No. 24 of 2020

REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS

SEVENTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENTARY

DEBATES

(HANSARD)

(UNREVISED)

FIRST SESSION

TUESDAY 07 JULY 2020

CONTENTS

PAPERS LAID

QUESTIONS ***(Oral)***

MOTION

BILLS ***(Public)***

ADJOURNMENT

QUESTIONS ***(Written)***

THE CABINET

(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	Minister of Land Transport and Light Rail
Dr. the Hon. Renganaden Padayachy	Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development
Hon. Nandcoomar Bodha, GCSK	Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade
Hon. Mrs Fazila Jeewa-Daureeawoo, 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. Yogida Sawmynaden	Minister of Commerce and Consumer

	Protection
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
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

Mr Speaker	Hon. Sooroojdev Phokeer, GOSK
Deputy Speaker	Hon. Mohammud Zahid Nazurally
Deputy Chairperson of Committees	Hon. Sanjit Kumar Nuckcheddy
Clerk of the National Assembly	Lotun, Mrs Bibi Safeena
Adviser	Dowlutta, Mr Ram Ranjit
Deputy Clerk	Ramchurn, Ms Urmeelah Devi
Clerk Assistant	Gopall, Mr Navin
Clerk Assistant	Seetul, Ms Darshinee
Hansard Editor	Jankee, Mrs Chitra
Parliamentary Librarian and Information Officer	Jeewoonarain, Ms Prittydevi
Serjeant-at-Arms	Pannoo, Mr Vinod

MAURITIUS

Seventh National Assembly

FIRST SESSION

Debate No. 24 of 2020

Sitting of Tuesday 07 July 2020

The Assembly met in the Assembly House, Port Louis, at 11.30 a.m.

The National Anthem was played

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

PAPERS LAID

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

A. **Prime Minister's Office**

Ministry of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications

Ministry for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity

Certificate of Urgency in respect of the Finance (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill (No. VII o 2020). (In Original)

B. **Ministry of Housing and Land Use Planning**
Ministry of Tourism

The Beach Authority (Traders' Licence) (Amendment) Regulations 2020. (Government Notice No. 139 of 2020)

C. **Ministry of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management**

(a) The District Council of Savanne (Fair) (Amendment) Regulations 2020. (Government Notice No. 140 of 2020)

(b) The Municipal Town Council of Beau Bassin Rose Hill (Fees, Dues and other charges for classified trade) (Revocation) Regulations 2019. (Government Notice No. 143 of 2020)

D. **Ministry of Land Transport and Light Rail**

(a) The Road Traffic (Amendment) Regulations 2020 (Government Notice No. 137 of 2020)

(b) The Road Traffic (Examination of Motor Vehicles and Trailers) (Amendment) Regulations 2020. (Government Notice No. 141 of 2020)

E. Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development

(a) Loan Agreement between Government and Standard Chartered Bank (Singapore) Limited. (In Original)

(b) The Statutory Bodies (Accounts and Audit) (Extension of Time during COVID-19 period) Regulations 2020. (Government Notice No. 146 of 2020)

(c) The *Institution Agréées* (Amendment) Regulations 2020. (Government Notice No. 147 of 2020)

F. Ministry of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity

The Social Integration and Empowerment (Child Allowance Scheme) (Amendment) Regulations 2020. (Government Notice No. 144 of 2020)

G. Attorney General
Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security

The Annual Report 2013 of the Vallée d'Osterlog Endemic Garden Foundation.

H. Ministry of Commerce and Consumer Protection

(a) The Consumer Protection (Importation and Sale of Second-hand Motor Vehicles) (Amendment) Regulations 2020. (Government Notice No. 142 of 2020)

(b) The Consumer Protection (Control of Imports) (Amendment) Regulations 2020. (Government Notice No. 145 of 2020)

I. Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation

The Financial Statements of the Trust Fund for Excellence in Sports for the year ended 30 June 2019.

J. Ministry of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping

The Fisheries and Marine Resources (Fishing of Octopus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020. (Government Notice No. 138 of 2020)

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY - IMPLEMENTATION

The Leader of the Opposition (Dr. A. Boolell) *(by Private Notice)* asked the Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change whether, in regard to the elaboration of a Solid Waste Management Strategy, he will state where matters stand, indicating the expected date of implementation thereof and the measures his Ministry proposes to take to encourage –

(a) segregation of waste at source, and

(b) local authorities to carry out composting of market waste.

Mr Ramano: Mr Speaker, Sir, the quantities of wastes have been increasing at an annual rate of nearly 2.8% last year only, a total amount of around 540,000 tonnes of wastes were disposed at Mare Chicose landfill. Over-reliance on the landfill is not sustainable.

In that respect, Government has initiated, with the assistance of the *Agence Française de Développement*, the elaboration of a Waste Management Strategy. I have to inform the House that, in 2017, a consultancy study for the development of a new Solid Waste Management Strategy and Action Plan for Mauritius with focus on resource recovery and recycling.

The study, which aims at maximising resource recovery and recycling while also tapping the energy recovery potential from wastes, started in March 2017 and the Consultants submitted the Strategy and Action Plan in December 2017 (as part of Phase 1 of the Consultancy study) following two workshops and several meetings which were held with key stakeholders. The Strategy and Action Plan essentially focussed on domestic wastes and comprised the following five Strategic Areas –

- Prevention and Environmentally Responsible Consumption;
- Increase of Resource Recovery;
- Provision of Adequate Technologies for Energy Recovery from Waste;
- Provision of Adequate Disposal Infrastructure, and
- Information, Education and Communication.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in August 2019, Government further set up an Inter-Ministerial Committee under the Chairmanship of the hon. Prime Minister to review policies pertaining to solid waste management in Mauritius. To assist the Inter-Ministerial Committee, a Technical Committee was set up to study all reports pertaining to solid waste management in Mauritius and proposed concrete recommendations on the way forward. The Technical Committee has submitted its technical report in December 2019 and is currently under consideration.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in December 2019, my Ministry further organised "*Les Assises de l'Environnement*" as part of a nationwide consultative process and the following recommendations were made by participants on solid waste management –

- Need for an Integrated National Solid Waste Management Strategy with clear vision, objectives and targets, which is visible and known to everyone;
- Reducing reliance on landfilling and shifting from a linear economy to a circular economy through the setting up of civic amenity centres, commonly known as *déchetteries* at the level of Local Authorities for the collection of bulky wastes, including e-wastes, construction waste, demolition debris, setting up of material recovery facilities (MRFs) and composting plants.
- Also, following the assize, it was recommended the promulgation of regulations for the segregation wastes at source.
- Also, the introduction of the Extended Producer Responsibility, commonly known in French as *responsabilité élargie des producteurs* with a new

approach to manage waste streams such as electrical and electronic wastes.

- Implementing deposit-refund schemes for other waste streams such as aluminium cans and other types of plastics.

Resource recovery and recycling is the cornerstone of our Strategic Plan based on the above three reports taking into consideration that the major fraction of domestic and commercial wastes is organic nature and the remaining being potentially recyclable.

With regard to implementation of segregation of wastes at source, it is to be noted that provision has been made in the Budget 2020/2021 for the setting up of a network of civic amenity centres, *déchetteries,* at the five transfer stations on a first stage basis.

It is to be highlighted that a Civic Amenity Centre, *déchetteries,* is a facility whereby households can dispose of specific wastes that are normally not collected by Local Authorities. The Civic Amenity Centres consist of containers/bays for temporary storage of different sorted waste fractions before recyclers come and collect the waste materials for further processing. The wastes that may be accepted at the Civic Amenity Centres include E-wastes, bulky wastes, wood wastes, waste oils, batteries, paint containers and textile wastes, amongst others.

This is the first step towards segregation at source.

With the setting up of Civic Amenity Centres, the issue of illegal dumping will be reduced while the materials disposed at these facilities may be reused or recycled in line with the concept of circular economy. As a first step, five Civic Amenity Centres are being constructed at the 5 transfer stations and 5 additional Civic Amenity Centres will be constructed in a near future near populated regions. The potential sites for the 5 Civic Amenity Centres outside transfer stations are being identified. It is to be noted that a Civic Amenity Centre, *déchetterie,* is currently under construction at La Chaumière transfer station and will be commissioned by September 2020. The contract for another one at La Laura transfer station has just been awarded. Procurement exercise for setting up of Civic Amenity Centres within Roche Bois and Poudre d'Or transfer stations will start soon. A Consultant is being recruited for the design of a Civic Amenity Centre at La Brasserie.

Furthermore, to enable the proper functioning of the Civic Amenity Centres, amendments to the Local Government (Dumping & Waste Carriers) Regulations 2003 will be brought to enable households to bring their bulky wastes to the Civic Amenity Centres.

As regards dry wastes, provision has been made in the Budget 2020/2021 for a feasibility study to be conducted on the construction and operation of sorting units on a Private Public Partnership basis.

Mr Speaker Sir, it is to be highlighted that to sustain the recycling industry and ensure a high quality of waste materials to the recyclers, waste segregation at source is fundamental. With source segregation, the recyclables are not contaminated and will be eventually easier for the recyclers to handle and recycle into new products. Waste segregation at source entails the provision of two bins to households. One bin will be used for storage of wet wastes, (organic wastes) and one bin for dry wastes (recyclables such as paper, plastics, glass, metals). Once sorted, the wastes will be collected separately and the organic wastes will be diverted to a composting plant and the recyclables to a sorting unit for separation of the different recyclable fractions prior to sale to recyclers. The measures required for the implementation of source segregation of wastes are as follows –

- Acquisition of bins.
- Distribution of bins and sensitisation by Local Authorities.
- Amendments to Local Government Act and by-laws to waste segregation at source.

With regard to part (a), Mr Speaker, Sir, of the question, a Consultant will be appointed in this financial year to prepare Bidding Documents on a PPP basis for the design, construction and operation of the sorting units and compost plants in pilot regions.

With regard to part (b) of the question, provision of Rs5 m. has been made under the National Environment Fund in the Budget 2020/2021. With this initiative, the green waste generated at some markets will be diverted from the transfer stations. Collaboration with Local Authorities is being worked out with regard to identification of suitable plots of land prior to its implementation. The Ministry of Local Government has several consultations with Local Authorities in view of the implementation of the composting of market wastes at their level.

As the Minister responsible for Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change, my endeavour is to develop a strategy for solid waste management in line with Sustainable Development Goal 12, which promotes sustainable consumption and reduction.

M. le président, je souhaite aussi faire mention que, sur une base annuelle, environ 125 millions de bouteilles en PET sont mises sur le marché mauricien, représentant 2,500 tonnes par an de plastique. A ce jour, seulement 40% de bouteilles en PET sont collectées chaque année pour le recyclage, soit environ 1,000 à 1,125 tonnes par année.

Permettez-moi de souligner quelques mesures, rapidement, prises par mon ministère au cours de ces dernières années en ce qui concerne le contrôle des déchets plastiques -

- La promulgation des règlements sur l'interdiction d'importer, de fabriquer, de vendre et de distribuer certains sacs en plastique à partir de janvier 2016. Là, je dois dire que nous sommes dans un stage de finalisation en ce qui concerne la promulgation des *regulations* en ce qui concerne les sacs en plastique et aussi les *single-use plastics.*
- Deuxième mesure, l'augmentation du *refund* accordé aux fabricants locaux de R 5 à R 15 par kilo de bouteilles PET usagées comme préconisé dans le Budget 2018-2019.
- L'introduction d'un *excise duty* de R 2 pour les *takeaways* (assiettes, bols, tasses, plateaux, en plastique à usage unique non biodégradables) à partir de février 2019.
- L'installation des *Eco bins* pour la collecte des bouteilles en PET dans douze collectivités locales et dans 57 *Social Welfare Centres* à travers le pays.

M. le président, avec toutes ces mesures, quand même un changement de mentalité des commerçants, des consommateurs et des fabricants est important. Et là, je dois dire qu'en ce qui concerne le pays, nous avons constaté la fabrication de plus de 52 millions de sacs biodégradables et compostables à Maurice. Nous sommes en train d'encourager la fabrication des sacs biodégradables. En ce qui concerne les sacs en plastique, les PET *bottles,* le plastique à usage unique, les règlements entreront en vigueur dans les jours qui suivent.

Je vous remercie.

Dr. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, I thank the hon. Minister for his rather lengthy reply. Now, I am sure the whole country wants to walk the talk of the Minister and we don't want to arrest at waste stage. Now, can I ask the hon. Minister - and I will come specifically on the segregation of waste at source - how many tonnes of market waste, does he expect the local authorities to compost per day during this year?

Mr Ramano: M. le président, le ministre du *Local Government* a déjà eu des réunions de travail avec les différentes collectivités locales. Pas plus tard qu'hier, le ministre a eu une réunion de travail, et là, nous avons des soumissions du *District Council* de Moka et aussi une soumission du *District Council* de Pamplemousses, à titre d'exemple. Donc, en ce qui concerne le *District Council* de Moka, mention a été faite que les *waste* qui sont acheminés à la Brasserie Transfer Station pour être ensuite acheminés vers Mare Chicose, sont environ 442 tonnes de *green waste*. Donc, il y a un gros volume qui est généré chaque année en ce qui concerne les *market waste*, mais je dois préciser que l'idée du gouvernement, c'est de diminuer la pression qui existe sur le centre de transfert à Mare Chicose. Nous sommes en train de considérer les *waste* qui sont générés par les différents marchés, gérés par les collectivités locales, mais le ministère de l'Environnement travaille en collaboration avec le ministère du *Local Govenment*, pour qu'on puisse aussi englober les différents *parks and gardens* et aussi les différents *playgrounds*, les *football playgrounds* surtout. Parce qu'en ce qui concerne le *green waste*, il y a pas mal de *waste* qui sont générés par les *parks and gardens*, le *green waste* et aussi, par les terrains de foot, etc. Donc, il y a lieu que nous puissions considérer tout cela pour que nous puissions diminuer la pression en ce qui concerne le *green waste*. Et dans les 540,000 tonnes de déchets qui sont générés chaque année, les techniciens du ministère de l'Environnement ont considéré que, environ 50% à 60% de ces déchets sont composés de déchets organiques.

Dr. Boolell: Can I ask a specific question? Now, I want to know from the hon. Minister where will this amount be composted?

Mr Ramano: Donc, comme je l'ai dit, le ministère du *Local Government* a déjà eu une séance de travail avec les différentes collectivités locales. Ils sont en train de *devise* un plan. Le plan, ils vont voir à leur niveau, est-ce qu'il y a lieu de regrouper les collectivités locales ou bien, selon le volume qui est généré par chaque collectivité locale, selon le volume, il y a lieu aussi qu'ils puissent prévoir leur propre *compost* plan. Mais c'est un plan qui est en train d'être élaboré par le ministère de *Local Government* en collaboration avec les différentes collectivités locales.

Dr. Boolell: Basically what the Minister has said that there is no specific compost assigned. Now, I will come to plastic waste. How many tonnes of plastic waste does he expect will be segregated per day during this financial year, and equally for green waste?

Mr Ramano: Les chiffres sont alarmants, M. le président, je l'ai mentionné. Sur une base annuelle, il y a environ 125 millions de bouteilles en PET qui sont mises sur le marché mauricien, représentant environ 2,500 tonnes par an de plastique. Et, à ce jour, seulement environ 40% de bouteilles en PET sont collectées chaque année pour le recyclage, soit environ 1,000 à 1,125 tonnes par année. Des déchets plastiques, il y a lieu aussi de considérer, il n'y a pas seulement les bouteilles en PET, il y les sacs en plastique, il y a aussi ce qu'on appelle le *'single use plastic'*.

Donc, avec votre permission, M. le président, je souhaite aussi apporter une réponse supplémentaire qui ne fait pas partie de la question de l'honorable Leader de l'Opposition, c'est que valeur du jour, en ce qui concerne les nouveaux règlements, en ce qui concerne les PET *bottles*, il existe déjà les règlements en ce qui concerne les *beverages*, PET *bottles/beverages*. Mais, en ce qui concerne les autres, tels que les condiments, les bouteilles pour la cuisine, le siaw, les sauces à l'ail, etc, toutes ces bouteilles, malheureusement, il n'y pas de règlement tel quel pour toutes ces bouteilles. Donc, le ministère de l'Environnement est en train de travailler sur des règlements en ce qui concerne l'utilisation et aussi les déchets concernant ces PET *bottles*. Et là, nous venons de l'avant avec des règlements pour pouvoir englober toutes ces bouteilles et aussi mettre devant leurs responsabilités ces importateurs pour qu'ils puissent aussi venir de l'avant avec un plan pour récupérer leurs bouteilles. En ce qui concerne les déchets plastiques, nous sommes en train de finaliser les *regulations* en ce qui concerne le '*single use plastic'*. Nous avons identifié 10 items dans un premier temps en ce qui concerne le '*single use plastic'*. Il y va des verres en plastique, les plats en plastique, les couteaux en plastique, les fourchettes, les *takeaways*, etc. et là, il y a lieu qu'on puisse finaliser cette liste de 10 items. Donc, nous venons de l'avant avec l'interdiction de cette première liste de 10 items. Mais nous sommes en train de travailler en collaboration avec *Business Mauritius*, nous sommes en train de travailler aussi en collaboration avec la Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie parce que nous ne sommes pas en train de venir imposer un quelconque mesure. Nous sommes en train de le faire en collaboration avec les différents opérateurs économiques. Donc, il y a eu des représentations à travers *Business Mauritius*, il y a eu des représentations aussi à travers la Chambre de Commerce pour qu'on puisse venir de l'avant avec un moratoire pour que les opérateurs qui ont déjà un certain stock de ces matériaux puissent écouler ces produits sur le marché local. Je peux dire, M. le président, que les *regulations* vont prévoir un moratoire de six mois pour permettre à tous les

opérateurs de pouvoir écouler leurs produits avant que ces *regulations* puissent entrer en vigueur.

Dr. Boolell: Now, does the hon. Minister agree that the first phase is to prepare a memorandum and submit it to Cabinet? Can I ask him whether this is the first time that a Solid Waste Management Strategy will be submitted to Cabinet or this has been done before in respect of a previous one which was presented to the National Environment Commission? Is he aware of this?

Mr Ramano: Donc, les renseignements que j'ai, M. le président, dans ma réponse initiale, j'ai mentionné deux comités principaux. Il y a le premier comité en ce qui concerne *le Solid Waste Management Strategy and Action Plan for Mauritius*. Selon les renseignements qui m'ont été proposés, il y a eu l'*Elaboration of Waste Management Strategy en 2017,* ensuite il y a eu l'*Interministerial Committee*, toujours en ce qui concerne le *Solid Waste Management*. Aux environs de l'année 2000 il y a eu le Fisher Report. Il y a eu aussi en 2005, le Carl Bro Report.

Dr. Boolell: The hon. Minister should know that this is *déjà vu, déjà entendu.* Is he aware that in respect of his best endeavour, it is very unlikely that his project will go ahead, because of a Waste to Energy Project which will cost around Rs3.5 billion to Rs4 billion and this is the stumbling block? And is he aware that there has been extension of this bid for the construction of the Waste to Energy Project since 2016?

