behalf of the Government of Mauritius on a contractual basis. So, Mauritius Telecom is also providing maritime information on weather forecast, dissemination of distress messages, Navigational Ship Security Alert System, piracy information and safety

warnings to ships navigating in our territorial waters and EEZ zone on a 24/7 hour basis. In fact, this is mandatory as per the IMO with regard to maritime safety information.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Armanee!

Mr Armanee: Thank you, Mr Chairperson, Item 22090.006 – *Salvage assistance to vessels in Distress*, I can see that there is a sum of Rs500,000 that has been voted last year. I know it is a big sum but I still want to know how you spent this Rs500,000 last year. How much is spent in the sum that was allocated to you?

Mr Maudhoo: Mr Chairperson, this Rs500,000 is for salvage operation only for the initial cost to be incurred, the initial deployment cost, if any. But, for last year it is was Rs500,000 only but Rs500,000 is nothing for salvage operation.

The Chairperson: Hon. Minister, you have given your reply, no need for cross talking. Hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie, please!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Yes, thank you. Item 27210.009 – *Funeral Grants*, a very small pittance of Rs10,000 was voted last year and is being earmarked for this year and the following years. Could we have details on this item, the number of beneficiaries and other details?

Mr Maudhoo: It is under Fisherman Welfare Fund.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Yes, the details, the number of beneficiaries and amount given to each of them.

Mr Maudhoo: I will check it out, Mr Chairperson, but I will circulate this.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: *Enn serkey pa gagne ladan !*

Mr Maudhoo: Of course, I must circulate. I must check first.

The Chairperson: It is only Rs10,000.

(Interruptions)

Mr Maudhoo: But under this Item, this is the one payable to officers of the Ministry. This is not under the Fisherman Welfare Fund. Under this vote...

(Interruptions)

No body, only one! This one, only one has been paid to one officer...

Mrs Navarre-Marie: And next year there will be one only?

Mr Maudhoo: No, it is only one...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Hon. Navarre-Marie, only one question and the hon. Minister has not got a crystal ball to see the future! Hon. Luchmun Roy!

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Thank you, Mr Chairperson, under Item 28213.010 – *Transfers to Non-Financial Public Corporation, Mauritius Shipping Corporation Ltd*, can we have more details and if there is any breakdown that the hon. Minister can table to the House? We shall be grateful to have it, thank you.

Mr Maudhoo: Yes, in fact, Mr Chairperson, under this vote, we have allocated Rs5 m. with regard to freight charges for Rodriguans, means goods coming from Rodrigues to Mauritius, MSCL will not charge with regard to agricultural products or any products coming from Rodrigues. There is Rs5 m. to be financed through this budget measure to support the local industry. This has been waived and again, another Rs45 m. have been provided in total. Rs5 m., I said from Rodrigues to Mauritius and also from Mauritius to Rodrigues, there is a 20% Rebate Scheme with regard to freight charges that the Government provides to Mauritius Shipping to give the 20% rebate to exporters to Rodrigues.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Lobine!

Mr Lobine: Yes, thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 426 under Item 21110.005 –, *Extra Assistance*, can the hon. Minister provide us with more details with regards to the *Extra Assistance* component?

Mr Maudhoo: I think the same *Extra Assistance* with regard to the Advisor on Information Matters. Everywhere, it is the same provision. No, there are two *Extra Assistance*, this one is for the nautical surveyors, inspectors, marine engineers, marine surveyor and naval architect.

The Chairperson: You are talking of staff from your Ministry?

Mr Maudhoo: No, this *Extra Assistance* is provision for the post of Nautical Inspector.

The Chairperson: Post to be filled?

Mr Maudhoo: Yes.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dhunoo!

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson, under Vote Item 22070 –*Cleaning Services*, can we have the service provider and more details from the hon. Minister?

Mr Maudhoo: The service provider is Keepclean Ltd. for the ground floor of the LIC building. So, for wing A and B, Keepclean Ltd. and the total amount is as provided.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dr. Boolell.

Dr. Boolell: Thank you, Mr Chairperson, I will come back to Item 22090 – *Security and safety at sea* now, we know the budgetary provision which has been earmarked. Can I ask the Minister whether there is the required personnel and whether they are appropriately trained to manage all the services to ensure safety and security at sea?

Mr Maudhoo: In fact, the Shipping Division, it is not manned with regard to personnel. The Shipping Division is manned with all these equipment to alert the NCG.

Dr. Boolell: My question is whether they are trained personnel; properly trained?

Mr Maudhoo: Of course we have trained personnel in the Shipping Division.

Dr. Boolell: No.

The Chairperson: Okay, your answer is yes?

Mr Maudhoo: Not trained to assist but trained to trigger the alert.

Dr. Boolell: Okay. Thank you.

The Chairperson: We move to page 427. Hon. David!

Mr David: Thank you Mr Chairperson. Under Item 311132.123 – *Computerisation of Shipping Division*, I can see that this is a new expenditure from this new financial year for Rs 5 m. May I have some details behind this expenditure?

Mr Maudhoo: This is for the computerisation of the Shipping Division. They will automate four major activities with regard to registration of ships, survey, certification and assessment of seafarers. So, it is to launch a software with regard to computerisation of the Shipping Division.

The Chairperson: Time is over. We now move to the next sub-head, Sub-Head 19-103: Mauritius Maritime Training Academy and it is on page 427. We have only 5 minutes for this. Hon. Dr. Boolell.

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson. Under Capital Expenditure, Item 31113.413 – *Upgrading of Slipway/Jetty*, there is a budgetary provision, if the hon. Minister can update us as to the number of slipways and jetties which are going to be upgraded or constructed?

Mr Maudhoo: Mr Chairperson, under this Item, *Upgrading of Slipway/Jetty*, this is for the jetty at the FiTEC at Pointe aux Sables and also, for the lifeboat jetty which is used by the MMTA for training of seafarers, this is a specific slipway and jetty.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Item 21110.005 – *Extra Assistance*, last year a sum of Rs5 m. was voted and this year, we are asked to vote a sum of Rs3.7 m. Can we have more details on this extra assistance?

Mr Maudhoo: Mr Chairperson, this is for the resource persons that we normally take on contract: for trainer, for seamanship, lecturers in engineering field, for deck, maritime training officers, instructors. This is for service with regard to training of seafarers. So, it is for the resource persons.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Dhunoo.

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under Item 22120 – *Fees*, can we have a breakdown from the hon. Minister and to whom the fees have been paid?

Mr Maudhoo: Normally, for the fees, Mr Chairperson, for the professionals and academics per session it is Rs880; for degree holders it is Rs695; for the professional degree holders; it is Rs695; and other public officers.

The Chairperson: Hon. Minister, I think the question was to whom it is paid.