Mr Ramano: M. le président, nous sommes en train de passer d'une économie linéaire à une économie circulaire. Laissez-moi dire quelques mots en ce qui concerne l'économie linéaire et l'économie circulaire. L'économie linéaire, M. le président, c'est tout simplement collecter des déchets enfouis à Mare Chicose. Avant c'était collecter pour bruler. Ça c'était l'économie linéaire. Là, nous sommes en train de préconiser, à travers le budget, l'introduction de l'économie circulaire. Qu'est-ce qu'on est en train de dire, M. le président ? C'est que nous ne sommes pas en train de considérer un produit juste en ce qui concerne les bénéfices qu'on peut tirer en ce qui concerne le *normal life cycle* d'un produit. Ce qu'on est en train de dire c'est qu'à la fin du *life to life cycle* d'un produit, on va se servir de ce produit-là comme intrant pour la production d'autres produits. C'est ça l'économie circulaire, M. le président. Protéger l'environnement, adopter le principe de *reuse* et aussi le *recycle*.

M. le président, ce que nous sommes en train de préconiser aujourd'hui, nous sommes en train de favoriser la protection de l'environnement, nous sommes en train de venir de l'avant avec des projets qui soient en conformité avec la protection des normes environnementales. Et là, je peux dire que, en ce qui concerne le *Waste to Energy*, aucun *tender* n'a été alloué jusqu'à présent. Il y a, bien sûr, eu le lancement des *tenders*, etc., mais je peux dire, au niveau du *CEB*, il n'y a pas eu l'allocation d'aucun *tender* en ce qui concerne le *Waste to Energy*. Mais, M. le président, la philosophie du gouvernement a été clairement stipulée dans le présent budget. La philosophie du gouvernement, c'est de préconiser l'économie circulaire et nous considérons que le compostage, le recyclage, le *reuse* fait partie de notre priorité, et là, les termes du budget, les provisions budgétaires qui sont prévues ici, font clairement mention de cette philosophie et aussi de ce plan de travail, M. le président.

Dr. Boolell: I will come back to the - the Minister has agreed that there has been extension of the bid and that there are ongoing discussions in respect of the Waste to Energy Project. Of course, to a large extent that was the baby of the former Deputy Prime Minister.

Now, let me come back, to put your best endeavour and to do what your objective is and which was highlighted in the *Assises de l'Environnement*, we are all in favour of reducing, reusing, recycling and recover, but, you have to make sure that you have the volume, the waste. Now, is he aware, and I will ask the Minister, that if he wants to implement what has been spelt out in the *Assises de l'Environnement*, in relation to management of solid waste, can he say to the House and to the country that this Government is going to put an end to the Waste Energy Incineration Project?

Mr Ramano: M. le président, je pense que j'ai été clair dans ma réponse. M. le président, c'est vrai les recommandations des Assises de l'Environnement poussent dans la direction de l'économie circulaire. L'honorable Leader de l'Opposition a parfaitement raison de dire que pour que nous puissions encourager le privé pour s'intéresser à tout ce projet d'économie circulaire, la question de volume est très importante. Donc, ce qui est très important aussi, M. le président, ce que nous sommes en train de faire, actuellement, au niveau du ministère de l'Environnement, c'est de travailler sur tout le territoire mauricien et venir de l'avant avec des *compost plants* et aussi des centres de tri. Que ce soit les *compost plants*, que ce soit les centres de tri, ce qui est important, M. le président, pour que les projets soient viables, ce que nous puissions assurer le volume aux opérateurs privés. C'est ce que

nous sommes en train de faire et non pas tuer le projet dans l'œuf. Ce qui est important, aujourd'hui, c'est de s'assurer que le volume qu'on est en train d'allouer, secteur par secteur sur une base territoriale, soit viable pour les opérateurs privés. C'est la raison principale, et nous, nous considérons aujourd'hui, M. le président, avec l'introduction de l'économie circulaire, le traitement des déchets, le *management of solid waste* constituera un pilier économique pour le pays et nous sommes convaincus là-dessus, M. le président.

Dr. Boolell: We are convinced 'subject that'. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether his Government will entertain a politics of contradiction or will put an end to the Waste Energy Incineration Project, which was the pet project of the former Deputy Prime Minister to the cost of Rs4 billion? Will he tell the House that he is going to put an end to this project if he wants to save what has been spelt out at the *Assises de l'Environnement* in respect of reduction, reuse, recycling and recover? Besides, I am sure he is aware that there is a comprehensive recycling programme which was established by the 3C Committee.

Mr Ramano: M. le président, à force de me répéter, je dirais la même chose, c'est que l'intention du gouvernement a été clairement stipulée dans le budget. Nous allons de l'avant avec l'économie circulaire, et ce que j'ai mentionné dans ma réponse aujourd'hui, fait partie de la stratégie du gouvernement.

Dr. Boolell: Can I ask the hon. Minister again, if he is for circular economy - a comprehensive clinic, what we call a 'Centralised Clinic Coordination Programme' which is part of what has been spelt out at the *Assises de l'environnement.* He needs waste; he needs to make sure that there is segregation at source. And can he give firm guarantee to the House that no waste will be given to CEB? I want to hear it from him.

Mr Ramano: M. le président, j'ai été très sobre dans ma réponse, mais permettez-moi de rappeler au Leader de l'Opposition une chose.

Dr. Boolell: *Ayo, ki to pou rapelle moi!*

(Interruptions)

Mr Ramano: La vérité fait toujours mal, M. le président, mais laissez-moi lui rappeler une chose. En novembre 2008, M. le président, qui était au pouvoir?

(Interruptions)

Quel gouvernement qui était au pouvoir en novembre 2008, M. le président? *An Indicative Terms Sheet was entered into and then the Ministry of Local Government and Gama-Civic Limited to negotiate, agree and execute a waste supply agreement*, et c'était principalement pour l'utilisation de 300,000 tonnes par année de *combined Waste to Energy.* Quel comble, M. le président ! Le même Leader de l'Opposition qui fait partie - enfin, je pense, fait partie de son parti - avec un Leader à la tête de 2005 à 2014, qui est venu de l'avant avec un projet de *Waste to Energy* avec la compagnie Gama-Civic, aujourd'hui clame haut et fort sa contradiction par rapport à la politique. Mais si je ne me trompe, M. le président, le Leader de l'Opposition faisait partie du gouvernement à cette époque. Donc, il ne peut pas, aujourd'hui, plaider l'ignorance de la chose, le *Waste to Energy* faisait partie de la priorité du gouvernement du Parti travailliste, sous l'honorable Navin Ramgoolam, M. le président.

Mr Speaker: Last question!

Dr. Boolell: Except that there is a vast difference between them and us. The project was never implemented and they are going to implement the Waste to Energy Project. So, can I appeal to this Government, on behalf of the nation, to set aside this Waste to Energy Incineration Plant, it's a killer and it's a killer which we don't want to have in this country.

Mr Ramano: M. le président, ce gouvernement *means business*.

(Interruptions)

Ce gouvernement est en train de mettre les termes au-devant pour qu'on puisse venir de l'avant avec un plan d'ensemble pour le *Waste Management.* Nous n'allons sûrement pas commettre les mêmes erreurs du gouvernement du passé, en ce qui concerne les contrats à gauche et à droite, pour favoriser les petits copains, comme cela a été le cas en 2008.

Ce que nous sommes en train de faire, M. le président, c'est un plan dans la transparence, un plan pour la protection de l'environnement, un plan qui fait la part belle à l'économie circulaire.

Merci, M. le président.

Mr Speaker: Time is over! Prime Minister's Question Time!

The Table has been advised that PQ B/214 has been withdrawn.

Hon. Dr. Aumeer!

WHEEL LOADER - COCAINE - SEIZURE

(No. B/207) Dr. F. Aumeer (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity whether, in regard to the seizure of 95 kgs of heroin found in a wheel loader on 10 July 2019, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to where matters stand as to the inquiry initiated thereinto.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I shall reply to PQs B/207, B/208, B/211 and B/215 together as they relate to the same subject matter.

I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that on Wednesday 10 July 2019 at 1620 hours, following the request of the Service Manager of Scomat Ltd located at Grewals Lane, Pailles, a team from the Anti-Drug and Smuggling Unit (ADSU) proceeded to the location of the said company. The ADSU Officers were informed by the Manager of the company that on the same day at around 1530 hours whilst the employees were inspecting the engine of a wheel loader imported by the company from Brazil, they found three black kit bags which were concealed in the engine compartment near the exhaust muffler of the said vehicle. The bags were handed over for safekeeping to the store supervisor, who, whilst checking the three kit bags, came across several rectangular parcels each containing suspicious substances.

The three bags were handed over to ADSU Officers who opened them in the presence of the employees present at that moment and the contents thereof were suspected to be dangerous drugs. An enquiry into the matter was immediately initiated by the ADSU and the exhibits were secured and sent to the Forensic Science Laboratory for examination.

In the course of the enquiry, the three bags were found to contain a total amount of 92.5 kgs (including also the wrappings) of dangerous drugs suspected to be cocaine.

To date, statements from sixteen persons have been recorded in connection with the case. No arrest has been effected so far.

In accordance with section 41(4) of the Dangerous Drugs Act 2000, a person is deemed to be a drug trafficker where the street value of the drugs exceeds one million rupees. Accordingly, a drug trafficking investigation has been initiated and is ongoing. It involves international ramifications; hence, the enquiry is complex and time-consuming.

As regards part (a) of the Question B/211, there has been exchange of information between ADSU and foreign authorities concerned with a view to obtaining relevant inputs for the progress of the investigation. As this investigation is still in progress, any disclosure of information pertaining thereto can be highly prejudicial to the case.

Concerning part (b) of the same Question, the responsibility for the examination and scanning of such types of consignment or equipment devolves upon the Customs Department of the Mauritius Revenue Authority. The examination, scanning and search of such types of consignments are based on risk management which is automated on pre-set selectivity criteria and also on intelligence and profiling.

I am informed by the Customs Department that since 11 July 2019 to 02 July 2020, 273 such types of equipment have been imported. All such types of equipment are, without exception, subject to sniffing by narcotics sniffer dogs; out of which 79 have also been scanned, 68 have been subject to physical examination and 35 have been scanned and examined. Nothing incriminating has been found in these types of equipment.

Whenever ADSU has credible and reliable information based on intelligence and profiling about suspected consignments, the collaboration of the Customs Anti-Narcotics Section of the MRA is sought.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to reiterate once more the unflinching commitment of my Government in the fight against drug trafficking.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Dr. Aumeer!

Dr. Aumeer: Thank you Prime Minister for your reply. Can you let us know whether from the ADSU point of view any action has been taken to ensure that the 92.5 kgs of so-called cocaine that is being securely kept in the Exhibit Room of the Headquarters of ADSU together with relevant information regarding weights prior and after being sent to the FSL, so that it does not suffer the fate of the 16 kgs of drugs that disappeared in thin air and needed a Fact- Finding Committee to elucidate it very recently?

The Prime Minister: Well, I cannot say what fate this seized amount of suspected drugs will have, but what I can say is that I am informed that the FSL is carrying out its analysis, and I am told that its report is not yet ready, and that this will be ready in the very near future, and that same will be submitted to the Police.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Abbas Mamode!

Mr Abbas Mamode: Is the Prime Minister satisfied with the time being taken in this particular case and what are the measures taken so that this type of transaction does not occur again because it was not the Police or the Customs who discovered the drugs, but the workers of Scomat?

The Prime Minister: Well, I cannot judge on the issue of time taken. Police has its own way of conducting an enquiry, and especially when the fact that such amount has been seized coming from abroad through this wheel loader, and there are, as I have stated in my answer, international ramifications obviously. So, there is communication between the Police authorities and the foreign authorities in order to establish and to try to find out how this amount of suspected drug has come to Mauritius.

Now, whether the system is such that we must find out how it has happened, and how this has even landed at the company. Obviously we need to be vigilant. The authorities, Customs, Police, need to have information. And also, at the level of Customs, there is need to be more vigilant in terms of checking, scanning, and trying to see whether there is no smuggling of such kind of drugs.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Among the persons who were interviewed by the Police during the course of the inquiry, are there any officers of the ADSU and the MRA who were on duty at the Customs Department on the arrival and the delivery of the said *tractopelle*?

The Prime Minister: If I can understand what the hon. Member is asking is whether Police has interviewed ADSU or Customs Officers. I cannot say because, Mr Speaker, Sir, one must realise that I cannot have access to the case file. The case file is in the possession of the Police, it is confidential and I do not even know who are the people who have been interrogated. I have only been given, as I said it in my answer, the number of…

(Interruptions)

Yes. I stated that statements from 16 persons have been recorded. Now, for obvious reasons, I believe one would understand that I cannot ask the Police to give me the names of those people and communicate them to the public.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Dr. Gungapersad!

Dr. Gungapersad: The hon. Prime Minister will concur with me that here is a clear case of flawed surveillance by ADSU, NSS, Team Intelligence, etc., and in his recommendation, Paul Lam Shang Leen had proposed that we revamp the vigilance security measures and so on, already in 2018, and this happened last year. What is the hon. Prime Minister proposing in order to review the surveillance and security measures?

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I must be honest. The hon. Member is talking about flawed surveillance, but it does happen that there are smuggled goods, that there are drugs that come to the country that the authorities are not able to detect, even at the Customs or elsewhere.

Dr. Boolell: On that special occasion?

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: On that special occasion, so you want to put additional question?

Mr Speaker: Crosstalking is not permitted!

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: But let me…

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: No crosstalking!

The Prime Minister: Okay. I did not want to go into that. Since you prompted me, let me tell you, because you have been in Government, unlike the hon. Member.

(Interruptions)

Shut up, *donc*!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker, Sir, can this hon. Member stop interrupting me when I am answering the question?

(Interruptions)

An hon. Member: *Malelvé!*

Mr Speaker: Order, please! Order!

(Interruptions)

There is a question to the Prime Minister and it is up to the Prime Minister to answer the question.

(Interruptions)

An hon. Member: *Malelvé!*

Mr Speaker: Hon. Mohamed, what is happening? Hon. Shakeel Mohamed!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Shakeel Mohamed!

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir…

(Interruptions)

An hon. Member: Exactement!

The Prime Minister: *Ress trankil do ta! Mo paniker ek twa? Enn lariaz koman twa ki mo pou paniker?*

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Assirvaden! Hon. Shakeel Mohamed! You are going too far! You are going too far! Hon. Prime Minister!

The Prime Minister: So, I was saying, Mr Speaker, Sir, hon. Dr. Boolell has been in previous Government 2011-2014. Let me remind him about how many cases of importation of heroin there have been. Let me just say this: on 06 June 2011, at the DHL Parcel Service at SSR International Airport, 431.4 grams of heroin were detected. Still, as at today, who has been arrested? None! Nobody has been arrested. On 02 October 2012, *La Pipe*, where 424.1 grams of heroin were detected. Again, no one has been arrested. On 05 May 2013, at SSR International Airport, 3,788.8 grams of heroin concealed in six plastic bags were removed

from the bin in the toilet of the plane of Flight MK289 that arrived from Madagascar; but still no arrest under the Labour Government! I can go on. I do not want to waste the time of the House. I can go on like this, citing number of cases, Plaisance Air Transport Services, again. Plaisance used to be, maybe, the mode of transport that was favoured by some who had protection from the Labour Government at that time. So much amount of heroin that has been brought, that entered into the country and, up to now, no one has been arrested.

(Interruptions)

So, do not speak as if you are giving us lessons.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Doolub!

The Prime Minister: It is as if the first time this is happening, it is as if it is something new, whereas it has happened. Whereas I say, honestly, that it has happened and we need to draw lessons from this. That is why I said that Customs have to review their way of scanning and the checking, and try to see how we can make sure that there are no drugs that come and enter the country.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Doolub!

Mr Doolub: Thank you, Mr Speaker Sir. Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House as to who carries out the weighing, packaging and labelling of the drugs samples? Thank you.

The Prime Minister: Well, initially, I must say that when the ADSU officers take possession of the seized goods, they are the ones who carry out this weighing in order to know exactly what is the quantity together, of course, with the wrapping. But let me say that the FSL is responsible for weighing the net weight of the drug and, after completion the drug with its original packaging is placed in an FSL tamper-proof evidence bag and returned to ADSU on the same day for safekeeping in the ADSU strongroom. There are, of course, labelling of the exhibits and the whole process of weighing, sampling and packaging is witnessed by Police Exhibits Officer at the laboratory.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Shakeel Mohamed!

Mr Mohamed: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Could the hon. Prime Minister enlighten us on the following? Who had, within the Police Force or the Prime Minister's Office, cleared the very important fact that, on that particular date, when the drugs came into Mauritius, no scanning equipment was to be used because of the presence of the hon. Prime

Minister there for the arrival of Mauricio? So, who gave clearance from the PMO – authorisation - and the Commissioner of Police's Office not to scan on that particular, special auspicious day?

The Prime Minister: This is not correct at all, Mr Speaker, Sir. This is a pure invention, as usual, of this hon. Member, and I must say that Customs Officers carry out their normal duty according to the protocol that has been established. This is totally false.

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Mrs Luchmun Roy!

(*Interruptions*)

Quiet on this side!

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House whether the wheel loader was delivered in Mauritius on a non-stop voyage from Brazil, please?

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that it was embarked at the Port of Paranaguá in Brazil on board the ship of Grande Francia and it was disembarked in the Port of Tanger in Morocco on the 07 of June 2019 and it stayed there till the 09 of June 2019, where it was again embarked on the ship called Hoegh Antwerp, and then, disembarked in Mauritius when it reached Mauritius on the 04 of July 2019. Then, it remained at the Cargo Handling compound until the delivery was made.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Dr. Aumeer, last supplementary!

Dr. Aumeer: The Prime Minister will surely agree that it is usual practice by the MRA or ADSU in any case of seizure of drugs at the airport, seaport, through the Mauritius post, the consignee is usually arrested pending further investigation. Knowing quite well that this case is still under Police inquiry, can the Prime Minister liaise with the Commissioner of Police to see why the sole consignee of this wheel loader, which is Scomat, no single arrest has been made, so far, a year later? Thank you.

The Prime Minister: It is for the Police to determine whether there is a *prima facie* case against any employee or any member of that company. I do not know how this hon. Member has stated that the consignee has to be arrested. Maybe he is not well-versed in law and he does not know that it is not like that.

(*Interruptions*)

It is not like that. It is up to the inquiry of the Police to see to it that whoever needs to be arrested, will, of course, be arrested.

WHEEL LOADER - DRUGS DISCOVERY

(No. B/208) Mr S. Abbas Mamode (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity whether, in regard to the discovery of drugs by workers of Scomat Ltd. in a wheel loader last year, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to where matters stand as to the inquiry initiated thereinto, indicating the number of arrest effected in connection therewith, if any.

(Vide PQ No. B/207)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Abbas Mamode, next question!

TRAFFIC BRANCH - POLICE OFFICERS

(No. B/209) Mr S. Abbas Mamode (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity whether, in regard to the Traffic Branch, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of Police Officers posted in each of the units thereof, indicating the duties assigned thereto and number of vehicles attached thereto.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that there are 406 Police Officers posted in 13 different Units of the Traffic Branch and 194 vehicles attached to them.

I am tabling lists of the number of Police Officers posted in each Unit of the Traffic Branch and their respective duties as well as the number of vehicles attached thereto.

Mr Abbas Mamode: Is the Minister satisfied with the number of Police Officers attached to the Traffic Branch, especially when you know with the Metro Express and development around the island, traffic jams are very popular nowadays?

The Prime Minister: Well, I can tell the hon. Member that the number has been increasing on many occasions, and if I compare the number of officers who were attached in 2014: 248 PC, 27 WPC, and total, 342. I am speaking about those who are on the field, and now, as at today, we have 263 PC, 48 WPC, and a total of 406. So, it has been increasing and, of course, the traffic situation also has been increasing, and that is why I believe that it is not easy to be able to post officers everywhere, but mainly on certain spots which are considered to be used by heavy traffic. For example, like Metro Express for which works are being carried out, and, obviously, the Commissioner of Police has seen to it that more officers are posted there.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Abbas Mamode!

Mr Abbas Mamode: Can the hon. Prime Minister see to it that in Port Louis region, especially at the northern entrance and in the evening - in this very House, this question has been raised now and then concerning La Croisée Vallée des Prêtres, where there is a huge problem of traffic in the evening. So, can he inquire with the Commissioner of Police why there is no Police Officer in the northern region of Port Louis in the evening?

The Prime Minister: Well, Mr Speaker, Sir, this is a specific question relating to a place. Of course, I shall have to verify whether what the hon. Member is saying is correct or not, but I shall pass on this remark onto the Commissioner of Police.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Mrs Mayotte!

Mrs Mayotte: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. The hon. Prime Minister has already answered to my question which was to give us more information about the comparison in 2014 and as at this year, about the number of PC and WPC.

The Prime Minister: Well, as I have stated, Mr Speaker, Sir, we have, in fact, *augmenter l'effectif d'année en année parce que, bien sûr, le nombre de véhicules sur nos routes, les travaux qui se font sur les routes, les gros projets, donc, ce ne sera évidemment jamais assez suffisant et, comme j'ai dit, on ne pourra jamais mettre autant d'officiers partout pour couvrir les endroits et pour pouvoir réguler le trafic.*

Mr Speaker: Hon. Shakeel Mohamed!

Mr Mohamed: Mr Speaker, Sir, thank you. The hon. Prime Minister has just opened the door to something interesting. He talks about more work going on on roads, road development, I believe he meant. What would he have to say to the House pertaining to officers, Police Officers precisely, instead of being used efficiently and effectively to reduce traffic problems, being placed on the Metro Line, where a construction is going on, and being used by the company responsible for Metro construction? Police Officers are thereby used and placed there without any money. Normally, there is an allowance that is paid for a Police Officer that is used by a private company for construction, but in this particular case, those officers are used, placed there, but no allowance whatsoever is paid to the Police Officers for several years now.

The Prime Minister: Well, I am surprised by this question, Mr Speaker, Sir. The Police Officers are doing their job. They are being assigned duty to regulate traffic at places where there are heavy works going on, Metro Express and others.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Listen to the Prime Minister, he is replying!

The Prime Minister: That is part of their duty. The hon. Member is speaking about duty. Whenever there are private entities that require the assistance of the Police and the Commissioner of Police decides that Police will have to attend to those duties, as far as I can remember, I think there is an allowance that is paid to those officers. But otherwise, we are talking about Government projects, and I fail to understand how we are carrying out such major projects, like Metro Express, and we are not going to assign Police Officers to be present in order to regulate traffic. But then, I think this is what the Opposition wants, to create a situation of chaos in the country.

Mr Speaker: Next question, hon. Uteem!

KREOL LANGUAGE – NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

(No. B/210) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity whether, in regard to the Kreol language, he will state where matters stand as to the proposal for the use thereof in the proceedings of the National Assembly.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, as I have explained on several occasions in this House, there are certain requirements and pre-conditions which would have to be met and fulfilled before the Kreol language can effectively be used in the proceedings of the National Assembly.

It is noteworthy that some good progress has been made in terms of the elaboration of the orthography, grammar and vocabulary, and in this regard, the following linguistic aids have already been published –

(i) *lortograf Kreol Morisien;*

(ii) *gramer Kreol Morisien,* and

(iii) *diksioner Kreol Morisien.*

Moreover, as the House is aware, an *Akademi Kreol Repiblik Moris* has been set up in May 2019 under the aegis of the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Scientific Research and Tertiary Education, to follow up on the development and use of the Kreol language in the Republic of Mauritius. I officially launched the *Akademi Kreol Repiblik Moris* on 03 October 2019.

One of the objectives of the *Akademi Kreol Repiblik Moris* is precisely to develop further the orthography, grammar, lexicon, usage and norms of the *Kreol Morisien.*

Mr Speaker, Sir, as already explained in my previous replies on this matter, the mastery of the language, at all levels, is a major prerequisite of its introduction into the National Assembly and this process will take time.

I must say that the preparatory works for people to develop a mastery of the harmonised version of the *Kreol Morisien* is being pursued and facilitated by Government through teaching and training.

As a matter of fact, the *Kreol Morisien*, which was introduced in primary schools in 2012 has been extended to Grades 7 and 8. The teaching of the subject has also been extended to Grade 9 in 2020. It will be assessed at the level of the National Certificate of Education Assessment in 2020/2021 at the end of Grade 9.

It is noteworthy that the number of pupils studying *Kreol Morisien* in primary schools has shown a steady increase from 17,305 in 2017 to 18,903 in 2019. Moreover, 3,681 pupils of Grade 6 sat for *Kreol Morisien* at the Primary School Achievement Certificate Examination in 2019, compared to 2,830 and 2,480 for the years 2018 and 2017 respectively.

Government is pursuing its efforts for the promotion of the *Kreol Morisien* in schools by providing all necessary resources. This effort will have to be sustained over a period of time until we develop the required critical mass.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it must also be pointed out that for the *Kreol Morisien* to be used in the National Assembly, we must first ensure that the Members of the National Assembly, along with all the relevant staff, receive appropriate training in the language.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we have also previously underlined the technical requirements in terms of hardware and software which will have to be put in place before introducing the language in the National Assembly.

The Digital Recording System being used in the National Assembly presently is a customised system which uses an off-the-shelf component in the form of a Voice-to-Text software for the automatic transcription of the proceedings of the House in English and French. The technology being sensitive to accents, the supplier would have to be requested to develop a platform to recognise the Kreol language.

In this connection, I am informed that the National Assembly is currently examining the different aspects and implications of the use of the Kreol language in the National Assembly in terms of technology, language and the training of staff.

Moreover, the National Assembly is also benchmarking on other similar projects where native languages have been encapsulated on technological platforms for translation, transcription and other uses.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we have started the groundwork so as to put in place all the requirements for a successful introduction of the *Kreol Morisien* in the National Assembly.

I wish to reassure the House, once again, that the Government will consider the introduction of the *Kreol Morisien* into the National Assembly, when all the necessary pre-conditions are fully satisfied.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: The hon. Prime Minister just mentioned that the major stumbling block is that we don't master the Kreol language and we need to be trained. When we go in Press conference, when we go in electoral campaigns, when we go on TV, when we talk at school, at home, mastery of the Kreol language is not an issue, but only for the National Assembly it is an issue! Does he not agree with me that this is the lamest excuse that this Government has come up with to prevent the Kreol language from being used in this Assembly?

The Prime Minister: It is not a lame excuse, Mr Speaker, Sir. The hon. Member, maybe, does not realise that we are not talking about speaking, we are talking about writing, we are talking about reading also, and I do not know – maybe he is an expert in reading, but I must say that we have also talked to a number of experts and they say, and have also advised, that one must also be able to read to be able to understand. Let me just say and quote – well somebody who is well respected…

(Interruptions)

Dev Virahsawmy? Why you are already ahead of me?

Mr Speaker: No crosstalking!

The Prime Minister: What he said? I am not talking about Dev Virahsawmy. Dev Virahsawmy was your good friend in 2014.

(Interruptions)

Well, listen to this one! I am quoting Dr. Arnaud Carpooran. This is what he said, and I quote part of what he has said not to take the time of the House –

> *"Pour que le Kreol puisse être adopté au Parlement, il faut d'abord que les parlementaires, en charge des* Standing Orders*, soient formés dans cette langue. Les sténographes ainsi que les correcteurs auront à être formés dans ladite langue. Tout cela demandera du temps afin que le personnel de l'Assemblée nationale puisse s'accommoder avec le lexique et la syntaxe du Kreol pour rédiger correctement les documents.*"

Well, I do not have to say more than that.

Mr Speaker: Time is over by 5 minutes! First, let me announce that the Table has been advised that PQ Nos. B/227, B/252, B/262, B/263, B/264, B/271, B/275, B/278, B/272, B/273, B/274, B/276, B/279, B/280, B/281, B/282, B/283 and B/284 have been withdrawn. Hon. Mrs Tour!

NATIONAL SPORTS AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY POLICY

(No. B/219) Mrs J. Tour (Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation whether, in regard to the National Sports and Physical Activity Policy launched by his Ministry in October 2018, he will state where matters stand as to the implementation thereof.

Mr Toussaint: Mr Speaker, Sir, the National Sports and Physical Activity Policy launched in October 2018, had set forth 20 recommendations grouped under the following three pillars –

(i) foster a culture of community sports and physical activity;

(ii) create an amateur to elite environment, and

(iii) develop a vibrant and growing sport economy.

To ensure an optimal implementation of the policy, a Task Force was set up comprising of officers of my Ministry, officials from the Mauritius Sports Council and a representative from Portas Consulting.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am pleased to report that the following recommendations have already been implemented –

(i) active Mauritius which has been set up under the Mauritius Sports Council in June 2019 has developed and is running no less than 14 fitness programmes. More than 41,600 people have benefited therefrom;

(ii) a Statistician Research Consultant has been recruited by the Mauritius Sports Council to conduct the Annual Mauritius Physical Activity and Sport Survey. The data has already been published in March 2019. One of the main findings is that only 13% of the Mauritian population needs the World Health

Organisation Guidelines for Physical Activity, that is, 150 minutes per week. The target is to increase it to 35% by 2024.

Moreover, to date the following recommendations are being implemented –

(i) consultations with the Ministry of Health and Wellness are ongoing to determine the best possible way to empower medical professionals to prescribe sports and physical activity as treatment. To that effect, two workshops were organised by my Ministry for public and private health care professionals in June and December 2019;

(ii) a strategy for active Mauritius and facilities management has been elaborated by Portas Consulting and same has been presented on 16 June 2020;

(iii) a new elite strategy has been elaborated by my Ministry after consultations with several stakeholders, including the Mauritius Olympic Committee and the Mauritius Paralympic Committee. In this context, a new Athlete Assistance Scheme and a new Cash Prize Scheme will be introduced shortly. My Ministry is also working on a new mechanism to fund sports federations in a strategic manner thereby optimising resource allocation, and

(iv) work is ongoing for the drafting of a new piece of legislation that would facilitate the implementation of the National Sports and Physical Activity Policy, and thereby repeal the existing Sports Act 2016.

Mr Speaker: Supplementary Questions!

Mrs Tour: Can the hon. Minister table the list of the 14 programmes?

Mr Toussaint: Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir. I table the list of the 14 fitness programmes run by Active Mauritius.

Mrs Tour: Can the hon. Minister indicate when Team Mauritius will be launched?

Mr Toussaint: M. le président, comme je l'ai dit dans ma réponse, le *National Sports Policy* nous propose de créer *Team Mauritius* et, à l'heure que je vous parle, il y a plusieurs consultations en cours avec l'aide de M. Mark Abberley, représentant de Portas Consulting. Il anime différentes réunions et nous espérons que, d'ici trois semaines, nous allons pouvoir lancer *Team Mauritius*.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Quirin!

Mr Quirin: Merci, M. le président. Dans le budget 2017-2018, une somme de R 25 millions avait été allouée pour la réalisation et l'implémentation du *National Sports and Physical Activity Policy*. De ce fait, le ministre peut-il nous donner une répartition des sommes dépensées?

Mr Toussaint: M. le président, je n'ai pas ces chiffres actuellement avec moi mais bien sûr, je pourrai les déposer à l'Assemblée plus tard.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Mrs Tour, next question!

MAURITIUS VOLLEYBALL FEDERATION – MANAGING COMMITTEE – COMPOSITION

(No. B/220) Mrs J. Tour (Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation whether, in regard to the Mauritius Volleyball Federation, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the –

(a) composition of the Managing Committee thereof, and

(b) amount of funds allocated thereto for the year 2019-2020.

Mr Toussaint: Mr Speaker, I am tabling a copy of the composition of the Managing Committee of the Mauritius Volleyball Association.

Mr Speaker, as regards part (b) of the question, I wish to inform the House that, in Financial Year 2019-2020, an amount of Rs2.7 m. had been allocated to the Mauritius Volleyball Association.

Additionally, in that same financial year, an amount of Rs1.7 m. had been disbursed for the payment of the salary of its National Technical Director.

Thank you.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Mrs Tour!

Mrs Tour: Can the hon. Minister advise who is the actual Secretary General?

Mr Toussaint: Mr Speaker, the Secretary General has taken a leave, Mr Teeroovengadum and the duties of secretariat are being achieved by Mr Bryan Mootoosamy who is the Assistant Secretary General.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Quirin!

Mr Quirin: Merci, M. le président. Justement par rapport au congé prolongé demandé par le secrétaire, monsieur Teeroovengadum, peut-on savoir du ministre si ce principe de congé des dirigeants des fédérations existe dans le *Sports Act* et, si oui, quelle en est la durée maximum?

Mr Toussaint: M. le président, les membres du comité exécutif d'une fédération sont élus et ils sont autonomes. Rien n'est dit dans le *Sports Act* qu'ils doivent faire telle affaire ou telle affaire mais c'est au comité qui s'est rencontré à plusieurs reprises et c'est à partir de là que le secrétaire a décidé de prolonger son congé jusqu'à ce que son affaire en Cour se termine.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Mrs Tour.

Mrs Tour: Can the hon. Minister advise how much fund has been used by the Federation for the development of volleyball amongst the youth?

Mr Toussaint: M. le président, le budget d'une fédération est repartie en plusieurs bouts. Donc, il y a le department élite, the *sports for all*, *training development*, administration, *youth development*. Et pour l'année financière 2019-2020, malheureusement je dois dire que la fédération de volleyball n'a pas utilisé. Il y avait une somme de R800,000 qui était *earmarked for the youth development in volleyball*, malheureusement la somme est zéro. Donc, ils n'ont pas utilisé cette somme repartie pour le développement du volleyball pour les jeunes.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Juman, last supplementary!

Mr Juman: Merci, M. le président. Honorable ministre, outre monsieur Kaysee qui est actuellement en congé, il y a deux autres membres du *Managing Committee* de la MVB dont monsieur JMD et monsieur SG qui sont inculpés provisoirement pour des affaires criminelles. Est-ce que, pour une question d'éthique, ce ne serait pas plus juste de leur demander aussi de se retirer temporairement en attendant le verdict de la justice?

Mr Toussaint: M. le président, j'ai eu vent de cette affaire et nous sommes en contact avec la fédération de volleyball et nous attendons leurs réponses.

Mr Speaker: Next question, hon. Mrs Tour!

CITE ROMA, RICHE TERRE – EMERGENCY DRAIN PROJECT

(No. B/221) Mrs J. Tour (Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure and Community Development whether, in regard to the Emergency Drain Project at Cité Roma, at Riche Terre, he will state where matters stand as to the implementation thereof.

Mr Hurreeram: Mr Speaker, Sir, I thank the hon. Member for this question.

Following flooding in February and April 2019, the National Development Unit has embarked on the implementation of the project for the reconstruction of existing culverts and the drain network at Cité Roma, Riche Terre on an emergency basis with a view to mitigate recurrence of flooding and water accumulation problems thereat.

A consultant was appointed on the 04 July 2019 for the design and supervision of the project and the detailed design report was submitted to the National Development Unit in September 2019.

The scope of works for the project comprises the following –

(a) demolition of two existing box culvert and reconstruction of two new ones;

(b) construction of a stone masonry wall near the two new box culverts;

(c) provision of a rock bun along feeder cess;

(d) construction of a storm water drain network and relocation of existing services as may be required during execution of the works.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as some of the works along feeder cess will lead to change in the watercourse and its level, the approval of the Supreme Court is required as per the provisions of the Rivers and Canals Act.

Action has already been initiated by the NDU to seek the authority of the Supreme Court and clearances from all other authorities. Once all clearances are obtained, the NDU will appoint a contractor for the execution of the works.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Mrs Tour!

Mrs Tour: Can the hon. Minister give us an indication on when works will start and the estimated duration of the works?

Mr Hurreeram: Mr Speaker, Sir, works are expected to start by November 2020 and the duration of the work will be about one year. So, we are expecting completion of all the drain network at Cité Roma by November 2021.

Mr Speaker: Next question!

CAMP LA BOUE, MONTAGNE LONGUE - DRAIN WORKS

(No. B/222) Mrs J. Tour (Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure and Community Development whether, in regard to the drain works undertaken at Montagne Longue, Camp La Boue, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Road Development Authority, information as to where matters stand.

Mr Hurreeram: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by Road Development Authority that two major road infrastructure problems had been reported at the village of Camp La Boue near Soondur Manrakhan College along Camp La Boue, Les Mariannes road, road B169. The road at that location is frequently flooded and there is no footpath and drain by the side of the road.

To address the above problem and to ensure the safety of students and the public in general, a work order was issued by the RDA to Gamma Construction Ltd under the approved framework agreement on 18 February 2020.

The works consist of the construction of footpath and drain over a length of 280 metres for an estimated sum of Rs4.4 m. Works started during the first week of June 2020 and, as at date, 90% of the works have already been completed. The remaining 10% of works consist of two cross drains are ongoing and will be completed and will be completed by the end of July 2020.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Mrs Tour!

Mrs Tour: Have there been any modifications that have been brought to the initial plans of this project?

Mr Hurreeram: Indeed, Mr Speaker, I would like to thank the three hon. Members of the Constituency No. 4 to have brought to our attention the concern of the inhabitants and,

yes, we have modified the original plan which was to make 260 metres of drains to 280 metres.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Members I will break for one hour.

At 12.58 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 2.32 p.m. with Mr Speaker in the Chair.

Mr Speaker: Please be seated! Hon. Ms Bérenger!

COP25 IN MADRID – ENGAGEMENTS TAKEN BY MAURITIUS

(No. B/224) Ms J. Bérenger (First Member for Vacoas & Floréal) asked the Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change whether, in regard to the Cop25 held in Madrid last year, he will give details of the engagements taken by Mauritius, indicating where matters stand as to the application thereof.

Mr Ramano: M. le président, La Conférence des Parties à la Convention-cadre des Nations Unies sur le changement climatique est la principale réunion officielle qui réunit chaque année tous les pays membres de la Convention, incluant les pays développés et les pays en voie de développement, pour évaluer les progrès accomplis dans la lutte contre le changement climatique et pour prendre, collégialement, des décisions afin d'apporter une réponse collective et globale à la problématique du changement climatique.

Permettez-moi, M. le président, de vous rappeler que le processus de négociation sur le changement climatique est long et progressif. Ce processus a débuté avec la première Conférence des Parties qui s'était tenu à Berlin en 1995. Les réunions successives de la Conférence des Parties ont abouti à des résultats concrets sur des points pour lesquels des consensus ont pu être trouvés. Par contre, les points contentieux sont généralement reportés à la réunion suivante.