Mr Maudhoo: To resource persons that we take whenever there are courses to be delivered to seafarers.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Yeung Sik Yuen.

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22070 – *Cleaning Services*, I can see that there is an increase in the amount. Also, I would like to know who the service provider is.

Mr Maudhoo: The service provider is Mauriclean Ltd.

The Chairperson: Thank you.

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Mr Chairperson, I also asked why there is an increase.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Silence!

Mr Maudhoo: It is in line with the contract amount, that's it.

Vote 19-1 Blue Economy, Marine Resources and Shipping (Rs327,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(11.17 p.m.)

Vote 19-2 Fisheries was called.

The Chairperson: We have 10 minutes for this. We are going to Vote 19-201, Sub-Head: Fisheries Department. We are talking here of page 430 to page 433. We have 10 minutes. Hon. Dhunoo.

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under Item 21110.005 – *Extra Assistance*, may we have more details from the hon. Minister?

Mr Maudhoo: This extra assistance is for the Advisor on Welfare of education of fishers, skipper, deckhand and fishermen, motormen, technical and mechanical officers, fish boat inspector and second-hand fishing. It is all on contract officers.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie, your question is on page 430?

Mrs Navarre-Marie: No, 431.

The Chairperson: Any question on page 430?

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 26313.018 – *Fishermen Welfare Fund*, can we know from the Minister if this Fund is still operational?

Mr Maudhoo: Of course, it is still operational. Yes, it is.

The Chairperson: Hon. Abbas Mamode.

Mr Abbas Mamode: Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: *Fos!*

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie, you asked for a question, the Minister replied, and you cannot say '*fos*'.

Mr Maudhoo: The Fishermen Welfare Fund is still here.

An hon. Member: Withdraw!

The Chairperson: You cannot say '*fos*'. Withdraw with apology.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Can he please double-check his answer?

The Chairperson: You have to, first of all, withdraw what you said, the '*fos*'.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Okay.

The Chairperson: And then, apologise for that.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Yes, I withdraw. Can he please...

The Chairperson: And apologise.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: I apologise. Can he please...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: She does not need a lawyer, hon. Aadil Ameer Meea!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: ...check his answer?

The Chairperson: This question is not admissible. I already asked hon. Abbas Mamode.

Mr Abbas Mamode: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22120.024 – *Fees icw Capacity Building Programme (a) Training of new fishers*, can the hon. Minister enlighten the House about the money spent last year and give details for the sum of Rs5 m. earmarked for this financial year for training of fishermen?

Mr Maudhoo: Yes, Mr Chairperson with regard to training of new fishers, provision is made for payment of stipend of Rs650 daily to new fishers. It has been aligned with the Bad Weather Allowance. The number of fishers trained for 2022-2023 was 170 and the amount paid was Rs985,750. This provision is for training for 1,000 additional fishers licensed.

The Chairperson: Hon. David.

Mr David: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under item 26313.018 – *Fishermen Welfare Fund*, during this Financial Year 2022-2023, there was Rs8 m. earmarked. May I ask the hon. Minister to table the breakdown of the number of beneficiaries under the different welfare schemes with the corresponding quantum for the last financial year?

Mr Maudhoo: Okay, I will table.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Mrs Mayotte!

Mrs Mayotte: Thank you, Mr Chairperson! Still on item 26313.018 – *Fishermen Welfare Fund*, can the hon. Minister inform the House on why there has been an increase from Rs8 m. to Rs10.7 m. in the budget for this financial year? Thank you.

Mr Maudhoo: In fact, Mr Chairperson, all the scholarships to the children of fishermen's children and other schemes have been increased and a new computer scheme has been introduced to children of fishermen.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22120.024 – *Fees icw Capacity Building Programme (b) Sea Cucumber Project (Funded by Australia)*, can we have more information about this, what does it entail and how is it faring this programme because it started last financial year?

Mr Maudhoo: Yes, in fact it started well before, but the only problem was with COVID-19. In fact this was planned in 2019-2022, unfortunately because of COVID-19. There was prof. Southgate and this project is funded from Australia and there is an MoU with the Sunshine University. This has been re-actualised and now, it is planned for August 2023 till July 2026. It's a three year programme. All the equipment have already been sent to the AFRC. We are just awaiting the arrival of Prof. Southgate from Australia.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Let's move to page 432 under the same sub-heading. Hon. Lobine!

Mr Lobine: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 432 under Capital Expenditure, item 31112.032 – *Construction of Balaclava Marine Park Centre (EU funded)*, may we be updated as to where this project is, whether it has started?

Mr Maudhoo: No, Mr Chairperson. In fact, there is a swapping of land to be done with the Beach Authority and the request has been agreed. So, the pegging has already been done. We are awaiting the Minister of Housing to do this swapping with Beach Authority for us to go forward with the conception of planning.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Léopold!

Mr Léopold: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 28225.008 – *Off Lagoon Fishing Scheme (a) Purchase of Canotte (EU funded)*, can the hon. Minister inform the House whether this provision will be applied to Rodriguan fishers as well?

Mr Maudhoo: In fact, Mr Chairperson, the Rs4 m. which appears in the budget, is for Rodrigues; the transfer of funds to Rodrigues Regional Assembly for purchase of canottes for fishers of Rodrigues. For Mauritian fishermen, it will be funded by the National Resilience Fund. There is Rs26 m. under this item to fund our fishermen.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Mrs Mayotte!

Mrs Mayotte: Item 31112.009 – *Construction of Fish Landing Stations (a)Pointe aux Sables and (b)Bain des Dames*, can the hon. Minister inform the House on the construction of...

The Chairperson: It should be either (a) or (b).

Mrs Mayotte: Okay let's go for item 31112.009 – *Construction of Fish Landing Stations (a) Pointe aux Sables*. For the construction of fish landing station at Pointe aux Sables, please?

Mr Maudhoo: Yes, in fact, these two projects, Mr Chairperson, have been canvassed from my hon. good friend hon. Dorine. In fact, the two projects that we are working on, it is not like what was done before – two modern jetty, fish market, fish landing, everything and even the toilet so we are just awaiting for the budget to do the conception.

The Chairperson: We now move to page 433. Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Item 31132.801 – *Acquisition of Software - Electronic Catch Reporting System (EU funded)*, can we know more about this project because there is a fault of Rs25 m. here, EU funded?

Mr Maudhoo: Yes, the Electronic Catch Reporting System, Mr Chairperson, this is the project being implemented as the requirement of the European Union. So, this is the system, we call it the ERS System which provides real time data on catch effort of all license fishing vessels operating in our waters, this is a control measure. So the contract for the implementation of the project includes hardware, software, maintenance and training of staffs. This was awarded in February 2019 to a Company called *Collecte Localisation Satellites* of France for an amount of Rs10 m. So, the project is now on trial, now it is being tried on our vessels and the European Vessels and once the ERS Regulation will be passed through the State Law Office, it will be put under the license condition.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Ms J. Bérenger!