Depuis 1995, les négociations ont été lentes. Cependant, une étape majeure a été franchie en 2015 à la COP21 qui s'est tenue à Paris grâce à l'adoption de l'Accord de Paris. Il est aussi à souligner, M. le président, que Maurice a été parmi les premiers pays à ratifier l'Accord de Paris le 22 Avril 2016. Depuis 2015, les pays membres de la Convention se concertent afin d'établir des règlements pour la mise en œuvre de l'Accord de Paris. Les progrès dans le processus de négociation pour la finalisation de ces règlements ont été en

deçà des attentes des pays en voie de développement, notamment les pays les plus vulnérables tels que les Petits États Insulaires en Développement comme Maurice, les pays les moins avancés et les pays du continent africain.

A la COP25, qui avait pour objectif de finaliser les règlements pour la mise en œuvre de l'Accord de Paris, les pays membres ont reconnu que certains progrès ont été accomplis. Ces progrès concernent le renforcement des capacités et le transfert de technologies, à travers le '*Climate Technology Centre and Network'* ainsi que sur la thématique des Genres et le Changement Climatique.

Toutefois, les pays membres ne sont pas parvenus à un consensus sur un certain nombre d'éléments importants tels que l'article 6, concernant le mécanisme pour le marché du carbone, le financement climat à long terme et l'écart dans les objectifs d'atténuation pour la période pré-2020 pour les pays développés.

M. le président, en ce qui concerne l'Article 6 de l'Accord de Paris, bien que les partis soient d'accord sur l'importance de la comptabilisation de l'émission de carbone avec des ambitions quant aux mesures d'atténuation et d'adaptation, le consensus n'a pas été atteint entre pays développés et en voie de développement. Quant au besoin de maintenir l'intégrité environnementale et la nécessité d'éviter le *double accounting* dans la comptabilisation dans l'émission de carbone.

Autre point de contentieux, M. le président, entre pays développés et en développement concerne le besoin des mesures d'atténuation des pays développés en raison de leur responsabilité historique pour la réduction du *Green House Gas Emission* comme recommandé par l'*Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change.* Les partis ont accueilli l'idée de renflouer à la hauteur de USD9,7 milliards le *Green Climate Fund* pour la période 2019/2023. Toutefois, ils ont quand même regretté que la somme promise de USD100 milliards n'a pas été respecté.

Très peu de pays développés se sont engagés de la somme de USD90 millions dans *l'Adaptation Fund* pour aider les pays en développement dans l'implémentation des mesures d'adaptation.

Le bilan de la COP25 a été jugé comme décevant par les pays en voie de développement. D'ailleurs, le Secrétaire Général des Nations Unies a exprimé sa déception

quant au bilan de la COP25 dans un communiqué après la conclusion de la réunion à Madrid en décembre 2019. Ces éléments inachevés seront, cependant remis à l'ordre du jour de la COP26 qui se tiendra à Glasgow au Royaume-Uni en novembre 2021. Donc, la COP25 de novembre 2020 a été, comme vous le savez, repoussé en raison du COVID-19.

Je tiens à souligner que mon ministère, en collaboration avec les autres partenaires, s'attèlent actuellement à la révision de nos contributions déterminées au niveau nationale, qui sont les engagements prises suite à l'Accord de Paris auprès de la Convention.

Ms Bérenger: Merci, M. le président. *At Cop21 in 2015, Government pledged in its nationally determined contribution that by 2030 it will reduce its emissions by 30%. Can we ask the Minister where does the matter stand?* Et si les outils à disposition nous permettent d'affirmer que nous allons dans cette direction?

Mr Ramano: M. le président, je voudrais souligner que Maurice a été très proactif depuis l'adoption de l'accord de Paris en 2015. En sus d'avoir été parmi les premiers pays à le ratifier, nous sommes très vite mis au travail afin d'atteindre les objectifs que nous nous sommes fixés. En ce qui concerne l'engagement pris par Maurice, que j'ai mentionné dans mon allocution pendant la COP25, le gouvernement a lancé une série de mesures sur la réduction des risques de catastrophe, l'adaptation aux effets néfastes du changement climatique, ainsi que pour la réduction des émissions de gaz à effet de serre et bien sûr, l'émission de carbone.

Les principales mesures soulignées, permettez-moi de les énumérer, sont comme suit
–

- le renforcement de notre système de drains;
- la protection et la réhabilitation de nos côtes, et
- le suivi de paramètres climatiques.

Comme je l'avais déjà souligné dans mes allocutions, notamment lors du *Supplementary Appropriation Bill* et aussi il y a lieu de considérer le renforcement que nous avons mis en place, en ce qui concerne la préparation d'un plan national pour l'adaptation, une demande de proposition de subvention du Fonds Vert pour climat est en voie de finalisation. Ce Plan national d'adaptation renforcera la capacité de Maurice à évaluer sa vulnérabilité et pour concevoir des mesures d'adaptation appropriées, notamment pour les zones côtières à travers

l'évaluation des risques et aussi des infrastructures à travers l'évaluation de vulnérabilité. La réduction des gestions et des risques à travers la préparation des cartes et des plans pour plusieurs zones qui sont inondables.

M. le président, en ce qui concerne l'atténuation, la question de l'honorable membre, une série de mesures sont en cours dans les différents secteurs, à savoir la promotion des énergies recouvrables et l'efficacité énergique, l'introduction de la mobilité électrique, avec le projet soutenu par le fonds pour l'environnement mondial récemment approuvé, la gestion durable des terres et l'écologisation de l'agriculture et bien sûr, l'embellissement des autoroutes en utilisant le concept de *linear forestry*.

De plus, mon ministère a déjà commencé l'élaboration d'un *National Climate Change Mitigation Strategy and Action Plan.* L'objectif étant de promouvoir une économie à faible émission de carbone, en identifiant les mesures d'atténuation les plus appropriées pour atteindre les objectifs de nos contributions déterminées au niveau national, aussi connu comme *'Nationally Determined Contribution'*.

Finalement, M. le président, conformément à l'accord 4 de l'accord de Paris, mon ministère s'est engagé dans un processus d'examen et de mise à jour de nos contributions déterminées au niveau national. Ce processus déterminera des nouveaux engagements de Maurice en termes de réduction de gaz à effet de serre et des mesures d'adaptation qui seront nécessaires pour nous protéger aux aléas du changement climatique. Les services d'une équipe d'experts internationaux ont été mobilisés par l'Agence Française de Développement et Expertise France. Une assistance complémentaire dans le cadre du projet *Climate Promise Initiative* a aussi été obtenue du PNUD pour la conduite d'une série de consultations avec divers partenaires sociaux économiques et pour la sensibilisation autour de nos contributions déterminées au niveau national. Les nouvelles contributions déterminées au niveau national seront soumises au secrétariat de la Convention-cadre des Nations unies sur le changement climatique avant la COP26 qui a dû être reporté, comme je l'ai souligné, en raison du new China Town Foundation new China Town Foundation new China Town Foundation COVID-19.

Je tiens aussi à souligner l'engagement de la République de Maurice en ce qui concerne l'accord de Paris et aussi dans tout cet engagement pour la protection contre le changement climatique. Je dois souligner, M. le président…

Mr Mohamed: Mr Speaker, Sir, on a point of order!

Mr Speaker: Point of order!

Mr Mohamed: It is well-known practice in the House here, that when a Minister is going to give such a long answer, which is his right, he can, at least, table the answer because since he is reading it anyway, but to go like that, it's blocking other Members who have other questions. Thank you.

Mr Speaker: If you would take more time, then better table the answer.

Mr Ramano: Je me tiens à vos instructions, M. le président. Mais il faut quand même se rendre à l'évidence que dans la question, M. le président, c'est dit, *"he will give details of the engagement taken by Mauritius"*. *Engagement* de l'accord de Paris c'est toute une panoplie d'engagement. Il y a aussi la question, *"where matters stand as to the application thereof"*. Donc, il est de ma responsabilité, en tant que ministre de l'Environnement, de donner toutes les étapes qui ont été accomplies par la République de Maurice.

Donc, M. le président, je termine là-dessus pour dire que nous avons signifié notre engagement en ce qui concerne la lutte contre le changement climatique. D'ailleurs, le Cabinet ministériel a déjà approuvé le *Climate Change Bill* et nous viendrons de l'avant dans un proche avenir avec le *Climate Change Bill* aussi. Voilà, M. le président!

Ms J. Bérenger: Merci. Le ministre a parlé de nombreux projets y compris concernant la protection de la zone côtière. Dans le même souffle, peut-il nous dire si oui ou non, l'introduction d'une loi spécifique pour protéger les zones sensibles, les *wetlands*, pourrait faciliter la tâche de son ministère en matière de gestion du littoral et, si oui, pourrait-il nous indiquer quand le gouvernement compte venir de l'avant avec une telle loi? Merci.

Mr Ramano: M. le président, donc…

(Interruptions)

M. le président, le ministère de l'Environnement, en collaboration avec le *Ministry of Housing and Land Use Planning*, nous sommes en train de travailler sur tout l'aspect de *mapping*, en ce qui concerne les *environmentally sensitive areas*. Donc, M. le président, nous sommes très conscients de la nécessité de venir de l'avant avec un *risky concept*. Il y a lieu de la protection de nos zones côtières parce qu'il y va de la protection de la politique environnementale, de la politique agricole et aussi de la survie même des habitations dans les zones côtières.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Thank you. 2020 is the year where countries need to submit new ambitions level to mitigate carbon emission. The hon. Minister has just stated that *l'Agence Française de Développement* will be providing a consultant to that effect. Can I ask the hon. Minister the time frame, because 2020 is ending in a few months' time, whether Mauritius will be able to submit in time?

Mr Ramano: Je dois dire que, M. le président, nous sommes confiants. Les travaux se font dans un rythme soutenu et je suis très satisfait de la collaboration entre les techniciens de l'Agence Française de Développement et aussi l'équipe d'experts qui a été diligentée à cet effet. Donc, oui, nous sommes confiants de pouvoir respecter nos engagements pour 2020.

Mr Speaker: Next question, hon. Ms Bérenger!

CITÉ ANOSKA – CHILD - SEXUAL AGGRESSION

(No. B/225) Ms J. Bérenger (First Member for Vacoas & Floréal) asked the Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare whether, in regard to the sexual aggression on a child at Cité Anoska, she will state if consideration will be given for the provision of –

(a) assistance to the parents of the victim, and

(b) therapeutic treatment to the perpetrator.

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Mr Speaker, Sir, in regard to part (a) of the question, I would like to inform the House that my Ministry has pursued all efforts to provide assistance to the parents and the child since 28 June this year. Referrals were made to key stakeholders on 30 June 2020 for further assistance which are as follows –

- The Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology for follow-up on the schooling on the four minors;
- National Empowerment Foundation for appropriate economic support as deemed necessary, and
- An NGO for rehabilitation purpose of the mother, mainly in terms of medical treatment for detoxification and psychological support through individual and group therapy, family therapy, job training for empowerment to the onward reintegration in mainstream society.

Mr Speaker, Sir, on 03 July 2020, the mother was arrested by the Police and the minor, together with other siblings, placed in shelters. The father was convened for

psychological assessment on 06 July 2020. However, he did not turn up and is not reachable on the phone. Another appointment will be arranged as soon as possible.

As regards part (b) of the question, Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that the case has been reported to the Police on 28 June 2020 and on 30 June respectively and an enquiry is ongoing. Cases of perpetrators of criminal offences are dealt with by the Police.

Ms J. Bérenger: Merci. Est-ce que la ministre est au courant que les études montrent qu'un accompagnement psychiatrique des agresseurs réduit de 90% les risques de récidive? La ministre peut-elle nous dire si un traitement psychiatrique est inclus dans le *Perpetrators Rehabilitaiton Programme* qui sera rendu obligatoire, et quand le sera-t-il? Merci.

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Mr Speaker, Sir, I think my hon. colleague is confused about the Perpetrators Rehabilitation Programme which is a programme conceived and adapted to perpetrators of domestic violence. This question pertains to child abuse; and perpetrators and criminals of child abuse receive whatever provisions are made by the Police, when they are in custody, not through the Perpetrators Rehabilitation Programme, that is an entirely different matter.

Ms J. Bérenger: Merci. Donc, quel accompagnement psychiatrique est prévu pour le présumé agresseur?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: We do not address a perpetrator at the level of my Ministry, a perpetrator of child abuse. When there is an enquiry, the perpetrator is in custody of the Police.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Dhunoo!

Mr Dhunoo: Can the hon. Minister inform the House, therefore, of geographical distribution of cases reported of child abuse during the same period?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Mr Speaker, Sir, I've got a table which I will lay down for the consideration of the House.

Mr Speaker: Last supplementary!

Ms J. Bérenger: Merci! Sachant qu'à leur sortie du *shelter* en janvier 2020, les enfants avaient été confiés à leur grand-mère par le *District Court* de Curepipe et que le 15 juin 2020, l'ONG, *Youth for Human Rights International*, avait alerté la *CDU*, à travers une lettre sur la situation des enfants, et avait affirmé que les enfants étaient dans Cité Anouska et

non pas chez leur grand-mère et qu'ils sont gravement négligés. La Ministre peut-elle nous dire quelles sont les mesures qui ont été mises en œuvre concrètement par son ministère pour s'assurer d'un suivi régulier et qualitatif depuis janvier 2020, sachant que ces enfants étaient à risque?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Mr Speaker, Sir, when the children are placed in a 'place of safety' as we call it, in Floréal that was the case, this is determined by a Court Order. The Court Order determines the place of safety through a psychological report, social report, physical assessment site visit of that place of safety.

Mr Speaker, Sir, during lockdown, which is the period mentioned by my hon. colleague, follow-up has been maintained on the phone, the mother has reassured the officers...

(Interruptions)

The case was fixed in January; it was at Court level. Following that, the children were placed in Floréal with their grandmother. I am failing to understand exactly where is the question. You spoke about follow-up, follow up will start after the children have gone to the place of safety, and that has been done and maintained throughout their stay.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Assirvaden! So, hon. Ms Bérenger!

Ms J. Bérenger: Sur les ondes de Radio Plus le mardi 30 juin dans l'émission 'Au Cœur de l'Info', l'*Officer-in-Charge* de l'*Alternative Care Unit* a affirmé que les officiers de la *CDU* s'étaient rendus sur les lieux dans Cité Anouska le 15 juin, après avoir reçu la lettre alertant la *CDU* et n'avaient pas trouvé les enfants. Alors qu'une résidente de Cité Anouska a témoigné dans la même émission pour dire que les enfants habitaient chez elle depuis début juin, que les officiers de la *CDU* étaient venus le 15 juin dans Cité Anouska pour parler aux enfants et avaient discuté avec eux le 15 juin. Ma question est, depuis la lettre envoyée à la *CDU* le 15 juin et suite à la visite de la *CDU* à Cité Anouska le 15 juin, étant donné que son ministère savait que les enfants n'étaient pas chez la grand-mère qui avait pourtant la garde, comme elle vient de le dire, savait que les enfants étaient avec la maman qui n'était pas apte à s'en occuper, savait que les enfants n'étaient pas en sécurité, la ministre peut-elle nous dire pourquoi la Cour n'a-t-elle pas été alertée et pourquoi les enfants n'ont-ils pas été mis en sécurité? Merci.

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Mr Speaker, Sir, it is very misleading to claim that the children were left with the mother and that the CDU or my officers were aware that the mother is incapable of looking after the children. When the Court ordered the children to be under the guardianship of the mother and the grandmother, it was following a thorough investigation by officers and the Court. The hon. Member also stated that following a letter received at my Ministry, in fact, it was also recorded on our hotline 113 on 14 June and an urgent visit was effected in Cité Anouska. The inhabitants were extremely hostile; the children could not be found. An EPO was issued immediately, by then the children and the mother had already left Cité Anouska. There has been extensive search carried out through the south of the island to try and retrace the four children and the mother.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Ms Bérenger, next question!

MAURITIUS SOCIETY FOR ANIMAL WELFARE – DAILY COST – CASES OF ANIMAL ABUSE

(No. B/226) Ms J. Bérenger (First Member for Vacoas & Floréal) asked the Attorney-General, Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to the Mauritius Society for Animal Welfare, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to –

(a) the number of –

(i) dogs which are being sheltered in the compounds thereof, indicating the daily cost for the caring thereof, and

(ii) reported cases of animal abuse thereat, if any, and

(b) procedures for euthanisation thereat.

Mr Gobin: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that as at Friday 03 July, the Mauritius Society for Animal Welfare was sheltering 290 dogs and 12 cats.

The cost of caring for one sheltered animal amounts to approximately Rs260 per animal per day. Insofar as the capacity is concerned, the MSAW can shelter around 360 dogs at the Animal Home in Port Louis and around 75 dogs at the facilities in Rose Hill.

Mr Speaker, Sir, concerning part (a) (ii), I am informed by the Livestock and Veterinary Division that as at 02 July, no case of animal abuse at the MSAW has been registered at the Animal Welfare Unit of my Ministry.

I am further informed that the Animal Welfare Unit carries out surprise inspections at the seat of the Society in Rose Hill, and the last one was on 25 February of this year to verify compliance with the provisions of the Animal Welfare Act, and no adverse issue of animal welfare was observed during the inspection.

Mr Speaker, Sir, concerning part (b) of the question, it's rather long, I prefer to table it.

Ms J. Bérenger: Thank you. As per Animal Welfare Act, healthy stray dogs that are caught by MSAW, but not claimed or returned to their owner, should not be euthanized if there is an alternative way to dispose of the stray dog that would ensure the dog's welfare. *Est-ce que le ministre peut nous dire s'il a reçu une demande officielle de l'ONG 'Quatre Ti La Patte' à cet effet, demandant de bien vouloir les laisser accueillir les chiens en bonne santé dans leur* shelter *à La Brasserie? Merci.*

Mr Gobin: I have, indeed, received not one, but a number of correspondences from that NGO. I am in conversation with them. There are two persons, in fact, and we will be looking into their representations.

Ms J. Bérenger: *Merci*. Can the Minister inform the House whether the Government will implement the Trap-Neuter-Release Program and, if so, when will it be implemented?

Mr Gobin: This is being looked into, Mr Speaker, Sir. No final decision has been taken yet.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Shakeel Mohamed!

Mr Mohamed: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Could the hon. Minister with regard to the same question (a) (ii), where he said that there have been no cases of animal abuse, specifically during the confinement period at Mauritius Society for Animal and Welfare, it is reported in the Press and a video also has been shared on social media about 100 of dogs having died precisely because no food and water was given to them during confinement for a period of two weeks. And the relevant agencies within his Ministry did not carry out any check, specifically during that period that demanded some additional verification, but the last verification was only in February. Can he enlighten the House on that?

Mr Gobin: The last surprise inspection was on 25 February. I am aware of the case mentioned by the hon. Member, that video, the alleged video during the confinement period. On the very next day, inspection was carried out, following that video and it was found to be

unfounded. There were no such occurrences, Mr Speaker, Sir. The House will appreciate the dangers of such kind of videos on social media. Some date to perhaps long time ago, they just spring back, but verification was conducted and found once again, I repeat, to be unfounded. Insofar as the reported cases I have mentioned, they are in relation to reported cases of animal abuse thereat as per the question.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Ramful!

Mr Ramful: I don't know if the hon. Minister has got his information right. Is it not the case that last year employees of the MSAW, disciplinary actions were taken against them for animal abuse, their contract of employment was suspended, at least, three of them?

Mr Gobin: I will need details of those cases and, in fact, a specific question is welcome.

CONSTITUENCY NO. 16, VACOAS & FLORÉAL – WATER SUPPLY ON A 24/7 BASIS – SEPTEMBER 2019 TO DATE

(No. B/227) Ms J. Bérenger (First Member for Vacoas & Floréal) asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to Constituency No. 16, Vacoas and Floréal, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to the –

(a) number of complaints registered on the hotline in relation to non-supply of water on a 24/7 basis since September 2019 to date thereat;

(b) areas affected by the lack of water thereat, and

(c) cost incurred in relation to water supply through water tankers hired from private operators.

(Withdrawn)

Mr Speaker: Next question, hon. Ms Foo Kune!

CREWS WORKING ONBOARD REPATRIATION FLIGHTS – QUARANTINE REQUIREMENTS

(No. B/228) Ms K. Foo Kune (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to cabin crews working onboard repatriation flights, he will state –

(a) the quarantine requirements therefor after each flight, indicating the sanctions applicable for breach thereof, if any, and

(b) if they are COVID-19 tested in case any passenger travelling onboard any such flight is tested COVID-19 positive.

Dr. Jagutpal: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that in line with the established protocols based on international standards, cabin crew at Air Mauritius, are required to self-isolate at home. On landing at the airport in Mauritius, the crew members are allowed to leave the airplane wearing their uniforms and to proceed to their home where they self-isolate themselves for 7 days.

Thereafter, our public health inspectors carry out home visits to assess their health and check their temperature on a daily basis. Section 12 of the Quarantine Act 2020 provides for a fine not exceeding Rs500,000 and to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 5 years in the event of breach of quarantine requirements.

As regards part (b) of the question, if a passenger is tested positive, all the cabin crew is tested for COVID-19 and they remain in self-isolation at home. After 5 days, they all undergo another PCR test.

Ms Foo Kune: Can I ask the hon. Minister if the cabin crew is systematically, routinely COVID-19 tested after each flight?

Dr. Jagutpal: Before leaving Mauritius, after each flight, the cabin crew is not systematically tested. No test is being carried out. It is after they are coming back that these protocols are met for them.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Can I know from the hon. Minister what is the procedure for crew which has come to Mauritius and left on flights other than Air Mauritius, cargo flights and private jets that land in Mauritius? What is the procedure for these cabin crews?

Dr. Jagutpal: Procedures for passengers who are on transit, if ever they have to be in Mauritius, they have to roam around in Mauritius, they are not allowed because they will be placed in quarantine. Now, if passengers have come only for the transit, but, so far, we have

not have any passengers coming for transit, but if ever there are passengers coming for transit, they will be kept in this sanitary corridor.

Mr Uteem: It's crew.

(Interruptions)

Dr. Jagutpal: The same procedures apply for the crew members also. But if ever they come outside the airport, then in that case, they are going to have these sanitary protocols observed for them.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Ms Foo Kune!

Ms Foo Kune: If the cabin crews are not systematically tested after each flight and there is no guarantee that they respect the self-isolation correctly, how does the Minister intend to ensure that the cabin crews are not COVID-19 positive and will contaminate other family members they live with or other people they encounter if they choose to leave their home?

Dr. Jagutpal: Mr Speaker, Sir, I believe the answer was clear because health inspectors carry out home visits to assess whether they have any health problem and even they have been observed. Now, these crew members, if they have been in contact with passengers travelling in the flight and if all the passengers have been tested and all are negative, there is no possibility that those crew members will carry the virus.

Mr Speaker: Last supplementary, hon. Ittoo!

Mr Ittoo: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Can the hon. Minister please inform the House as to quarantine protocols for the crew members when they arrive at their destination abroad? Thank you.

Dr. Jagutpal: Now, for crew members arriving at their destination abroad, so the pilot, the co-pilot, as well as all the crew members should keep on wearing their protective clothing. They go to their hotel with their protective clothing. They move to the reception, again with the protective clothing. Once in front of their respective rooms, they take off the protective clothing. They should use the protocol made in place, that is, they have to use the plastic bag, specifically designed to that effect and the bag should be hermetically sealed. The

crew members, once they are in their room, they have to stay in their room. They should not leave their room until their transfer to the airport for the next flight.

Mr Speaker: Next question, hon. Abbas Mamode!

NEONATAL INTENSIVE CARE UNIT - BEDS AND VENTILATORS

(No. B/229) Mr S. Abbas Mamode (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to the public hospitals, he will state the number of beds and ventilators available in each Neonatal Intensive Care Unit thereof, indicating –

(a) if they are in good working order, and

(b) where matters stand as to the opening of a Tertiary Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at the Victoria Hospital, indicating –

(i) if all required equipment have been procured, and

(ii) the expected date of coming into operation thereof.

Dr. Jagutpal: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the present Neonatal Intensive Care Unit bed capacity is 26 throughout the island. As regards the ventilators, there are 27 in all, 23 which are functional and 4 non-functional in the five regional hospitals. The needful has been done for the repair of the 4 non-functional ventilators.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am informed that the procurement procedures for the construction of a Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at Victoria Hospital have already been initiated. Bids have been launched on 23 June 2020 and the closing date for submission is 29 July 2020. A pre-bid site visit is scheduled for Monday 13 July 2020. The evaluation of the bids received, award of contract and construction period will take some 9 to 10 months. On this basis, it is expected that the building will be ready in April 2021.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as far as the equipment is concerned, I am informed that 26 beds and 27 ventilators are available as follows –

- for SSRN Hospital, we have 6 beds, 6 ventilators, out of which 4 are functional and 2 non-functional. Order for spare parts have already been placed on 25 June 2020;

- for Jeetoo Hospital, we have 4 beds and 3 ventilators which are all functioning;

- at Flacq Hospital, we have 4 beds and 5 ventilators, 4 are functioning and one is non-functional. Tenders for the purchase of spare parts have been launched on 29 June 2020 with closing date on 14 July 2020;

- at Nehru Hospital, we have 5 beds and 6 ventilators, out of which, one is not functioning. Spare parts are awaited by 10 July 2020, and

- at Victoria Hospital, there are 7 beds and 7 ventilators and all are functional.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am further informed that 8 out of the 27 items required for the NICU, have already been procured. The approval of the Central Procurement Board is awaited to award the contract for other 8 items and 3 items are at the Departmental Bid Committee level. Specifications for the remaining items are being worked out and tenders would be floated accordingly.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Abbas Mamode!

Mr Abbas Mamode: We are made to understand by the reply of the Minister that tender will be launched. So, for the time being, there is no information concerning Neonatal, especially the Intensive Care Unit. There are only two specialists in Mauritius as far as we know. Does the Minister consider having negotiations with the two ladies to form personnel right now, because there is a rise in neonatal death during these last months?

Dr. Jagutpal: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am not aware that there has been any rise in the neonatal death last month, but what I can say that the paediatricians working in the different neonatal departments of the hospitals, they are very much trained to see neonates.

Now, obviously, if we want to escalate our service, we will be in need of Neonatologists. And Neonatologists to be recruited at the level of the Ministry, it is the process of going through the Public Service Commission.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Shakeel Mohamed!

Mr Mohamed: Yes, I listened very carefully to what the hon. Minister of Health has said about the ventilators. Now, forgive me, but I am referring here to a document that has been tabled by the hon. Minister, himself, in relation to the Estimates of Supplementary Appropriation 2019-2020, in which I read in this document that he has tabled, that on 03 April 2020, under the column 'supplier' in that document, I read the words 'Pack & Blister' being the name of the supplier, even though I could not even find the existence of that company at the Registrar of Companies. Ever since this morning I am trying to look for it, it does not exist, that 50 ventilators, *entre autres*, were ordered, including 5 million masks, 1 million masks N95, Protective Equipment, all for the sum of Rs476,329,362.30. Now, it is so many millions that maybe the Minister has not heard me right. Rs476 m. if I have to round it up. So, would the neonatal ventilators being referred to, also find their way here and if he could please in the name of transparency, since he tabled these documents, tell us this Rs476 m. given to that one supplier in a document that he has tabled called Pack and Blister; if it does not exist at the Registrar of Companies, where is this company from?

Dr. Jagutpal: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member is referring to a question that is not related to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. The ventilators mentioned here are paediatric ventilators. I hope he can make the difference between paediatric ventilators and adult ventilators…

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Abbas Mamode!

(Interruptions)

Dr. Jagutpal: What the hon. Member is referring to are adult ventilators and I am giving the information about the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Abbas Mamode!

Mr Abbas Mamode: Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir. I will table a Press cutting where the Minister, himself, admitted that there is *une hausse de mortalité infantile*. I will table the Press article. There is, indeed, actually a problem in Mauritius concerning death of babies. You know, poor people have no alternatives than going to hospitals.

Mr Speaker: Question, question!

Mr Abbas Mamode: We have only two specialists available in Mauritius. Does the Ministry consider having a working arrangement with these two specialists to help the different hospitals in Mauritius?

Dr. Jagutpal: Mr Speaker, Sir, I know very well why the hon. Member is so much concerned about those two specialists. I don't want to raise the names, now…

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Let the Minister give the reply.

Dr. Jagutpal: I have already informed the House that recruitment for…

Mr Abbas Mamode: On a point of order! May I? The hon. Minister is imputing motive…

An hon. Member: Exactly!

Mr Abbas Mamode: ...and the hon. Minister has to remove it.

(Interruptions)

Withdraw!

Dr. Jagutpal: Mr Speaker, Sir,…

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Member, try to limit your replies, okay.

Dr. Jagutpal: Mr Speaker, Sir, so far as I know, I know only one doctor working at Wellkin Clinic who is a specialist in neonatology. So, I don't know why the hon. Member is so much asking the Ministry when I have already informed that the Ministry, the recruitment is going…

(Interruptions)

Because the Ministry will do recruitment through the normal process and that is through the Public Service Commission.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Abbas Mamode, next question!

Mr Abbas Mamode: PQ B/230! Mr Speaker, Sir, since the Minister is not here and we are at the eve of Eid-Ul-Adha…

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: So, we move on to…

(Interruptions)

Okay, we have no choice now, we move to the next Question!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: Where is the Minister? He should apologise. Call the Minister to order when he comes. B/231!

HORSERACING – GAMBLING REGULATORY AUTHORITY

(No. B/231) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development whether, in regard to horseracing, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Gambling Regulatory Authority, information as to if it has granted authorisation to the Mauritius Turf Club to have recourse to gaming agencies for the sponsoring thereof and, if so, when the said authorisation was granted.

Dr. Padayachy: M. le président, j'ai été informé par la *Gambling Regulatory Authority* qu'aucune autorisation n'a été accordée au *Mauritius Turf Club* pour avoir recours à des agences de jeux en vue de sponsoriser les courses hippiques.

Je porte à l'attention de la Chambre qu'en vertu de la section 156(4) de la *Gambling Regulatory Authority Act*, aucune activité n'est autorisée à être sponsorisée par un titulaire de licence ou par une personne ayant un intérêt direct ou indirect vis-à-vis d'un titulaire de licence.

Il est à noter que seule la publication d'informations factuelles relatives aux résultats, aux calendriers aux cotes, aux tirages et au pool est autorisée par la *GRA*.

Enfin, je souhaite informer la Chambre que le Conseil d'administration de la *GRA* prendra toute décision qu'elle jugera appropriée à la lumière des informations recueillies à ce sujet.

Merci.

Mr Bhagwan: Can the Minister give assurance to the House that - because everybody knows that one Senior Adviser, Mr Dev Beekharry, who is a member of the Board of the

GRA, is acting like a *paravent* for the Al Capone of Champ de Mars, the boss of *SMS Pariaz*. Can the Minister give guarantee to the House that there won't be any *ingérence* with regard to the sections 156(1), 156(4) *dont les sections ont été violées par ceux qui ont eu leur permis*?

Dr. Padayachy: M. le président, dans ma réponse je l'ai dit que la *GRA* prendra toute décision qu'elle jugera appropriée à la lumière des informations recueillies à ce sujet, c'est ça ma réponse et je pense que je tablerai par la suite les conclusions, si jamais il y en a. Merci.

Mr Bhagwan: Can the hon. Minister give the assurance to the House that there won't be any cover-up at the level of the GRA, not at the level of the Minister? Will the hon. Minister make sure that there won't be any cover-up at the level of the GRA, especially by one Board member, Mr Dev Beekharry who is acting as an agent of the Al Capone of Champ de Mars, Mr Lee Shim?

Dr. Padayachy: M. le président, je viens de répondre à cette question. Je dirais simplement une chose, qu'on arrête de jeter la boue comme cela sur les gens…

(Interruptions)

Qu'on arrête! Il n'y a aucune, il y a rien…

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Dr. Padayachy: Je termine ma…

(Interruptions)

Je dis qu'on arrête de jeter la boue parce que je viens de répondre à la question en disant que la *GRA* va donner des informations là-dessus.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Shakeel Mohamed!

Mr Mohamed: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Could the hon. Minister also bring to the attention of the Authority that the parties that he has, in an unsuccessful manner, tried to defend a few seconds ago, and to take position for them - he knows whom I am talking about, those companies referred to as some sort of Mafiosi name - that this company, very close to Government, has terminated employment of hundreds of employees of theirs recently just in

the midst of confinement by not paying them the requirement severance provided for by law? That should also be brought to the attention of the Authority as one of the elements of equation call human issues.

Dr. Padayachy: M. le président, je souhaiterais avoir les informations concernant ce sujet mais on ne m'a pas posé de question spécifique là-dessus. On m'a posé une question concernant la *GRA*, maintenant on vient sur une question concernant les ressources humaines d'une compagnie qu'on n'a pas donnée de nom par la suite, donc, on est en train d'accuser sans même citer…

(Interruptions)

Je viens de dire…

Mr Speaker: Let the Minister, hon. Shakeel Mohamed!

Dr. Padayachy: Je viens de répondre en disant je n'ai pas les informations sur quelle compagnie.

Mr Speaker: So, you finish your answer, hon. Minister; you stop there. Last supplementary!

Mr Bhagwan: One last supplementary! *Ce* n'*est pas jeter de la boue*. I know that the Minister is new - especially new - and he does not know this mafia of Champ de Mars and GRA as myself. Champ de Mars, not the Minister, I am saying the mafia at Champ de Mars…

Mr Speaker: You are repeating that three times.

Mr Bhagwan: No, I am not repeating. I am giving information. Can the Minister inquire whether there have been breach of the GRA Act by the Mauritius Turf Club, Loterie Poupard, and especially, Loterie Blanc of *SMS Pariaz* which is headed by the mafia of *SMS Pariaz*? Will he see to it that there is proper inquiry, especially what I am saying, breach of GRA Act by the MTC, Loterie Poupard and Loterie Blanc sponsored by *SMS Pariaz*?

(Interruptions)

I am giving information also.

Dr. Padayachy: J'ai répondu à cette question, M. le président, en disant que la *GRA* est en train de procéder à une série d'investigation, est en train d'avoir des informations là-dessus et j'apporterai les informations nécessaires par la suite. Merci.

Mr Speaker: Next question, hon. Bhagwan!

DEVELOPMENT BANK OF MAURITIUS LTD – COROMANDEL HOSPITAL CO LTD – POLYCLINIC DE L'OUEST LTD

(No. B/232) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development whether, in regard to the Development Bank of Mauritius Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to if land at Coromandel has been leased to the Coromandel Hospital Co. Ltd and Polyclinic de l'Ouest Ltd. and, if so, indicate –

(a) when application was made therefor and same approved;

(b) extent of land leased, purpose therefor and terms and conditions thereof, and

(c) if any evaluation of the land was made prior to approval and, if so, by whom and who represented the companies.

Dr. Padayachy: M. le président, en vertu de la section 81(3) de la *Prevention of Corruption Act*, il m'est impossible de dévoiler quelconque détail à ce sujet en raison de la conduite d'une investigation par l'*Independent Commission Against Corruption*. Toute information partagée à cet égard risquerait d'entraver le cours de l'enquête.

Mr Bhagwan: Can I know from the hon. Minister that there is an inquiry on PQ B/232? Inquiry about what, this land?

(Interruptions)

I am asking about PQ B/232, land given to Mr Joomaye, Senior Adviser. Is the hon. Minister confirming that this is before ICAC?

Mr Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan, let the Minister answer!

Dr. Padayachy: Oui, il y a une enquête de l'*ICAC* là-dessus.

Mr Bhagwan: We do not trust ICAC. But can I ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware, while approving that request given to this hospital Mafiosi, another Mafiosi, whether

the approval was given on 29 August 2019, and the application was made on 26 August 2019?

(Interruptions)

Whether the application was made on 26 August 2019 and the letter of approval was issued on 29 August 2019? I have a copy here.

Dr. Padayachy: M. le président, je viens de répondre à l'honorable Bhagwan qu'il m'est impossible de dévoiler quelconque détail parce qu'il y a une enquête, et c'est la loi. Je ne vais pas aller à l'encontre de la loi. Merci.

Mr Speaker: Next question!

Mr Bhagwan: This is fraud and corruption. I am giving information. Can the Minister inform the House whether Dr. Joomaye, Senior Adviser at the Prime Minister's Office and *candidat battu aux élections, ancien transfuge*, whether he is the one who has signed the deeds? Give me one second...

Mr Speaker: You have one question!

Mr Bhagwan: No, I am asking. So, can the Minister, at least, inform the House whether Dr. Zouberr Houssein Issa Joomaye was the one who signed that lease and he was a *candidat battu aux élections de l'alliance gouvernementale, ancien transfuge*, whether the Minister is aware of that? Can the Minister inform the House whether he has some details to give to the nation about the purpose of the inquiry?

Dr. Padayachy: Encore une fois, M. le président, je reviens là-dessus, je viens de dire qu'il m'est impossible de dévoiler les informations sur une enquête en cours. C'est une enquête. Si vous avez besoin des informations, vous pouvez aller les demander à l'*ICAC*.

Mr Bhagwan: I have one question.

Mr Speaker: No. I have already said, next question!

SMS PARIAZ – MAURITIUS REVENUE AUTHORITY

(No. B/233) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development whether, in regard to *SMS Pariaz*, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA), information as to –

(a) if it is connected to the server of the MRA and, if so, since when and, if not, why not;

(b) the platform used by the latter for the recording of the bets;

(c) if the MRA has been informed of winning bets allegedly not registered by *SMS Pariaz* in respect of the first meeting of 2020 and, if so, indicate the actions taken in relation thereto, if any, and

(d) if it has paid all its dues to the MRA.

Dr. Padayachy: M. le président, au regard des parties (a) et (b) de la question, j'ai été informé par la *Mauritius Revenue Authority* que *SMS Pariaz* est connectée au serveur de la *MRA* depuis mars 2013. La *MRA* utilise la plateforme qui a été mise en place par la *Gambling Regulatory Authority* dont le développement a été finalisé en 2005. Cette plateforme est sous le contrôle de la *MRA*.

SMS Pariaz Ltd charge les données de chaque journée de courses sur le serveur de la *MRA* situé dans le bâtiment du *Mauritius Turf Club* au Champ de Mars. Cette opération est réalisée chaque lundi suivant la journée de courses, comme c'est le cas pour les autres opérateurs utilisant la communication à distance.