Ms J. Bérenger: Item 31112.442 – *Upgrading of Building (d) Historical Building at Poudre D'Or (EU funded)*, peut-on savoir en quoi consiste le *upgrading* de ce bâtiment et où en est le projet s'il vous plaît ?

Mr Maudhoo: M. le président, en fait dans le Poudre D'Or Fisheries Post, il y a un vieux bâtiment qui est en roches taillés, qui date de la coloniale, il n'y a pas le toit, c'est abandonné mais c'est *vested land from Housing to our Ministry*. So, we want to repair this building and give it for the women entrepreneur, just to attract the women to do training in the fishery sector, with regard to oyster training and other means, algae training for the ladies.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. We now move to sub head 19-202: Certification of Seafood Products for Exports: Competent Authority. We have 5 minutes for this sub heading, it's on page 434. Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Yes, thank you. Item 22120.028 – *Fees for Laboratory Test*, what type of test normally are we referring to here?

Mr Maudhoo: Mr Chairperson, in fact, this again, is for the competent authority. It is with regard to the EU conditions that all fishes that are exported to EU must go through test from QuantiLAB, outside laboratories, SGS. So, there are requirements which are under EU, so we have to go through these requirements.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dr. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: In respect of Capital Expenditure item 31121.801 – *Acquisition of Vehicles (EU funded)*, I see that EU is funding acquisition of vehicles, there is a provision of...

Mr Maudhoo: Mr Chairperson, it is the provision made for the procurement of a utility vehicle to allow officers of this competent authority to access remote areas across Island for inspection, fish farms etc. The EU has funded one vehicle for the ...

Dr. Boolell: Only one?

Mr Maudhoo: Only one.

The Chairperson: Anymore questions on this Sub Heading?

Vote 19-2 Fisheries (Rs471,500,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(11.32 p.m.)

(Ministry of Gender Equality and Family Welfare)

Vote 20-1 Gender Equality and Family Welfare was called.

The Chairperson: Again we are going by Sub Heading. We start by Sub-Head 20-101 – General which start at page 442 and ends at 443. Any question on page 442? No. So, we move to page 443. I see hon. Ms. Anquetil has a question.

Ms Anquetil: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22130 – *Studies and Surveys (b) Development of 10 year Strategic Plan for Children*, peut-on savoir qui sont les consultants qui ont été recrutés pour réaliser le *Strategic Plan for Children* ?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: This item relates to the development of a 10-year Strategic Plan for Children. Obviously, the consultancy has not yet been awarded, so, it is a process that is going to be launched very soon.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms J. Bérenger!

Ms J. Bérenger: Item 31132.120 – *Licensing and Monitoring Information System*, there was an amount of Rs1 m. for the last financial year. *Il n’y a pas de provision pour cette année et le Directeur de l’Audit avait beaucoup critiqué ce système en disant qu’il n’enregistre pas avec satisfaction les Child Day Care Centres. Peut-on savoir combien de Child Day Centres ont été enregistrés et est-ce que le fait qu’il n’y ait pas de provision pour l’année budgétaire à venir fait suite au critique du Directeur de l’Audit ?*

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Mr Chairperson, I will stick to the specific part of the hon. Member’s question because she has expanded her question so much. Concerning the Licencing and Monitoring Information System, yes it is true that the National Audit Report of 2021 had recommended for the implementation of the system but the total project cost has been estimated at Rs8 m. However, there had only been an amount of Rs1 m. that was supplied in the budget 2022-2023 and because of that reason, my Ministry is currently holding consultations with the EDB, the Economic Development Board, to integrate this component of the National Electronic Licencing System of the existing Mauritius Platform.

Ms J. Bérenger: Combien d’enregistrements ont été faits ?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: We haven’t yet had the module into the Mauritius Platform, we are holding consultations. I think I have made that very clear.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dr. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson. In respect of Item 22130 – *Studies and Surveys (c) Study on Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in the Republic of Mauritius*, can the hon. Minister apprise us as to where we stand in relation to the studies and surveys which are being conducted as to when these surveys and studies will be completed?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: It is the study on Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in the Republic of Mauritius. Mr Chairperson, provision is made for consultancy services for carrying out the study on commercial sexual exploitation of children in our country and the objective is obviously to have a comprehensive survey representative the entire country.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Thank you. Item 22120 – *Fees*, could we have a breakdown of expenses incurred last year and expenses to be incurred next year, please?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: It is quite an extensive table. I will circulate the details.

The Chairperson: Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: On that same question, I know the hon. Minister will table the paper but why is there a substantial increase for this year itself and then it is going to decrease in the next two years; from Rs1.2 m. to Rs2 m. and then subsequently to Rs1.5 m per year?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Mr Chairperson, there was the consultancy that was paid out for the feasibility study for a stand-alone building at the level of a place called Jemmapes in Port Louis. So, that feasibility report is now ready, it was submitted to my Ministry in May this year. Obviously, now that amount has already been exhausted.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Time is over. We move to other Sub Heading. Sub-Head 20-102 – Women's Empowerment and Gender Mainstreaming which starts at page 443 and ends at 444. We got 10 minutes for this item. Is there any question on page 443? No. So, we move to page 444. Hon. Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha!

Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha: Item 22900.014 – *Hospitalities and Ceremonies (c) Implementation of National Gender Policy*, I can see that this policy only came out last year and there is no provision made for the next financial year. Can we know why?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Mr Chairperson, this is being provided for under Item Gender Mainstreaming. So, it has just been moved under another Item.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Luchmun Roy!

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under Item 22120.008 – *Fees to Consultants - Updated Gender Country Profile (11th EDF)*, can we have more details with regard to this one? Thank you.

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Yes, Mr Chairperson, there was a report that was prepared in the past but now we need to have a refreshed exercise carried out to have a gender country profile which is a bit more specific to address the future actions which are set out by the European Union as well as our own Government's policy. So, that Item makes provision for this one.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms Anquetil!

Ms Anquetil: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22900.014 – *Hospitality and Ceremonies (c) Implementation of National Gender Policy*, on voit qu'une somme de R 500,000 a été votée pour l'année financière 2022-2023. Dans une réponse à ma PQ la semaine dernière, la ministre a parlé d'une série de recommandations. Peut-on savoir comment ces nombreuses recommandations seront implantées avec une somme limitée de R 500,000 ? Merci.

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Mr Chairperson, this is operationalisation and besides she has asked a PQ, she can refer to the answer I have provided in the PQ.

The Chairperson: I agree with you. Yes you can.

Ms J. Bérenger: Item 26313.067 – *National Women's Council*, on nous demande de voter une somme de R 97,400,000. La ministre peut-elle nous confirmer si le *National Women's Council* a déposé ses *financial statements* qui n'ont pas été fait selon le Directeur de l'audit depuis 2019 ?

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms J. Bérenger, I do not think your question is valid for this exercise. You can come with a PQ for this question.

Ms J. Bérenger: Un peu plus tôt, il y avait la même question d'un honorable collègue et ça été acceptée. C'est pour ça que je me permets de poser la question. Elle est d'accord de répondre.

The Chairperson: Even if she is agreeable to reply, I can't allow it.

Ms J. Bérenger: Mais la question a été posée plutôt, *Mr Chairperson*. Ce n'est pas correct que quelqu'un puisse poser et moi je ne peux pas.

The Chairperson: It's not on the same issue. Now you are asking whether the report had been submitted and so on and here...

Ms J. Bérenger: No, I am not asking for a report. I am asking for the financial statements of the Council.

The Chairperson: Yes.

Ms J. Bérenger: Est-ce que ça a été déposé ou pas ? Parce que ça n'a pas été depuis 2019.

The Chairperson: It has got nothing to do with the figures that you are called to vote.

Ms J. Bérenger: Mais c'est relié.

The Chairperson: It can be.

Ms J. Bérenger: Et la question a été autorisée plutôt.

The Chairperson: I can't allow it.

Ms J. Bérenger: La question a été autorisée plutôt, ce n'est pas *fair* du tout ce que vous faites!

The Chairperson: Will you please remove that word?

Ms J. Bérenger: Which one?

The Chairperson: That I am not fair on what I am doing.

Ms J. Bérenger: Mais c'est un fait. La question a été autorisée plutôt. La même question...

The Chairperson: It's not parliamentary towards the Chair to say such a word.

Ms J. Bérenger: *Okay*, je retire.

The Chairperson: And apologise please?

An hon. Member: *Apologise la kot sorti?*

Ms J. Bérenger: Apologise for what?

The Chairperson: And apologise for being rude!

Ms J. Bérenger: Is it in Standing Orders?

The Chairperson: Yes.

Ms J. Bérenger: Is it in Standing Orders that I should apologise?

The Chairperson: Yes, you should be apologising because you are treating me for being unfair, and I have been trying to be fair since the very start.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Withdraw is enough.

An hon. Member: You should withdraw the words towards the Chairperson.

Ms J. Bérenger: I already withdrew the word but I am not being unfair towards you.

The Chairperson: You have to apologise. You have to apologise because it's an allegation. I am trying to be fair; since yesterday I am being fair.

An hon. Member: *Kot ena pu apologise la?*

Ms J. Bérenger: *Depi kan...*

The Chairperson: You should apologise otherwise you withdraw from this House. You can come back after hon. Mrs Koonjoo-Shah has finished. Yes.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Item 28211.051 - *Women's Associations*, it used to be Rs2.1 m., now we are passing onto Rs1.6. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether there has been a reduction in the number of women associations being granted this fund and which one are they?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Mr Chairperson, the hon. Member is correct. There has been a decrease due to the fact that the number of registered associations has decreased to a certain number and that is following regulations that were put in place, and there was better filtering that happened with those registered associations.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Merci. Item 26313.067 - *National Women's Council*, on nous demande de voter le montant de R 97,400,000, je voudrais savoir quel le montant qui est alloué aux dépenses courantes à partir de ce budget, à partir de ce montant la ?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Mr Chairperson, it is Rs99,400 as it is written in the Estimates.

The Chairperson: She is talking of...

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: National Women's Council.

The Chairperson: 2023-2024, Rs97.4 m.

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Sorry, yes Rs97.4 m., my mistake. I was looking in the column next to it.

The Chairperson: Thank you.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: La question est : de ce montant-là, quel est le montant alloué aux dépenses courantes, c'est-à-dire salaire, etc. ?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Okay I do not have the breakdown of that.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: You do not have the breakdown.

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: I can table it at a later hour!

The Chairperson: Okay. Hon. Dr. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much. On the same item 26313.067 - *National Women's Council*, can the hon. Minister inform us as to who is the Chairperson and who are the members of the Council?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Mr Chairperson, I can circulate the composition of the Council.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha!

Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha: Yes, thank you. Item 31112.418 - *Upgrading of Women Centres*, can we know the number of woman centres and their location?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Yes, Mr Chairperson, I have the information and, again, it is a list and I am happy to circulate it to the attention of the House.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms Anquetil!

Ms Anquetil: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22900.903 - *Awareness Campaign*, can we know what will be the themes that will be addressed under the awareness campaign, please? Thank you.

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Yes, Mr Chairperson, there is a whole list of them, about gender concept, terminologies, gender responsive actions, women rights, sexual and reproductive health. I can table what I have right now and obviously the list is subject to be enhanced.

The Chairperson: Time is over! We move to the next sub-head, Sub-Head 20-103: Child Protection, Welfare and Development. It starts at page 445 and it ends at 446. 10 minutes for this sub-head. Hon. Ms Tour!

Ms Tour: Thank you Mr Chairperson. Item 31111.407 - *Upgrading of Shelters for Children*, can the hon. Minister explain the increase in estimates for the upgrading of shelters for children?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Mr Chairperson, provision has been made for the project preparation. We have a Creativity Centre which is located in Mahebourg. So, there are some renovation works and the assistance of a consultant has been enlisted to get the scope of work and an estimated cost of this project in particular. There are other repair works as well to be undertaken at 6 other Residential Care Institutions namely –

- La Cigogne;
- Pointe aux Sables, La Colombe;
- Refurbishment at Oasis Grande Rivière North West;
- Cap Malheureux;
- Notre Dame.

I can table the details thereof.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Yes, Item 26313.050 - *National Adoption Council*, could we have the composition of the Council and the fees drawn by the members?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Mr Chairperson, very happily, I will table that as well.

The Chairperson: Dr. hon. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson. Now, in respect of Item 22030 – *Rent*, I see that there is a relative increase in the rent, am I right?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Yes, Mr Chairperson, indeed the increase is due to the provision made for the rental of three additional outstations.

The Chairperson: Hon. Doolub!

Mr Doolub: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 27210.011 - *Foster Care*, I notice an increase in the budget allocated from Rs10 m. to Rs15 m., can we know the reasons for the increase? Thank you.

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Mr Chairperson, this relates to the foster care measure that was announced in the budget by the hon. Minister of Finance. The allowance payable to foster care parents has been revised from Rs8,000 to Rs12,000. With regard to children with special needs, provision has been made for an allowance of Rs15,000, and that's it.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha!

Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 26313.053 – *National Children's Council (b) Support to Child Day Care Centres Scheme*, may we know how many Child Day Care Centres are registered with her Ministry and how many have applied for the scheme?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: The grant itself, Mr Chairperson, is given to CDCCs which have never actually registered with the Ministry, so that they get the opportunity to upgrade infrastructure. Out of 65 CDCCs which were eligible for the grant, only 18 CDCCs have benefited from, out of which only eight have been able to register with the Ministry having come up to the required standards.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms Anquetil!

Ms Anquetil: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 31111.014 – *Construction of Residential Care Units – 'Family-like-Settings' (Project Preparation)*, can we know how many units will be constructed, please? Thank you.

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Mr Chairperson, provision has been made for the construction of five RCUs under the family-like-settings project with a view of setting up those kinds of structures to better meet the needs of our children.

The Chairperson: Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: The very last line, Item 31112.428 – *Upgrading of Creativity Centre at Mahebourg*, may I know how many inmates or people benefit from the services of the Creativity Centre there?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: I don't have the exact details of that, Mr Chairperson, but it is a structure, a facility that requires some proper renovation work, for example, fencing, roofing works and all that before it can accommodate bigger and better activities for our children. There are no inmates; nobody lives there.

Mr Osman Mahomed: There are children? It is meant for children?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Of course! Yes, it is for children.

The Chairperson: We now move to page 446.

We move to the next Sub-Head 20-104: Family Welfare and Protection from Gender-Based Violence. We have got 10 minutes for this. It is only one page – 446. Hon. Mrs Luchmun Roy!

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under Item 22900.908 – *Women & Children's Solidarity Programme (g) Mobile Application LESPWAR*, can the hon. Minister provide the figures of the number of people who have had access to the mobile app, if she can table the information or share it to the House? Thank you.

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Is there a specific period that the hon. Member wishes me to give the figures?

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Lockdown period?

The Chairperson: There were two lockdown periods.

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Let's take from 2020.

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Mr Chairperson, I have the figures from 2020 up-to-date, so, I will just circulate that table.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22900.908 – *Women & Children`s Solidarity Programme (d) Domestic Violence Information System (DOVIS)*, will the hon. Minister say whether the DOVIS is already operational?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Mr Chairperson, the DOVIS computerised system is already operational. In fact, it has also been deployed all the way to Rodrigues as well. So, it is fully operational.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms Anquetil!

Ms Anquetil: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22900.908 – *Women & Children`s Solidarity Programme (b) Assistance to Victims of Domestic Violence*, peut-on savoir quelle assistance qui a été mise en place pour la réhabilitation des agresseurs ?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Mr Chairperson, funds available under assistance to victims of domestic violence is a capitation grant to NGOs that provide temporary accommodation and there are various ways that support is provided to those victims and their children whether it is through provision of empowerment forces, or legal counsel, psychological and psychosocial support and so on and so forth.

The Chairperson: And that`s why that Rs4 m. is needed?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Yes!

The Chairperson: No more questions?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: In fact, it has been increased.

Ms Anquetil: Mr Chairperson, *ce n`est pas la question que j`ai demandée.*

The Chairperson: What was the question?

Ms Anquetil: Je peux répéter ? Ma question était : quelle assistance qui a été mise en place pour la réhabilitation des agresseurs ?

The Chairperson: Je crois que la question que vous avez posée n`est pas admissible.

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Which budget item number is she referring to?

The Chairperson: This question is not admissible. This is a policy matter. Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: At Item 22130 – *Studies and Surveys – Prevalence of GBV in Mauritius*, we are being asked to vote a sum of money when on the same page, we see that last year it has started a national strategy and action plan on gender-based violence.

Does it not tantamount to *doublon* because in order for you to prepare your strategy, you need the surveys, right? Or is it one should come before the other?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: The survey for the prevalence of GBV in Mauritius, Mr Chairperson, is actually one of the recommendations of the National Strategic and Action Plan for the High-Level Committee Action Plan for Elimination of GBV. It is one of the recommendations to go down to the grass root level and do a prevalence study to find out whether people at grass root level understand even the word 'gender'. So, it is actually a recommendation of that big strategic plan, if that makes sense to you.

The Chairperson: Dr. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson. On the same Item 22900.908 – *Women & Children`s Solidarity Programme (f) Information Education Communication Campaign*, in the light of what the hon. Minister said, how aggressive is this campaign? I know it started last year; is being waged in an aggressive manner to reach out to the population?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Very aggressive with the intention of...

Dr. Boolell: I know you are very aggressive, that I can tell.

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: No, no, I am referring to the campaign, Mr Chairperson. Come on, you know it's only love.

Very aggressive with the intention of... and even more so.

The Chairperson: Any more questions under this Sub-Head? No.

Vote 20-1 Gender Equality and Family Welfare (Rs545,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(00.01 a.m.)

Vote 20-2 Social Welfare and Community-Based Activities was called.

The Chairperson: We have only 5 minutes for this section. Vote 20-2, page 449 up to page 450. Any question on page 449 first? Okay, we move to page 450. Hon. Ms Anquetil, you got a question?

Ms Anquetil: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 26323.085 – *Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund of which (a) Upgrading works in Community Centres, peut-on savoir si la Résidence l'Oiseau Community Centre a été earmarked pour les upgrading works, s'il vous plaît? Merci.*

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: I do not actually find it in my list, whether it has been earmarked for a specific work in that specific centre but I will check and revert to you.

The Chairperson: Hon. Osman Mahomed.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 28211.022 – *Social Welfare Centres (b) Rehabilitation and manning of Social Welfare centres used as evacuee centres*, I see quite a hefty amount is being invested as from this year, Rs10 m. per year. May we know more about it?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: It is exactly that, Mr Chairperson, we use our centres as evacuee centres. There are some renovation works that have to be carried out like waterproofing works in various social welfare centres. So, it is exactly that.

Mr Osman Mahomed: One more question, Mr Chairperson, please. The Tranquebar Welfare Centre is a new one and it is leaking. Is it part of that list?

The Chairperson: It is not valid. Hon. Dhunoo.

Mr Dhunoo: Under same Item 28211.022 – *Social Welfare Centres (c) Others - Social Welfare Centres*, there is an amount of Rs5.5 m. that has been earmarked for 2023-2024. Can we know how this amount will be spent?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: In fact, this is provision for the day-to-day running. Previously, funding used to be lumped into one single item for clearer accountability but now it has been redistributed under the rehabilitation and manning of Social Welfare Centre.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Minister. Okay, I have 2 minutes. So, I am giving you the 2 minutes.

Ms Anquetil: *Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 28221.022 – Upgrading of Social Welfare Centres, est-ce que la ministre pourrait table la liste des social centres qui ont été upgraded pour l'année écoulée, s'il vous plaît. Merci.*

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Yes, I will look into the list and have it circulated to the attention of the Library.