Depuis 2017, la *MRA* travaille sur une nouvelle plateforme appelée *Central Electronic Monitoring System*. Ce système assurera l'enregistrement, la surveillance et le contrôle en ligne et en continu de toutes les activités de jeux. Ainsi, tous les opérateurs de jeux, y compris les bookmakers, devront relier leurs serveurs à ce système de surveillance électronique centralisé.

J'ai également été informé par la *MRA* qu'un appel d'offres international a été lancé par le *CPB* en décembre 2018. Un seul fournisseur de services potentiels a répondu à cet appel d'offres. En mars 2019, le *Central Procurement Board* a informé la *MRA* que le soumissionnaire était peu réactif et a conseillé de revoir les spécifications afin de les rendre conformes aux tendances actuelles du marché.

La *MRA* examine actuellement le document d'appel d'offres qui sera achevé d'ici la fin du mois de septembre de cette année.

En ce qui concerne la partie (c) de la question, la *MRA* n'a pas été informée de paris gagnants prétendument non enregistrés par *SMS Pariaz* en ce qui concerne la première rencontre de 2020.

Toutefois, à la suite d'articles de presse parus le dimanche 21 et le lundi 22 juin 2020, la *MRA* a demandé à la *GRA*, le lundi 22 juin 2020, si cette dernière avait reçu des plaintes de parties lésées. La *MRA* a été informée qu'il n'y avait pas eu de plainte à ce stade.

SMS Pariaz a informé la *GRA* qu'un communiqué a été publié par l'entreprise pour informer ses clients du ralentissement du serveur et que des mesures correctives ont été prises pour, d'une part, payer les paris gagnants non-traités, et d'autre part, rembourser tous les paris perdus qui n'ont pas été acceptés par le serveur.

Par ailleurs, j'ai été informé que la *MRA* procède à un audit concernant cette journée de courses.

En ce qui concerne la partie (d) de la question, l'information indiquant si *SMS Pariaz* a payé toutes ses cotisations à la *MRA*, cette information ne peut être divulguée compte tenu des dispositions de confidentialité de la section 13 de la *Mauritius Revenue Authority Act.* Merci.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Speaker, Sir, the Minister is telling us that he cannot give information concerning these fees. According to my information, millions are due by the *SMS Pariaz* to the MRA, unless we are proved the contrary. Would the Minister, again, conduct an enquiry between *les liens incestueux entre* M. Beekarry, *membre de la* GRA *et la SMS Pariaz*? Everybody knows that the *SMS Pariaz* has been one of the main sponsors of the Government Alliance Party during that election, the MSM. So, can the Minister inform the House whether this *SMS Pariaz,* which is an habitual criminal, as regards to non-registering of bets, and it is not the first time that it has failed to do so, that the Minister will order an independent inquiry apart from the GRA - not the GRA - of what happened on the first day of the races, especially the first meeting of this 2020 where all the blame was put on the Mauritius Telecom?

Dr. Padayachy: M. le président, j'ai simplement répété ce qui est écrit dans la loi, c'est-à-dire que je ne peux divulguer compte tenu des dispositions de confidentialité de la section 13 de la *MRA*. Ça c'est la première chose. La deuxième chose, j'ai déjà dit que la *MRA* procède à un audit concernant cette journée de courses. Donc, j'attends d'avoir les informations et je donnerai les informations concernées.

Mr Speaker: Hon Dr. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the Minister whether MRA has been apprised or informed that *SMS Pariaz* has been taking bets for overseas sporting events despite the fact that it does not have regulatory licences from respective countries where bets are placed?

Dr. Padayachy: M. le président, je vais demander les informations que le Leader de l'Opposition m'a demandé et je donnerai ces informations.

Mr Speaker: Last supplementary!

Mr Bhagwan: Being given the seriousness of this issue where we are talking about millions more, several millions of rupees, *je viens de le dire,* incestuous relationship between the GRA and *SMS Pariaz,* will the Minister inform House whether he intends to review, have a fresh look at the composition of the Board of the GRA, especially, *le rôle de Monsieur* Beekharry, Senior Adviser?

Dr. Padayachy: M. le président, ça fait je ne sais plus combien de fois qu'on est en train de parler de Monsieur Beekharry, Monsieur Beekharry et Monsieur Beekharry. Je vais dire simplement une chose…

(Interruptions)

Je vais dire une chose…

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: I think they do not need an answer. Do you? If you need a reply, then listen!

Dr. Padayachy: On travaille, et en temps et lieu, on reviendra avec le Conseil d'administration de la *GRA.*

Mr Speaker: Next question, Hon. Bhagwan! B/234!

Mr Abbas Mamode: Mr Speaker, Sir, on a point of order! The Minister is back. So, can we go to B/229?

Mr Bhagwan: No, let me finish.

Mr Speaker: Yes, you finish first! Just wait a minute!

Mr Bhagwan: B/234!

Dr. Aumeer: Mr Speaker, Sir, will I have the same right to put my question which I missed one minute ago, same as the Minister is having the right to answer when he was not here?

Dr. Padayachy: B/234?

Mr Speaker: Reply Minister!

LANDSCOPE (MAURITIUS) LTD – BOARD MEMBERS

(No. B/234) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development whether, in regard to Landscope (Mauritius) Ltd, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the names of the Chairperson, the Chief Executive Officer and Members of the Board thereof, indicating in each case the date and terms and conditions of appointment, including the monthly pay packet and other benefits drawn.

Dr. Padayachy: M. Le président, le président de *Landscope (Mauritius*) Ltd. est M. P. Boodhun et la Directrice Générale est Mme N. Hanoomanjee.

Je dépose le nom des autres membres du Conseil d'administration. La date et les conditions de nomination de la Directrice Générale et des membres du Conseil d'administration sont également déposées.

Mr Bhagwan: Est-ce que le ministre peut confirmer à la Chambre et à la nation, *taxpayers, the people of Mauritius, whether* Dr. Zouberr Joomaye, *Senior Adviser of the Prime Minister's Office*, candidat battu aux dernières élections, transfuge, est membre du *Board*?

(Interruptions)

I think the Minister has not listened. Can I repeat my question?

Dr. Padayachy: Oui.

Mr Bhagwan: Can I repeat? Yes?

Dr. Padayachy: Non, vous avez posé la question. M. le president...

Mr Bhagwan: No, let me…

(Interruptions)

he has not listened to my question.

Dr. Padayachy: J'ai répondu. J'ai répondu oui.

Mr Bhagwan: Can the Minister inform the House what is the amount paid to him as being a member of that Board?

Dr. Padayachy: M. le président, j'ai déposé les informations là-dessus, mais je n'ai pas de problème pour le dire, tous les membres de ce Conseil d'administration touchent R 25,000 par mois.

Mr Bhagwan: Can I, one last question? At a time - can I ask that the mic be on? *Il me semble* there is some problem there.

(Interruptions)

Hey, res trankil ar mwa toi labas! Pa rod lamerdmen!

Can I ask the Minister how can he reconcile - because he, himself, during the Budget Time, has made a speech that we are passing through big financial difficulties in the country, that *nous avons à faire des sacrifices* - at a time when people are losing jobs, doesn't the Minister of Finance consider that it is time that these Board Members - he is working free for the Prime Minister's Office, he can work free here also. But can the Minister of Finance inform the House, the nation, the taxpayers, at a time when hundreds of thousands of people are losing their jobs, that such *largesse* is being known at the level of Landscope?

Mr Speaker: Okay!

Dr. Padayachy: M. le président, je suis désolé, mais je ne comprends pas très bien la question, parce que quelle largesse? C'est fixé, c'est R 25,000 par mois, comme pour les autres, certains autres Conseils d'administration…

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Abbas Mamode!

EID-UL-ADHA FESTIVAL – LIVE CATTLE

(No. B/230) Mr M. Abbas Mamode (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Commerce and Consumer Protection whether, in regard to live cattle, he will state if –

(a) for the Eid-Ul-Adha festival

(i) the price thereof will be fixed, and

(ii) his Ministry will ensure the age requirement thereof, and

(b) all farms are equipped with scales calibrated by the legal metrology.

Mr Sawmynaden: Mr Speaker, Sir, let me first of all tender my apologies for not being here because actually I thought that it was arranged with hon. Abbas Mamode and he told me that he is going to remove the question, because I was going to attend the funeral of one party. But, unfortunately, I am here today, so I am going to answer the question.

Mr Abbas Mamode: A communication between me and the Clerk: I was advised that it was the Minister who should have informed the Speaker of his absence, and not myself.

Mr Speaker: Minister, carry on!

Mr Sawmynaden: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that there are two importers for live cattle this year for the Eid Ul Adha festival, namely, Agro Boss Ltd and Socovia Belle Vue Ltée.

The two importers have been contacted and they have submitted costings for the animals which have been imported. A Committee under the chairmanship of Dr. the hon. Anwar Husnoo, Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management, has been set up to study the costings and recommend the price to fix for live cattle for Eid Ul Adha 2020. The Committee comprises of hon. Maneesh Gobin, Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security, importers of live cattle and my Ministry.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as regards the second part of the question, I am informed by the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security that according to Islamic rules, the cattle have to be at least two years of age to qualify for slaughter for the Eid Ul Adha festival. Cattle which are two years of age have two permanent incisors. Consumers will be allowed to verify that the animals are of this age according to the number of teeth and incisors of the animal.

Mr Speaker Sir, finally, on the question of scales calibration, the Legal Metrology Services of my Ministry has already calibrated the scales of five farms and those of four others are expected to be assized by the end of this week. Moreover, I am also informed that the Livestock and Veterinary Division of the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security will ensure that the weighing process of the cattle is animal welfare compliant. Inspection by Veterinary Officers will be carried out to verify this process.

The hon. Member may rest assured that appropriate action is being taken.

Mr Abbas Mamode: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am made to understand by the Minister's reply that it will be the role of the consumer to check whether the cattle are of two years over. I want to know whether the Ministry has inspectors or experts to check, to ensure that the animals are of age permissible to go for sacrifice?

Mr Sawmynaden: Mr Speaker, Sir, in my reply, I have mentioned that the officers, the Veterinary Services, the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security will do that and the consumers will be allowed to verify the animals also, they can crosscheck before they purchase. So, it will be one from the Ministry of Agro-Industry, and the second one from the consumer himself.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Yes, thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. As the hon. Minister mentioned, there are five farms, they have their calibrated scales, but recently there has been a multiplication of small farms and these farms do not have any scale, they just sell the animal by just looking at it. So, therefore, I am asking the hon. Minister if he can see to it that all farms that are selling live cattle must have scales.

Mr Sawmynaden: Actually, the hon. Member will agree with me that it will be for us, Ministry, to know where they are selling animals, but if a consumer feels that he is going to buy an animal without being properly weighed, he just needs to inform the Ministry that this is not correct and we will take necessary action. Or, if the hon. Member has a list of farms where he feels that they are selling animals according to what he said, he just needs to inform the Ministry, we will take action.

Mr Speaker: Next question, hon. Mrs Luchmun Roy!

ROCHE BOIS YOUTH CENTRE – DAMAGES CAUSED

(No. B/235) Mrs S. Luchmun Roy (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation whether, in regard to the Youth Centre at Roche Bois, he will state if he is aware of damages caused thereat during the curfew period and, if so, indicate if remedial measures have been taken in relation thereto.

Mr Toussaint: Mr Speaker, Sir, on 11 May 2020, my Ministry was informed that the Roche Bois Youth Centre has been subject to an act of vandalism coupled with the theft of some items of equipment. This incident occurred during the lockdown period and the matter

was accordingly reported to the Police. Without delay, a survey was conducted by the officers of my Ministry to determine the extent of damages. The preliminary survey has revealed that –

(a) the doors and windows were forced and damaged;

(b) all equipment, office and outdoor have gone missing, and

(c) the electricity, water and communication networks were damaged and beyond repairs.

The technical team attached to my Ministry were instructed to carry out a thorough inspection of the facility and determine the scope of works to make the Roche Bois Youth Centre operational. A service provider is being recruited to carry out the works in the shortest possible time so as not to penalise the youth of the region. In the meantime, the Centre has been closed to avoid any health and safety hazards.

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister inform the House about the tentative date for the reopening of the youth centre?

Mr Toussaint: M. le président, les travaux vont durer un certain temps et je pense que ce n'est pas avant le mois de décembre que nous allons pouvoir réouvrir et utiliser pleinement le centre de Roche Bois.

Mrs Luchmun Roy: The hon. Minister mentioned about damages caused. Can the hon. Minister provide us with the details of the expenses which his Ministry will incur towards works to be done for the youth centre?

Mr Toussaint: Actually, Mr Speaker, Sir, the estimates about the electrical works have not yet been finalised. Civil works will be at around Rs294,412. Survey about the electrical works is being carried out and has not yet been finalised.

Mr Ameer Meea: I understand this has been perpetrated during the curfew period, but in normal times, is there any security that is based at the Roche Bois Youth Centre?

Mr Toussaint: Yes, normally, we have Security Services, but during the curfew period the Security Officers were not attending work and that is why we had this problem at Roche Bois Youth Centre.

MORCELLEMENT LA VALLEY, LE CORNU, STE CROIX – DRAIN

(No. B/236) Mrs S. Luchmun Roy (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure and Community Development whether, in regard to the emergency drain project at Morcellement La Valley, Le Cornu, Ste Croix, he will state where matters stand as to the implementation thereof by the National Development Unit.

Mr Hurreeram: Mr Speaker, Sir, following recurrent flooding problems encountered in the region of Ste Croix, the National Development Unit has embarked on the implementation of a project for the construction of a drain network at Morcellement La Valley, Le Cornu in view to mitigate recurrence of flooding and water accumulation problems thereat.

The scope of work for the project comprises the following –

- cleaning of existing drains of a stretch of approximately 690 metres;
- construction of drains of a stretch of approximately 3,880 metres;
- full width road reinstatement over a distance of about 1,800 metres;
- road reprofiling wherever required;
- relocation of existing utility services, and
- construction of catchpits.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the National Development Unit has appointed a contractor for the execution of the works for an amount of Rs140,812,418.15, inclusive of VAT on 22 June 2020. Works are expected to start mid-July 2020 and completed by December 2021.

Mr Speaker: Next question, hon. Mrs Luchmun Roy.

COVID-19 PANDEMIC – CREDIT UNIONS – FINANCIAL SUPPORT

(No. B/237) Mrs S. Luchmun Roy (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Industrial Development, SMEs and Cooperatives whether, in regard to the credit unions, he will state if consideration will be given for a review of the financial support provided to the members thereof amid the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Mr Bholah: Mr Speaker, Sir, in the wake of COVID-19 Pandemic, I had consultative meetings with all the cooperative federations, including the Mauritius Cooperative Savings and Credit League Ltd. and the Mauritius Cooperative Alliance Ltd. which is the mouthpiece of the cooperative movement in Mauritius.

I seize this opportunity to make an appeal to the credit unions to be flexible as far as possible with their members who have taken loans and are facing difficulties repaying back because of hardship due to COVID-19.

Moreover, the Cooperative Credit Unions could also come at the rescue of those Mauritians who are facing financial difficulties in this post-COVID-19 period by devising attractive schemes for them. In fact, the Cooperative Credit Unions are autonomous and independent organisations that promote thrift among their members. Government does not provide any financial support directly to their members. It is up to the respective Board of Directors to resolve at extending any support to their members.

In accordance with the Cooperative Act, a cooperative credit union should operate within the framework of loan regulations adopted by its Board. Any exceptional measures proposed by a cooperative credit union which is beyond the scope of the loan regulations to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on the solvency of its members, should obtain the consent of the Registrar of Cooperative Societies. Such exceptional measures regarding loan repayment or moratorium will be considered on a fast track basis at the level of my Ministry.

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Has the hon. Minister been informed of any malpractices presently in the credit unions?

Mr Bholah: Well, there are, as far as I know, some complaints being made by certain members of certain credit unions, and as soon as we get such information about these, the Registrar of Cooperatives will initiate appropriate enquiries.

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Can the hon. Minister tell us what is the rate of interest normally charged to members on loan?

Mr Bholah: The rate of interest which is charged varies, as far as I know, between 0.8% to 1% per month on reducing balance.

MONTAGNE LONGUE HOSPITAL – DIALYSIS CENTRE – PROPOSED CONVERSION

(No. B/238) Mrs S. Luchmun Roy (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to the proposed conversion of the Montagne Longue Hospital into a Dialysis Centre, he will state where matters stand.

Dr. Jagutpal: Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I will reply to both PQ Nos. B/238 and B/246 together.

There are 1,390 persons undergoing dialysis treatment at both public and private health institutions in Mauritius. These are –

For Government hospitals – SSRN Hospital, Dr. A. G. Jeetoo Hospital, Victoria Hospital, Nehru Hospital, Flacq Hospital, Souillac Hospital and for private clinics, AURAM Dialysis Centre, Nephron Dialysis Centre, National Dialysis Centre, Phoenix, Chisty Shifa Clinic, Wellkin Hospital and *Clinique du Nord.*

As for Long Mountain Hospital, one ward has been upgraded since October 2019 to serve as a dedicated Dialysis Unit. The Ministry has initiated procedures for the procurement of 90 dialysis machines. Tenders were floated in January 2020 with closing date in March 2020. Following approval of CPB, a letter of notification has been issued to the unsuccessful and successful bidders on 02 July 2020. If after seven days, there is no challenge, the letter of award for the supply of 90 new dialysis machines will be issued. 20 of them will be installed at Long Mountain Unit for the treatment of some 110 patients from the northern catchment area.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Mrs Luchmun Roy!

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Thank you very much, hon. Minister. Can the hon. Minister share with the House how much is paid to private clinics for each dialysis?

Dr. Jagutpal: Yes, for private clinics with whom the Ministry has entered an agreement to provide this service against a payment of Rs800 per dialysis session and they

are also provided with dialysis consumables which cost around Rs500 per kit for each dialysis session.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Speaker, Sir, since 2010, the number of dialysis patients has been on constant rise when we look at the figures. Therefore, according to some information which I read, there are certain medicines that can be used so as to delay the session of dialysis to a maximum. Therefore, can I ask the hon. Minister if any *campagne de sensibilisation* has been done or will be done by his Ministry so as to educate people with these problems?

Dr. Jagutpal: Thank you, hon. Minister. Yes, obviously…

(Interruptions)

Hon. Member. I think you will be…

(Interruptions)

Alright, okay, sorry.

Mr Speaker: Everybody is in good humour. Continue!

Dr. Jagutpal: Thank you again, hon. Member. Yes, that's totally true that number of patients suffering from dialysis is increasing every year and obviously, we have to think on this line, where we can prevent patients from going into dialysis because that cost a lot of money, and also the quality of life for those patients is not as good as the hon. Member has said.

Now, new medications have come. So, we'll be waiting for the approval of the Consultant-in-charge working in the Dialysis Unit. Once they give us the approval, we are going to have the medicine that is being used for those patients to delay their dialysis sessions.

Dr. Aumeer: Can I ask the hon. Minister the number of Nephrologists who are employed in the public sector and the ratio of Nephrologists per Dialysis Unit? Will the hon. Minister also confirm to us for the new one being built at Montagne Longue, what would be the ratio of nephrologists per bed?

Dr. Jagutpal: As for the number of nephrologists employed in the public sector, I do not have the correct number, but so far, I can just give a broad number. It could be within five nephrologists working in the Nephrology Unit of the Ministry.

Mr Speaker: Last supplementary!

Dr. Boolell: Yes, thank you very much, Mr Speaker, Sir. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether the tender exercise for the acquisition of a dialysis machine, is it an open or restricted bidding exercise?

Dr. Jagutpal: Hon. Leader of the Opposition, I do not have the information, but what I can share with you, because this will amount to more than Rs50 m., so this procedure has been done at the level of Central Procurement Board. Once I get the information, I will table it.

Mr Speaker: I have to inform the House that PQ Nos. B/268, B/269, B/270 and B/242 have been withdrawn. Next question!

FATF RECOMMENDATIONS – COMPLIANCE

(No. B/239) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Financial Services and Good Governance whether, in regard to the consultants whose services have been retained to assist Mauritius comply with the recommendations of the Financial Action Task Force and get out of the European Commission's list of high risk third countries with strategic deficiencies in their regime regarding anti-money laundering and counter terrorist financing, since 2014 to date, he will state the –

(a) names thereof;

(b) quantum of fees paid thereto, and

(c) criteria used for the selection thereof.

Mr Seeruttun: Mr Speaker, Sir, in my reply to a Private Notice Question on 13 May 2020, I informed the House that Mauritius has undergone two mutual evaluations and the Eastern and Southern Africa Anti-Money Laundering Group (ESAAMLG) mutual evaluation procedures. The second exercise started with the desk review in October 2016, which subsequently led to the publication of its Mutual Evaluation Report, the MER, in September 2018.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the mutual evaluation is conducted in accordance with the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) methodology, which is endorsed by the ESAAMLG Council of Ministers.

Mr Speaker, Sir, one of the overarching principles of the revised FATF methodology 2012 concerns the assessment of money laundering and financing of terrorism risk at national level for which a National Risk Assessment has to be undertaken.

In this respect, Mauritius enlisted the technical support of the World Bank for the exercise under a reimbursable advisory services agreement. The exercise started in January 2017 and was completed in June 2019. The fees paid to the World Bank for this exercise amounts to USD 205,463. The services of Mrs Kelly Culver were thereafter retained to review and edit the draft National Risk Assessment Report. Mrs Culver is a consultant of wide experience in management and leadership positions in Government and has carried out a few assignments in Mauritius regarding the voluntary review report on the Sustainable Development Goals and the public sector business transformation strategy. She is also conversant with the National Risk Assessment. She was paid an amount of USD 5,000 for her services. Subsequently, the National Risk Assessment Report was published in August 2019.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the Financial Services Commission resorted to the services of a consultancy firm, namely, McDonald Consultants, Inc to assist in the implementation of the recommended actions of the ESAAMLG Mutual Evaluation Report.

I am advised that the firm was selected on the basis that the founders are experts in the field of anti-money laundering, combatting the financing of terrorism (AML/CFT), having wide experience working with the FATF. One of them was the Executive Secretary of the FATF from 2007 to 2016. As regards, the fees payable to them, I am advised that the Financial Services Commission (FSC) is bound by the Statutory Duty of Confidentiality under section 83 subsection 2 of the FSC Act, and as such, this information cannot be disclosed.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the ESAAMLG Secretariat also provided the services of its officers to assist Mauritius in complying with the implementation of the recommended actions in the Mutual Evaluation Report. In this respect, Mr Dubale Muluken, Mr Phineas Moloto, Mr Tom Malikebu and Mr Joseph Jagada travelled to Mauritius to provide the required assistance. No consultancy fee was payable. However, the cost of air tickets and board and lodging of the ESAAMLG officers were met by my Ministry.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is worth to note that, under technical assistance program, Mauritius is benefitting from the services of consultants under the EU AML/CFT Global Facility and the German Development Agency (GIZ) to assist in the implementation of the FATF recommendations. Currently, the services of ten consultants had been provided and the consultants are working closely with the relevant institutions involved in the implementation of the FATF Action Plan.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish also to inform the House that Government is working together with the private sector and has enlisted the services of a lobbying firm and a law firm, namely, Avisa Partners and Bredin Prat respectively, to assist us in getting out of the European Union list of high risk third countries. The services of these firms have been retained based on their set of qualities and experience, and, in particular, their close network with the European Commission and the European Union.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in view of the engagement of the private sector in this joint endeavour, I consider it will not be appropriate to disclose the fees paid to them.

Mr Uteem: I am very surprised that we are the ones who end up paying these fees through the Budget and I just heard the hon. Minister telling me that the Minister has agreed with the private sector that he is not going to disclose to us how much tax payers' money will be used to pay for these lobbyist companies. Does he find it acceptable that we will be asked to pay for fees when we do not even know what these fees are?

Mr Seeruttun: Mr Speaker, Sir, in my reply, I did mention that most of the consultants that we have enlisted are either being paid by funding agencies or are provided to us by the ESAAMLG. But also, with regard to the lobbying firm and law firm, we have a joint working arrangement with the private sector for the enlistment of those two firms. So, at this point in time, I need to seek their agreement before I can disclose the figure here in this House.

Mr Uteem: Hon. Minister mentioned that there were several consultants who have been recruited since 2017, costing us millions of rupees. He did not disclose how much FSC is paying in addition to the millions of rupees. Does he not agree that these consultants have not been effective enough to prevent us from being on the grey list of FATF and on the black list of the European Commission, or were the recommendations made by these consultants not implemented?

Mr Seeruttun: Mr Speaker, Sir, probably I need to repeat myself again because I have said it a few times in the past. The Mutual Evaluation Report, when it came out in 2018, that is when it was noted that, of the 40 recommendations that are set by the FATF, we were only compliant on 14, with regard to technical compliance. If you look at the achievement made within one year with regard to technical compliance, moving from 14 to 35 recommendations being compliant, it is a lot due to the assistance that we obtained from those consultants. And I must also say, because one thing probably some people do not realise, if you go by the ESAAMLG guidelines and procedures, when any country is under review and, following the report of the MER is out, any country is given five years to implement all those procedures; the first two years to comply with the technical compliance and given three years to show effectiveness after the second year. But in our case, within only one year, we have satisfied the recommendations with regard to technical compliance. Unfortunately, with regard to FATF, we did not have that same leeway with regard to what is stipulated under the ESAAMLG guidelines. But again, if we had been able to move to be technically compliant on 35 out of the 40, it is a lot to do with the assistance that we have had from those Consultants that were assisting Mauritius in that endeavour.

NATIONAL PENSIONS FUND – SELF EMPLOYED/UNEMPLOYED

(No. B/240) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity whether, in regard to the National Pensions Fund, she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the number of –

(a) insured persons contributing thereto, indicating the number thereof being –

(i) employees,

(ii) self-employed, and

(iii) unemployed, and

(b) persons receiving contributory retirement pension therefrom.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, in accordance with section 17 and the First Schedule of the National Pensions Act, employers are liable to pay contribution to the National Pensions Fund. Employers contribute 6% while employees contribute 3% of their

salary up to a ceiling of Rs19,900 per month to the fund. Self-employed and non-employed persons contribute on a voluntary basis a multiple of Rs5 in the range of Rs200 to Rs1,135.

As regards part (a) of the question, as at 31 January 2020, there were 316,585 employees who have contributed to the National Pensions Fund out of which 1,153 are self-employed and unemployed persons.

As regards part (b) of the question, there are 117,577 persons in receipt of contributory retirement pension.

Mr Uteem: May I know from the hon. Minister whether she has the figures of the number of employees and employers who are in default of their contribution to the National Pensions Fund?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Unfortunately, not. If the hon. Member can come with a substantive question, I will give the answer.

Mr Uteem: In the Budget Speech, the hon. Minister of Finance stated and I quote at Paragraph 173 –

> "We are abolishing the NPF as it is not only unsustainable but also unfair and regressive".

May I know from the hon. Minister, now that we are abolishing NPF, who is going to pay the deficit between the contribution in the Fund and the amount of benefit that is payable out of the Fund to the employees who will retire?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Well, as far as I know, the National Pensions Fund will continue to be alive to pay benefits. So, beneficiaries who have so far contributed to the Fund, will be paid their contributions, their dues and as from 01 September 2020, all contributions will have to be made to the *Contribution Sociale Généralisée.* This is my reading of what is happening.

Mr Uteem: Let me tell the hon. Minister what the hon. Minister of Finance said in answer to a PNQ on 12 June 2020, talking about *l'insoutenabilité à long terme du* NPF. He mentioned that the last official report was submitted by Feber Associates and showed a deficit which means as at today, there is not sufficient funds in the National Pensions Fund to pay for the pensionable rights payable to employees when they come to retirement. So, if

you are going to abolish NPF, there is not going to be any more contribution to that Fund, how are you going to fund the deficit? This is my question. Because this is what the hon. Minister said, there is a deficit in the accounts right now.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Well, I think that Government will have to do the needful if there is a deficit. Government will have to take care of the deficit.

Mr Speaker: Next question!

SUPREME COURT – LAND DIVISION

(No. B/241) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Attorney-General, Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether in regard to the proposed setting up of a Land Division of the Supreme Court, he will state where matters stand.

Mr Gobin: Mr Speaker, Sir, during the debates on Budget 2020, I had informed the House that my office was engaged in consultations with the Judiciary on this matter. I am pleased to inform the House that the consultation process has been completed. The last correspondence I have received from the Judiciary is dated Friday 03 July. Now, this process having been completed, I will now proceed to Cabinet with the necessary draft.

Mr Uteem: I am very glad to hear that from the Attorney-General. May I know from him whether Government intends to go ahead with the full-fledged Land Division of the Supreme Court, as was recommended in the Law Reform Commission or a Land Tribunal because in the past this is what was suggested in the House?

Mr Gobin: What is contemplated is the Land Division of the Supreme Court, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: Next question, hon. Juman!

BANK OF MAURITIUS – FOREIGN CURRENCIES

(No. B/242) Mr E. Juman (Fourth Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development whether, in

regard to foreign currencies, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Bank of Mauritius, information as to the quantum thereof available in –

(a) the Central Bank Reserves, and

(b) on the market, indicating for how long same will be available for our imports.

(Withdrawn)

COVID-19 PANDEMIC – VENTILATORS – SUPPLIERS

(No. B/243) Mr E. Juman (Fourth Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to ventilators, he will state if any procurement thereof was effected from local suppliers amid the COVID-19 Pandemic and, if so, indicate the names thereof and the corresponding contract values obtained, giving a breakdown as to the –

(a) number thereof purchased;

(b) price paid therefor, and

(c) country of origin thereof.

Dr. Jagutpal: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that 10 ventilators were ordered on 31 March 2020 from Ducray Lenoir Ltd. The Servo-I ventilation platform can satisfy the ventilator needs of every patient, from neonatal to adult. It can handle the most acute phases of respiratory distress through recovery to the weaning phase.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that four ventilators have already been delivered at the central stores department of my Ministry on 26 May. The supplier has indicated that five more will be delivered by the end of this week and one in three weeks' time.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the total cost for the 10 ventilators is Rs16.5 m. As regards the country of origin, I am informed that it comes from Sweden.

Mr Juman: Mr Speaker, Sir, does the hon. Minister mean that for the COVID-19 we procured only 10 ventilators?

Dr. Jagutpal: Mr Speaker, Sir, the procurement from this supplier has been 10 ventilators and from other suppliers it has been 50 ventilators that have not yet reached Mauritius.

Mr Juman: Mr Speaker, Sir, I did not ask for a specific supplier, I asked for the whole procured ventilators. So, can the hon. Minister give us details for the 50 ventilators?

Dr. Jagutpal: Mr Speaker, Sir, the question is from the local suppliers. For the 50 ventilators, it is not from the local suppliers.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Shakeel Mohamed!

Mr Mohamed: Since the hon. Minister has opened the door himself by referring to the 50 ventilators that allows me, therefore, to put him a question on the 50. If he had not mentioned it, I would not have been able to. Since he talks about the 50 ventilators, could he tell us, because I come back to this list that he himself tabled, I say it again and the supplier's name is called Pack and Blister. And this supplier, it is not written on the list which he tabled. Is it a company or is it a trade name? Which jurisdiction is this company from, if it is a company at all? It is not written on there what is the address of the company, but the only thing that is written in there and that is why I understand he wanted to evade that particular reference with the 50, I understand it, it is because this was for ventilators included therein of Rs476,329,360.30. Now, could this hon. Minister tell us, since he has opened the door wide open, for the 50 ventilators what is the brand, what is the cost and please table the full name of the company and where is this company from and the representative of the company in Mauritius, who is it?

Dr. Jagutpal: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am going to table all the information. I have this information that the manufacturer is Alpress Kalipcilik Danismanlik. These are information which I have with me and I am going to table all the information for the hon. Member.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Dr. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: Can I ask the hon. Minister again whether this exercise was an open tender exercise or restricted to a specific number of bidders?

Dr. Jagutpal: Mr Speaker, Sir, the exercise has been under the section 41 of the Emergency Procurement, so, we to do it in urgently.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I have to point out here that at that time, when the COVID crisis, we have cases in Mauritius and we have cases that their projection was that we might lend up to have more than 100 serious cases in Mauritius and in our country, in the different hospitals,

we have around 50 ventilators. The Government has taken the responsibility to do emergency procurement of all the ventilators that will be needed in case of the worst scenario.

Mr Speaker: Last supplementary, hon. Juman!

Mr Juman: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. The hon. Minister just mentioned of 50 ventilators and we paid Rs476 m. and from the list given, we saw that we procured from suppliers engaged in construction, engaged in selling of cars, selling of property, supplying us for Rs309 m. of medical supplies. So, can we know exactly that company Pack and Blister, is it a supplier of medical supplies or not?

Dr. Jagutpal: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am going to table all the information. Now, the hon. Members are picking up figures, I don't know from where. So, unless, I have all the figures in front of me. So, if figures have been tabled in the Assembly with all the details, so he refers to the details of those figures. Now you are asking me specific questions of the 50 ventilators, I am going to table the information as straight as direct as this.

Mr Speaker: Next question!

Mr Juman: Mr Speaker...

Mr Speaker: I said...

Mr Juman: This official document...

Mr Speaker: I have already said...

Mr Juman: Listen, Mr Speaker, Sir!

Mr Speaker: I have already said last supplementary.

Mr Juman: Mr Speaker, Sir, please, this is very important.

Mr Speaker: Last supplementary!

Mr Juman: This is very important, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: No, you cannot question! Next question!

Mr Juman: I am not questioning you.

Mr Speaker: Next question, please!

CÔTE D'OR NATIONAL SPORTS COMPLEX – MAINTENANCE COST, ACTIVITIES & REVENUES

(No. B/244) Mr E. Juman (Fourth Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation whether, in regard to the Côte d'Or National Sports Complex, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Multi-Sports Infrastructure Ltd., information as to the –

(a) monthly maintenance cost thereof;

(b) number of activities organised thereat since the holding of the last Indian Ocean Island Games, and

(c) revenues earned therefrom as at date.

Mr Toussaint: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Mauritius Multi-Sports Infrastructure Ltd. (MMIL), that for the period January 2020 to June 2020, a monthly average of Rs403,462 has been disbursed for maintenance.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am informed that since the holding of the Indian Ocean Island Games last year, 237 activities have been held thereat.

As regards part (c) of the question, I am informed that since the start of commercial operations, some Rs1.3 m. of revenue has been generated from activities held at the Côte d'Or National Sports Complex.

Thank you.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Juman!

Mr Juman: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Can we know the activities organised and the Rs1 m. we received, it's from which activities organised?

Mr Toussaint: Mr Speaker, Sir, this is a very long list of activities, I will table the list.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Dhunoo!

Mr Dhunoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, thank you. I listened to the reply of the Minister. Can the hon. Minister also inform the House whether there was any event planned at the National Sports Complex for this year?

Mr Toussaint: Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir, we have a list of activities that had been planned. However, due to the pandemic COVID-19, these events have been cancelled. I am going to table the list because it's quite long.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Ramful!

Mr Ramful: May we have also the figures in relation to the monthly electricity bill?

Mr Toussaint: Mr Speaker, Sir, the question pertains to maintenance cost. Electricity is operational. I don't have this in my answer. I can table it afterwards.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Duval!

Mr X. L. Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, this is an international sports centre. I would like to ask the hon. Minister what international sports events have been held and are to be held before the end of this year?

Mr Toussaint: *Mr Speaker, Sir,* nous étions en contact avec la fédération de Squash pour qu'elle puisse tenir le *Necker Pro International Squash Tournament at the complex. This was for June of this year. Unfortunately, all the borders are closed.* Et je dois rappeler à l'honorable membre qu'après les Jeux des Iles, c'est-à-dire à partir d'août, septembre, octobre, etc, donc, nous n'avons pas pu accueillir quand même des activités internationales, et le plan était de préparer et d'aller chercher des activités, mais, malheureusement, le COVID est passé par là et à l'heure que je vous parle nous n'avons absolument aucune visibilité qui pourrait nous permettre d'accueillir des évènements internationaux.

Mr Speaker: Last supplementary, hon. Juman!

Mr Juman: *Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.* M. le ministre peut nous dire, une année après l'ouverture jusqu'à maintenant le stade n'est pas accessible par autobus public et il n'y a même pas des arrêts d'autobus. Est-ce que le ministre est au courant, et s'il est au courant, qu'est-ce qu'il compte faire?

Mr Toussaint: J'ai déjà répondu à cette question dans le passé, M. le président, bien sûr, que je suis au courant. Le trajet en autobus, bien sûr, va dépendre des négociations que nous allons tenir avec le ministère concerné. Et, de toutes les façons, quand il y a des activités qui sont organisées, le MMIL s'organise de façon à ce qu'il y ait des navettes, que ce soit de la gare de St. Pierre, de Rose Hill, pour que les personnes puissent avoir accès au complexe.

Mr Speaker: The Table has been informed that the following PQs have been withdrawn: B/258, B/259, B/260 and B/261.

Next question, hon. Juman!

CÔTE D'OR NATIONAL SPORTS COMPLEX – FUNGUS ISSUE

(No. B/245) Mr E. Juman (Fourth Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation whether, in regard to the football pitch of the Côte d'Or National Sports Complex, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Multi-Sports Infrastructure Ltd., information as to the current state thereof, indicating the measures taken to address the –

(a) fungus issue thereat, and

(b) expected date on which same will be in order.

Mr Toussaint: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Mauritius Multi-Sports Infrastructure Ltd. that in October 2019, Mr Richard Hayden, a FIFA Pitch Consultant, was in Mauritius to assess whether the football pitch at Côte d'Or was in accordance with FIFA norms.

In his report, he stated that a fungus was affecting the lawn of the football stadium. The fungus was detected outside the playing area. Clive Richardson Ltd., the Pitch Contractor, was contacted for its views and informed that fungus detected was most probably the Fusarium, a common disease that affects pitches with that type of grass. This type of fungus is always present on pitches and lives in the thatch. Mr Richard Hayden recommended that fungicides be applied to eradicate the fungus and MMIL started treatment thereof.