The Chairperson: Thank you. We now move to page 451 and I think hon. Osman Mahomed has got a question on that. No. okay, thank you.

Vote 20-2 Social Welfare and Community-Based Activities (Rs401,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(12.06 a.m.)

(Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage)

Vote 21-1 Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage was called.

The Chairperson: So, we are going by sub-head, Sub-Head 21-101: General. We have 5 minutes for this item and it starts at page 456 and ends at 457. Any question on page 456? Page 457? Hon. Ms J. Bérenger.

Ms J. Bérenger: Item 21110.005 – *Extra Assistance*, can we have the list of the Advisors and their remuneration, please?

Mr Teeluck: Of course. As at now, there only one Advisor on Public Relation Matters and two need to be appointed. There is only one, Mr Ashwin Doorgachurn.

The Chairperson: So, we move to the next sub-head. Let me announce the sub-head and then you raise your hand otherwise you are creating confusion. Sub-Head 21-102: Promotion of Arts and Culture. We have 10 minutes for this sub-head and it starts at page 457 and ends at 459. Page 457, anyone?

Dr. Boolell: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22030 – *Rent*, I see there is a substantial increase, a budgetary provision of Rs28 m. has been made in relation to estimates for the Financial 2023-2024. Can the Minister apprise us as to how this money is being spent?

Mr Teeluck: Increase in provision is due to the rental of new building for the setting up of an Art Gallery which we do not have right now.

Dr. Boolell: The location has not been identified yet?

Mr Teeluck: No, this is what we will...

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms Tour.

Ms Tour: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22130 – *Studies and Surveys (b) Development of Cultural Indicators*, can we have some information on the development of Cultural Indicators?

Mr Teeluck: Provision is being made for the implementation of a framework for the development of cultural indicators for systemic cultural data collection with the support of UNESCO.

The Chairperson: Thank you. *Allez-y.*

Ms J. Bérenger: Item 22030 – *Rent*, there is an increase. Can we have a list of the buildings rented and their owners? *Et peut-on savoir s'il y a une intention de réduire les*

dépenses de location du ministère en prévoyant de louer des bâtiments qui ont déjà une importance historique ?

Mr Teeluck: Of course, it is always the intention of the Government to reduce expenses. There is a whole list of buildings being rented by different departments, so I will circulate the list.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Luchmun Roy.

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under Item 22130 – *Studies and Surveys (a) Strategic Plan for the Arts and Creative Sector*, can we know where matter stands? Thank you.

Mr Teeluck: Provision is being made for a study to be carried out - so, it is yet to be carried out - for the development of a long-term strategy and action plan to unlock the potential of the cultural and creative sectors with the Maurice Stratégie.

The Chairperson: Hon. David.

Mr David: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under Item 22120 – *Fees*, I can see that the expenditure is on a declining slope. Still, may I ask to whom and for what services are those fees being paid?

Mr Teeluck: Provision is being made for the payment of fees to Chairman and members of Departmental Bid Committees, Bid Evaluation Committees, Film Classification Board and Stage Play Censors Board and others. Also, tender consultancy services for the restructuring of MASA which has been launched recently through Opened Advertised Bidding.

The Chairperson: If you do not have any question on page 457...

Ms J. Bérenger: I have a question on that page.

The Chairperson: No, I have got a long list with me for the next page, so we give everyone the opportunity. Hon. Mrs Mayotte.

Mrs Mayotte: Merci, M. le président. Alors c'est l'Item 26313.044 – *Mauritius Society of Authors*, nous constatons que le budget cette année a été réduit. Je voudrais demander au ministre si ce budget prévu pour l'année financière comprend également les travaux de rénovations et d'entretien du bâtiment de la MASA ?

Mr Teeluck: Funds being allocated to MASA is generally for recurrent expenditure. So, when it comes to renovation works, it is *puisé des fonds* de la MASA.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms Tour.

Ms Tour: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 26313.101 – *Nelson Mandela Centre for African Culture Trust Fund*, there is an increase in the budget. Can we know why there is an increase?

Mr Teeluck: The increase in provision is to cater for payment of pension to staff of the Centre.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Osman Mahomed.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Item 26313.100 – *Islamic Cultural Centre for Hadjj Organisation*, can I ask the hon. Minister whether maintenance is part of it? I know it is for Hadjj organisation but I am not too sure where to get it because the Centre needs some renovation of late, is it being provided for somehow?

Mr Teeluck: For this year, they have only provided recurrent expenditure for the Islamic Cultural Centre Trust. Of course, it would have been in capital grant, which has not been provided for this year, maybe for the next financial year.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms J. Bérenger.

Ms J. Bérenger: Item 26313.106 – *Mauritian Cultural Centre Trust*, comme l'année précédente on nous demande de voter un budget de R 50 000 mais il me semble que ce *Mauritian Cultural Centre Trust* n'a jamais été opérationnel depuis la loi en 2001. Peut-on savoir où ça en est ?

Mr Teeluck: The Board is yet to be reconstituted. Just for the information, it was first constituted in 2001 and in February 2005, the Board was reconstituted for a period of three years. *Et par la suite*, the Chairperson resigned and since, reconstitution is pending.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Luchmun Roy.

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under Item 26313.163 – *Setting up of a Professional in the Arts Council*, can the hon. Minister provide further details with regard to this Arts Council, please?

Mr Teeluck: The Professional in the Arts Council will be set up following the enactment of the Status of the Artist Bill, which will be Act once voted, that would be an emanation of the Act of Parliament.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dr. Boolell.

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much, Sir. Item 28215.013 – *Assistance to Local Film Producers*, although there is no provision for next year's estimates, can the hon. Minister

apprise us as to where matters stand, because it seems that there is an early harvest, it started to pay dividends, as we say. So, if you can apprise us as to where matters stand.

Mr Teeluck: Actually, Mr Chairperson, no provision is made as the scheme is being funded under National Resilience Fund as from Financial Year 2023-2024.

The Chairperson: Hon. David.

Mr David: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under Item 28212.014 – *Financial Assistance to Artists (a) Scheme for Concerts, puis-je demander au ministre sur l'année financière écoulée, 2022-2023, combien d'artistes ont bénéficié de ce Scheme for Concerts ?*

Mr Teeluck: 11 beneficiaries have benefitted from the financial assistance to the tune Rs723,000 for the last financial year.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Merci. Item 28212.014 – *Financial Assistance to Artists (e) Artist Incubator Scheme*, can we have details on this scheme?

Mr Teeluck: The objective of the scheme is to enable emerging artists/ groups to write lyrics, compose music, produce a song and market their artistic work under the guidance of mentors. A call for application was launched on 10 February 2023 and 27 applications have been received. The screening exercise has been completed and 11 applicants have been selected. The mentoring will be carried out very shortly.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dhunoo.

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under Item 22900.924 – *Festival Mauricien*, can we have more details from the Minister?

Mr Teeluck: Provision is being made to meet part of the expenses incurred for the organisation of national festivals such as National Day Celebrations, Divali, Eid, Christmas, Spring Festival, Commemoration of the Arrival of Indentured Labourers and Abolition of Slavery. The increase which you might have noticed is to cater for increase in number of events and costs of services.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Time is over. We move to the other sub-head, Sub-Head 21-103: Preservation and Promotion of Heritage, which starts on page 459 and ends on page 460. We have 5 minutes for this sub-head. We start with hon. Mrs Luchmun Roy.

The Chairperson: We are still on page 459. Hon. Osman Mahomed, your question is on page 459?

Mr Osman Mahomed: Yes. Item 22030 – *Rent*, I see there is a substantial decrease in the rent. Is it because you are reducing on surface area of rented buildings? Is that correct?

Mr Teeluck: The decrease in provision is following a procurement exercise for the rental of an office space to house the National Archives Department and no responsive bid was received since the contract for construction of the National Archives and National Library Building at Réduit Triangle, Moka will shortly be awarded. This explains the reduction in the budget.

The Chairperson: Page 459?

Ms J. Bérenger: Under the Item 22040 – *Office Equipment and Furniture*, on nous demande de voter une somme de R 200 000 pour des *equipment*, est-ce que cela comprend des équipements pour combattre le trafic illicite d'objets d'importance culturelle ou, si non, sous quel item ça tombe, s'il vous plait ?

Mr Teeluck: *La rubrique est déjà* Office Equipment and Furniture, which means it is provision made for acquisition of office equipment and furniture. There is no specific provision to buy equipment *pour le vandalisme par rapport au patrimoine*. This is something that has to be taken up following the introduction, as I said in my budget speech, of the revised and revamped National Heritage.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Let's move page 460. Hon. Mrs Luchmun Roy.

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under Item 26313.001 – *Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund*, can we have the composition of the Trust Fund, the members in it? Thank you.

Mr Teeluck: The Chairperson is Mr Rishiraj Kanhye, drawing fees per month of amount Rs28,500; the Vice Chairperson is Mr Mukesh Jhummun who has recently resigned by the way; representatives of PMO; representatives of the Ministry of Finance; representatives of the Ministry of Arts and Culture; representatives of Ministry of Education; representatives of the Ministry of Tourism, representatives of Ministry...

I will table it. Yes. Thank you.

The Chairperson: Hon. R. Duval.

Mr R. Duval: Yes, page 460 under Item 26323.039 – *Mauritius Museums Council*, can we know why such a decrease in the budget allocated for the renovation of the museums?

Mr Teeluck: Of the Mahebourg Museum? Well actually contract was awarded to Pixel Creation Ltd on 12 August 2022 for a contract amount of Rs2,799,000 VAT exclusive. Due to some issues for which legal advice had to be sought, the contract has not yet been signed between the Ministry and Pixel Creation Ltd. The issues have now been cleared and the contract will be signed shortly. Provision, of course, is based on contract value and disbursement schedule.

The Chairperson: Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Okay. Item 31112.101 – *Construction of New Building for the National Archives and National Library*, can we have an update on this major project, please? Rs559 m.

Mr Teeluck: So, evaluation exercise has been completed and the Ministry is awaiting approval of Exim Bank of India because it follows a line of credit from Exim Bank to proceed further. Thereafter, once approval is obtained, Cabinet approval will be sought prior to awarding the contract for the construction of a new building for the National Archives and National Library.

The Chairperson: Time is over!

Vote 21-1 Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage (Rs 655,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(00.24 a.m.)

(Ministry of Public Service, Administrative and Institutional Reforms)

Vote 22-1 Ministry of Public Service, Administrative and Institutional Reforms was called.

The Chairperson: So, again, we will go by Sub-Heading. We start by Sub-Head 22-101: General. We have got 5 minutes for that. It starts at 477.

Any question on that page? No! 468?

Mr Osman Mahomed: Yes, 468. Page 468, Item 31112.058 – *Construction of Civil Service College*, Rs396 m. budgeted for it. Can we have an update on this project please?

Mr Hurdoyal: Yes, Mr Chairperson. Provision made to cater for construction of the Civil Service College at Le Réduit Triangle. The contract of the Civil Service College which comprises an academic block of 3,720 m² and an auditorium of 1,120 m² was

awarded in December 2021. Construction works started in January 2022 and is expected to be completed in December 2023.

As at 31 May 2023, the construction works for the academic block has reached a progress of 50% and that of the auditorium has reached a progress of 35%.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms J. Bérenger!

Ms J. Bérenger: Item 22900 – *Other Goods and Services*, can we have a breakdown please for the allocation of Rs500,000?

Mr Hurdoyal: It is provision made for payment of uniform allowance to eligible officers, hospitalities, and ceremonies, workshops, seminars and webinars. The increase in provision is based on the trend of expenditure.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dhunoo!

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Vote Item 22030 – *Rent*, can we have a breakdown from the hon. Minister please?

Mr Hurdoyal: Yes, Mr Chairperson. The Ministry is currently renting –

- 1) Ground floor, part of level 2, level 3 to 12 and 2 commercial spaces of a total of 5,574.5 m² at SICOM Building II for a monthly rent of Rs2,338,522.97 including VAT.
- 2) 507 m² at MPF Building to operate the correspondence Service, and
- 3) 5 parking slots at the Garden Tower due to limited space at SICOM Building II.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ameer Meea.

Mr Ameer Meea: Yes, Item 22060 – *Maintenance*, there is an amount of Rs610,000. May we have a breakdown of this figure?

Mr Hurdoyal: It is provision made for the maintenance of plant and equipment, vehicles, furniture and fittings and IT equipment. The present provision is based on the actual trend of expenditure.

The Chairperson: Time is over! We move to the next Sub-Head 22-102: Administrative Reforms in the Civil Service. This Sub-Head is at pages 468-469.

Hon. Ameer Meea.

Mr Ameer Meea: Item 22120 – *Fees*, there is an amount of Rs4 m. that has been budgeted. Can we have the breakdown of this figure?

Mr Hurdoyal: Yes, Mr Chairperson. Provision has been made for –

- 1) Payment to the Mauritius Standard Bureau for ISO certification of my Ministry.
- 2) Training of Public Officers on the implementation of CERT ...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Hon. Ameer Meea, you asked a question. The hon. Minister is replying and you are in conversation with your friend. That is not good. I know you are listening but please listen with due respect.

Mr Hurdoyal: Yes, Mr Chairperson. I continue.

- 3) Consultancy for the review of the Performance Management Process (PMS), and
- 4) Conduct of business processing, re-engineering BPR exercises at Ministries and Departments.

The Chairperson: Hon. David!

Mr David: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under Item 31132.111 – *E-Document Management System -Business Continuity Model*, I can see that this is a project for an expenditure of Rs30 m. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether this Management System is already in use?

Mr Hurdoyal: Mr Chairperson, I have to report to the House that the EDMS project is being implemented on a pilot basis at my Ministry and the exercise is being carried out by Leal Communications and is still on the pilot basis. If in case, it is successfully implemented, it will be rolled out in other Ministries and Departments.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Hon. Ms J. Bérenger!

Ms J. Bérenger: Item 22900.008 – *Medals, Prizes and Rewards*, the allocated budget has doubled. Can we know the reasons please?

Mr Hurdoyal: Yes, Mr Chairperson, provision has been made to cater for the payment of medals, prizes and rewards in connection with the Public Service Excellence Award Ceremony. The increase in provision is due to the fact that the next edition of the Public Service Excellence Award Competition will be open to parastatal bodies and also due to the rise in the cost.

The Chairperson: Thank you. Any other question on this Sub-Heading? Okay, you can have one.

Mr Ameer Meea: On page 469, I will come back to Item 31132.111 – *Intangible Fixed Assets (E-Document Management System - Business Continuity Model, Rs30 m. of project value, last year Rs18 m. budgeted and this year Rs9 m., can I ask the hon. Minister how much has been spent on this project up to now though it's on a pilot basis?*

Mr Hurdoyal: Yes, as I said earlier, Mr Chairperson, the Electronic Document Management System is financed by the UNDP and it is on a pilot basis. As soon as the project will be successfully implemented then it would be rolled out in other Ministries and Departments. So, the cost which has been incurred till now, I will table it as I don't have it right now. It is not only for the Electronic Document Management System, it is for the other two projects also which have been financed by the UNDP, it is for 8 Parliamentary EDMS at the National Assembly also and the automation of data capture process at the Registrar General's Department.

As I said, for the EDMS the contract was awarded by the UNDP in July 2022 and the project is expected to be completed by July 2023 and concerning for Parliamentary EDMS, the tender for the Parliamentary EDMS of the National Assembly was awarded by the UNDP to Harrel Mallac Technologies Ltd in July 2022 but we will table the breakdown of the cost but it is financed by the UNDP.

The Chairperson: Okay, hon. Minister, time is over. Let us move to Sub-Head 22-103 – Capacity Building in the Civil Service. Again we have five minutes, it starts at page 469 and ends at page 470. Any question on page 469? 470 ok.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Thank you, on top of the page Item 22120.039 – *Fees of which Continuous Professional Development for Civil Servants, Rs13.5 m. of which Rs11 m. will be for Continuous Professional Development for Civil Servants. So, there is a difference of Rs2.5 m. I understood the Rs11 m. but the Rs2.5 m. what is it for?*

Mr Hurdoyal: Mr Chairperson, the increase in provision is to cater for more training of public officers across Ministries and Departments and also for training of the remaining Ministries on business continuity plan.

The Chairperson: Thank you. So, no question on Sub Head 22-103. We move to Sub-Head 22-104 – Human Resource Management in the Civil Service, we have five minutes for this Sub Head and it is on page 470. So, let us start with hon Ms J. Bérenger!

Ms J. Bérenger: Item 26313.075 – *Public Officers' Welfare Council*, can we know the composition of this Council and how many times did they meet?

Mr Hurdoyal: Mr Chairperson, actually the Chairperson is Mr Mulloo. Do you want to have all the list of members? I can table it. Yes, I will table it.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dr. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson, I refer the Minister to Item 22060.005 – *Maintenance of which IT Equipment*, I see that the Rs22 m. has been budgeted for in the Estimates for Financial Year 2023-2024. Can the Minister apprise us as to whom the contract of maintenance has been and when was the tender called for if any?

Mr Hurdoyal: Provision is made for the maintenance of plant and IT equipment and furniture. The Item provides for the payment of –

- Maintenance and Support Services Fees for the Electronic Attendance Systems and the Electronic Time Recorders deployed in all Ministries and Departments;
- the Computerised Registry System;
- Maintenance of 12 Uninterruptible Power Supplies to ensure the functioning of the network of the Ministry and the development of the e-HR System across Ministries and Departments.

Do you want to have the breakdown details. Mr Chairperson, I can table it. It's a long list for the breakdown.

The Chairperson: Okay, we have understood the hon. Minister. Any more question on this Sub Head? So, we move to the last one Sub-Head 22-105 – Occupational Safety and Health and it is on page 471 and we got five minutes for this Sub Head. Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Last one for the road, the last line. Item 22900.934 – *Enhancement of Work Environment in the Civil Service*, how did you spend that Rs4.5 m. last year?

Mr Hurdoyal: Yes, Mr Chairperson, good question, I think it's the last for this budget. Definitely, I can tell you that the request and demand for enhancement of work environment programme, it's more than what we were expecting. In fact, we exceeded the budget that we were allocated and I can table the list, we have nearly approved 166 projects for this financial year.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms J. Bérenger! You have the privilege to have the last question!

Ms J Bérenger: Okay, if you want. Item 22/20 – *Fees*, can we have a breakdown, please? Thank you.

Mr Hurdoyal: Mr Chairperson, I feel privileged. It's provision made for training of public officers on occupational safety matters in compliance with safety and health norms of the OSH Act. The provision has been increased to cater for more training sessions. Thank you.

The Chairperson: Thank you. No other questions

Vote 22-1 Ministry of Public Service, Administrative and Institutional Reforms (Rs471,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Hon. Members the Committee of Supply for the Estimates is over. I thank you all for your collaboration, your cooperation. So, now I put the final question.

The Estimates 2023-2024 & Indicative Estimates 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 were considered and agreed to.

The Appropriation (2023-2024) Bill (No. IX of 2023) was considered and agreed to.

The Chairperson: Hon. Members, the Speaker will now resume the Chair.

At this stage, Mr Speaker took the Chair.

Mr Speaker: Please be seated! Hon. Nuckcheddy!

On the Assembly resuming with Mr Speaker in the Chair, the Deputy Chairperson of Committees reported accordingly.

The Deputy Chairperson of Committees: Hon. Members, I have to report to the House that the Estimates of Expenditure 2023-2024 & Indicative Estimates 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 and the Appropriation (2023-2024) Bill (No. IX of 2023) have passed the Committee of Supply without amendment.

Mr Speaker: Thank you, hon. Member.

Adjournment of the House!

ADJOURNMENT

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Tuesday 20 June 2023 at 11.30 a.m.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Mr Speaker: The House stands adjourned.

At 00.44 p.m., the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday 20 June 2023 at 11.30 a.m.