However, same could not be continued due to the COVID-19 lockdown. Workers were not allowed to attend their place of work. The fungus had, therefore, propagated during the lockdown. As soon as WAPs were delivered to the staff concerned, the treatment started anew and is ongoing.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am further informed that the pitch is being closely monitored. The recommended chemicals will be applied on areas where the fungus will be manifesting. Reseeding is being carried out on areas affected by the fungus.

With regard to part (b) of the question, the football ground will be open as the treatment and reseeding are completed. The maintenance of the lawn is a continuous process.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Juman!

Mr Juman: By when as per the expert, the pitch can be operational, approximately?

Mr Toussaint: Non, je ne peux pas répondre à cela, M. le président. On ne nous a pas informés de la date précise, puisque nous sommes encore en train de traiter la pelouse.

Mr Juman: Pour le *Liverpool Academy* qui d'habitude utilise cette pelouse, qu'est-ce qu'ils font?

Mr Toussaint: Les jeunes de l'académie de football de Liverpool s'entrainent en partie, certains au stade à Quartier Militaire, d'autres à St. François Xavier à Port Louis, et nous avons aussi fait appel à la MFA qui a mis à notre disposition certaines pelouses.

Mr Speaker: Time is over!

MOTION

SUSPENSION OF S.O. 10(2)

The 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).

The Deputy Prime Minister seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

(4.19 p.m.)

PUBLIC BILLS

First Reading

On motion made and seconded, the Finance (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill (No. VII of 2020) was read a first time.

Second Reading

THE ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING AND COMBATTING THE FINANCING OF TERRORISM (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) BILL (NO. V OF 2020)

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on the Anti-Money Laundering and Combatting the Financing of Terrorism (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill (No. V of 2020).

Question again proposed.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade (Mr N. Bodha): Mr Speaker, Sir, I have listened carefully to all the orators on both sides of the House and I would like to address a few specific issues on this very important piece of legislation, Mr Speaker, Sir. When we speak about financial flows for anti-money laundering, terrorism financing, arms trafficking, these are very serious matters which can have very, I would say, devastating effect on the reputation of a financial centre, Mr Speaker, Sir.

I would like to say that these last weeks on 07 May, we had listing of the European Commission as regards to high risk third countries for AML/CFT. But, Mr Speaker, Sir, we also had another event, that was the graduation of Mauritius classified as a high income country for the first time. Maybe this has not been given the importance that it deserves because we have been speaking a lot more on the black list, from the side of the Opposition is the summing up of the whole thing was '*c'est bien fait pour vous; vous le méritez*'. I have not seen so much political jubilation on issues of national importance. But let me say, Mr Speaker, Sir, that this achievement of Mauritius to be a high income country for the first time and the second in Africa, the World Bank country representative said this; he underpinned that in a longer term perspective this is a great achievement, that reflects the efforts and dedication of generations of Mauritians to build a better future for their children. He also congratulated the people of Mauritius for reaching this milestone. And what is interesting about this high income status, Mr Speaker, Sir, is that it is the '*bilan*' of this Government for the last 5 years and this has also gone together with the strengthening of the Welfare State and a better sharing of the '*gâteau national*', because we have brought in billions of money for the minimum wage; for the increase in the pensions and for all that has been done to see to it that '*le gâteau national se partage mieux*'. This is our mission, that is, to bring prosperity but also to see to it that this prosperity is divided amongst the households of Mauritius in a very fair manner.

So, we had two events, Mr Speaker, Sir: one was Mauritius graduating as a high income country; the second one was the blacklisting by the European Commission. To come back to the World Bank, the last figures issued for the situation after COVID-19, for Mauritius for the year 2020, the situation is a shrinking of the economy by no less than 7%. But what is being said for 2021 is that we will bounce back to around 6%. This shows the resilience and the capacity of the Mauritian economy to do well and to see to it that after the

success in containing the spread of the COVID-19, we have now to see to it that we succeed in the opening up of the economy, in such a way that this capital, '*le capital que nous avons avec notre succès en ce qui concerne le COVID-19, ce capital soit utilisé dans les meilleures conditions*'.

Mr Speaker, Sir, now, at present, I have heard a lot of negative comments from the Opposition on our financial centre. One hon. Member said that the country is going to the drains and it will continue to go to the drains. There was a lot of criticisms about the institutions and the people at the head of the institutions. But I would like to say, what is happening now, now itself. At this time, the GIZ, that is, the German development fund is launching in Mauritius its strengthening of the national regional linkages programme. The German development fund is doing this now. It's launching the strengthening of the national regional linkages programme.

As regards to the FATF Action Plan, I will address it later, but I would like to say that we have - my colleague from Financial Services mentioned it, we have about 10 experts working already online with the 5 sub committees on the weaknesses that have been identified by the FATF action plan. These experts are working by video conferencing and together with the Prime Minister we are thinking of '*un cordon sanitaire*', to bring them to Mauritius, to be able for them to see to it that we fine-tune all that is being done today to address the weaknesses of the FATF Action Plan.

Among these, because it's good to know what is happening, I would really want to give a positive touch to my speech because there has been such a gloom and doom image of this financial centre. The High Commissioner of Britain informed me that Mrs Jennifer Berner, who is the new Legal, Finance and Investment Officer of the UK, she is coming to Mauritius for a period of 3 years to see to it that Britain can promote the flow of investment from Mauritius into Africa. And she is coming here and she is already working with the Mauritian authorities and this is what the High Commissioner said to me, is that she is ready to work closely with the Mauritius authorities with regard to compliance with FATF recommendations. Her collaboration will be of benefit to the UK as the latter has important financial interest in Mauritius, banking trust funds and also to channel investment into Africa.

At the same time, what is happening, Mr Speaker, Sir, the regulators, the FSC; the FIU; the Registrar of Companies, myself and my colleague we had a meeting, they are

working on a request for information from the group of experts mandated under the UN Security Council Resolution. We are working on it now. There was a request from the UN Security Council Resolution, the group of experts for associated documentation on one Libyan oil company incorporated in our jurisdiction, and we are working on it, the information has been sent to New York.

There was another request. It was on a Rwandan company, incorporated in Mauritius, in relation to possible relations with a company based in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and here again, the regulators in Mauritius are providing the information that has a disclosure as regards to the beneficial owner/ownership, as regards to shareholders, as regards to incorporation, as regards to capital. And as regards to the Wirecard Scandal, the Bank of Mauritius and the FSC also have started their enquiry at this level.

So, what I wanted to say, Mr Speaker, Sir, is that this image of doom and gloom, that we deserve this, we deserve the way we have been treated by the European Union and I will address this issue because these have not been addressed.

Now, what is happening in Europe? After the COVID-19, Europe is reconsidering its geopolitical financial strategy. Europe wants today that investment is done in European countries, that production is done in European countries, jobs are created in European countries and taxes are paid in European countries. So, what they want to do, in fact, is to see to it that you don't have financial flows outside Europe, through financial centres like Mauritius. This is the challenge today and when you listen to what is being done in Brussels and what is being said, it is clear that Europe has a new strategy, geopolitically as regards to the financial flows from Europe, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Now, let me explain what happened from the 06 of May. On the 06 of May, Reuters published, it was a leak, a list saying that we are going to be blacklisted and Mauritius was on that list. On the 07 of May, this list became official.

Now, everybody has been saying and my friend, hon. Colleague, just mentioned that, after the MER Report, there was a lot which was done in 2019. We succeeded in being compliant from 11 to 35 criteria and then, there was the FATF meeting in February 2020 where we were put on the light grey list, that is, there was a monitoring list.

But nobody said something here. We were given two years. We were given two years to be able to see to it, to fine-tune all the regulators, their job, their effectiveness and we were

given two years; so, it would have been 2021. What did we do, Mr Speaker, Sir? There was a strong political commitment from the Prime Minister and we said that we are going to prepone 2021 and bring it to 2020, at the end of this year, to be fully compliant with all the weaknesses identified by the FATF.

But what does the European Union do? Two months later - we have two years to be complaint, but the European Commission takes two months to put us on the blacklist and our friends are saying *c'est bien bon pour vous.*

We were given two years by the FATF to be compliant, to setup the regulators and to start the - what has really - it is true that maybe things have not been done. All that has to be done has not being done. And, instead of giving us two years, the European Union gives us two months to put us on the blacklist because they have only two lists: the white and the black, and without being consulted, without being given the right of hearing.

Let me tell you something else now, Mr Speaker, Sir. The new methodology to be able to list the countries, third countries, risk countries - it was published on the same day and the list was published on the same day which means that you have the syllabus on the same day and you have your results on the same day. And the methodology says it is going to be based on the FATF and it is also going to be based on additional criteria. Now, there is something else which matters.

(Interruptions)

Yes.

Now, Mr Speaker, Sir, something else happens. We are told that, in one month, this is going to be ratified by two institutions. One is the Council of Ministers of Finance, the ECOFIN and the second one is the EU Parliament. So, that brings us to the 07 of June. What happens between the 07 of May and the 07 of June? We do all that we can. The Prime Minister writes to the President of the Commission. I have been talking to many Ministers. We had a number of interfaces with the Commission, with FISMA and then on the 07 of June, you know what happens, Mr Speaker, Sir? It is not even on the agenda of ECOFIN, it is not even on the agenda of Libye. Why? Because, according to the European Union, this can be done by silent agreement. Nobody said this. Can you blacklist a country on the 07 of May and, in one month, without it being on the - this is the new methodology of the European Commission?

So, one month, without being on the agenda, there was no objection, it goes by silent agreement and it was after the silent agreement that at ECOFIN and at the Libye that we were blacklisted on the gazette a few days later, with being given effect on the 01 of October. Now, do we think that Mauritius, in spite of everything, all the eleven other countries should have been treated in that manner by the European Commission?

Let me tell you now, Mr Speaker, Sir, what the Prime Minister of Bahamas said when this listing was done. This is what she said - talking about the COVID-19 –

> "In addition, we are confronted with a recent unilateral action taken at this critical time in Europe to place members of our regional grouping: Barbados, (…) deemed to have strategic deficiencies and anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing regimes that are supposed to pose significant threats to the financial services and systems of the European Union. We reject this. But more so. We say that this is in spite of the fact that those nations whose names I've called and others in that shame list have already committed to working with the Financial Action Task Force on matters that are largely regulatory and in some cases, depend on money supply and technical issues, but are not reflective of the scale of risk associated with a list of shame."

This was what was said by the Prime Minister of Bahamas.

The Chairperson of the OACP, because the hon. Leader of the Opposition mentioned a lot about what we have been doing, whether we were able at the level of our network and at the level of our ACP group do something. The Georges Rebelo Pinto Chikoti, the Secretary General of the Caribbean ACP says –

> "The OACPS regrets the unilateral publication of this list, without any appropriate prior consultation with the ACP countries therein mentioned".

That was around the 7th,

> "To this day, neither the Secretariat of the OACPS organisation nor the concerned Member States have been notified of this list(…)".

And he goes on to say that –

> "at the moment where the COVID-19 Pandemic is affecting the economies of these States and that while both Member States of the EC and the OACPS are trying to find

solutions to the crisis, the publication and the adoption of such a list would aggravate the health and economic crises which are already affecting the concerned countries."

Mr Speaker, Sir, in a letter now to the Chairman of the EU Council, His Excellency Mr Kenyatta, the President of Republic of Kenya, on behalf of the ACP has written to him.

And there was a question: 'what happened between the conversation between the Prime Minister and Michel, whether the Prime Minister was successful in convincing Michel to get Mauritius out of the list?' This is what President Kenyatta writes. The OACP laments the unilateral approach adopted by the EU with respect to the publication of this list and reiterate its commitment as well as a call for dialogue to combat anti-money laundering and terrorism financing and as the OACP and the European Union on the verge of concluding a new partnership that is the Post-Cotonou Agreement, there should be an enhanced partnership. And what are we doing, Mr Speaker, Sir? We have proposed that in the new Cotonou Agreement, there should be a clause that the European Union cannot take such unilateral brutal decisions which can jeopardise the economy of the ACP States in a spirit of partnership and dialogue. So, we have proposed a paragraph and it is now bracketed in the Cotonou Agreement, it will put stress on the principles and standards of a thriving rule-based financial sector in dialogue, in partnership but in a timely manner, not when it is already done, when the damage is done but before any such decision is taken. This is what Mauritius has been doing so far but I would like to say one thing, Mr Speaker, Sir. *L'opposition ici nous a dit, c'est bien fait pour vous.* I would like to take the Opposition in the Bahamas. They criticised the Government for being on that list but then, Mr Chester Cooper who was the Deputy Leader of the Opposition says: 'It is outrageous that the European Commission would seek to unilaterally levy heavy handed sanctions by way of another blacklist." This is the Opposition in the Bahamas saying it.

(Interruptions)

No! This is what I am saying because when you say that you are for the country. This is the Opposition, they criticise the Government, they say the Government has not done this or this, there is no ambassador, but they criticise the European Union for the way the blacklist has been promulgated: "It is outrageous that the European Commission would seek to unilaterally levy heavy handed sanctions by way of another blacklist."

So, this is important because there was a lot of issue about the national interest, patriotism but what we have to do is that in our democracy we know that this is a vital sector and we have to work on it. There were some proposals made on both sides of the House. There was one proposal, I think, we will have to discuss it, we have our African partners, we should engage with them to see to it whether the DTAs that we have cannot be renegotiated to the benefit of both of us. I think there are some proposals and I salute this.

Mr Speaker, Sir, what are we asking now, what is left? My friend, the hon. Minister of Financial Services, together with all these sectors in Mauritius, published the March Interim Report for the FATF on 20 March. This was to be assessed and revaluated by the FATF in the coming months, then we had the COVID-19. In the meantime, we have been working, my colleague has been working very hard, the Prime Minister has been working very hard, the Steering Committee has been working hard and I must say I have been very impressed by the synergy between the banks, the offshore sector, the Government and the regulators to be able to come together and to see to it that we can fight this battle together.

So, now, what has happened is that the Interim Report of March has been given to the FATF. The Interim Report of June is ready, Mr Speaker, Sir. So, if we go the FATF way, we are requesting the FATF to be able to assess Mauritius and to tell us what is missing but there is something else which has happened, Mr Speaker, Sir. When the FATF gave us two years up to 2021, we preponed it to end of 2020, but then, when this list came, the Prime Minister and the Steering Committee proponed it to August 2020. If this does not show a political commitment and technical capacity, what does it show? So, we are now wanting to be able to be ready by August 2020 to be able to be assessed. So, this is the FATF line. My colleague has received a new timetable with the FATF and we hope that we will be able to be assessed as soon as possible because we have this deadline of 01 October.

Now, if we go on the European Commission Methodology, we have two types of evaluation, those who fall under the FATF ESAAMLG Member countries and those who are the non FATF countries. For the non-FATF countries, there is the possibility of having a hearing, an autonomous assessment by the EU Commission and the right to be heard which can be triggered by the Member State. So, we are fighting at this level to see to it that we are going to be able to have an assessment by the European Union, by the Commission itself, as soon as possible so that we can show our commitment, we can show that we have been working hard and we can show that we really want our centre to be a centre of repute.

So, hopefully, we will have the June Report, we will have the August Report and we will be ready. And we are also doing our best at the level of Brussels to see to it that on 01 October, if it can be, we can have a moratorium, this was requested by President Kenyatta, it was requested by the Caribbean countries, it had been requested by the ACP countries, Mr Speaker, Sir. Now, we have shown over the years that Mauritius can engage with the European Union successfully. We had the sugar protocol. The Leader of the Opposition is aware of all that we did, all that the Prime Minister did as the Minister of Agriculture, all that we did as spokesperson for the ACP, the accompanying measures. We won that battle, Mr Speaker, Sir. We also won the battle with regard to the Lomé Convention and access to market. We have been working under the Cotonou Agreement, as I said Europe has changed, so it will be for us also to be able to fight this battle to be able to see to it that we have a financial centre of repute.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I had said there has been a lot of figures about the weight of this sector and the possibility of its growth and I remember I had mentioned last time in my speech that the Foreign Portfolio Investment (FPI) of Indian companies based in Mauritius is Rs2.575 trillion and we are second only to the United States which shows where Mauritius has reached. We are a big player, Mr Speaker, Sir, that is why we have all this. I have said in the beginning, the UN Security Council Experts asking for information and, I think, that we will be able to address this issue of the blacklist. We are working very hard, the Prime Minister has given his support, He has been talking to Michel, we have been talking to a number of Ministers, we have been engaging with the FISMA, we have been engaging with the European Commission.

Before I end, Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to say two things. First of all, this Bill plugs a number of loopholes in our weaknesses as regards our financial centre and we are working on it. It is one instrument and with the coming into operation of this instrument, the whole issue of effectiveness will have to be addressed and we are going to address it but together with it, it goes with a court and this is another commitment of this Government with regard to financial crimes. It’s the creation of a court, we are working on it. My hon. friend mentioned it, but there is another aspect which, I think, should be on the table again is the financing of political parties, Mr Speaker, Sir. And I am making an appeal to the Opposition that time has come for us to have a legislation for the financing of political parties. We cannot always live in this shroud veil. And I am making an appeal to the Opposition this time that if

we have the commitment, the Prime Minister has it, this Government has it, we bring the Bill, we look forward to them setting up a legislation. It may not be a perfect legislation, but, at least, we will have a legislation which we can make better. This is my contribution, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Thank you for giving me the floor.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Prime Minister!

(4.50 p.m.)

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish at the very outset to commend the hon. Minister of Financial Services and Good Governance for bringing the Anti-Money Laundering and Combatting the Financing of Terrorism (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill to the House.

The Bill aims at addressing the current challenges that we are, in fact, facing in our financial services sector. It will further strengthen our legal and regulatory framework pertaining to the fight against money laundering and financing of terrorism. We have always acted with determination to protect and enhance the reputation of our International Financial Centre as one of substance and compliant with international norms and standards. It has always been, Mr Speaker, Sir, a priority of this Government, since 2014, to promote the integrity and stability of our international financial system and, indeed, of our financial markets generally.

Mr Speaker, Sir, according to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes, the estimated amount of money laundered globally in one year is 2 to 5% of global GDP or $800 billion to $2 trillion. These figures underline the seriousness of the problem as well as the threat which money laundering poses to the economic stability of all countries across the world. It is, therefore, our duty to ensure that Mauritius, as an International Financial Centre, is not misused as a *conduit* for laundering proceeds of ill-gotten gains and other crimes. Our regulatory environment must obviously meet international standards to mitigate against the loss of international reputation and doing business ratings and, alongside, effective, proportionate, and dissuasive sanctions must be imposed for failure to comply with AML-CFT obligations.

Worldwide, Mr Speaker, Sir, the figures show that more than $8 billion in AML fines were handed out in 2019 with the largest monetary fine of $5.1 billion originating from France alone.

The Bill accordingly provides for an upward revision on the fines which may be imposed by AML-CFT supervisors and the Courts in case of breach of the AML-CFT requirements. In the banking sector, for example, the maximum penalty which may be imposed by the Bank of Mauritius for such breaches is being increased from Rs1 m. to Rs10 m. per breach. A further fine of Rs100,000 for every day or part of a day during which the offence continues may also be imposed under the Banking Act. Breaches committed by legal persons, namely companies, foundations, associations and limited liability partnerships, amongst others, will also be severely sanctioned by the relevant authorities with the imposition of a maximum fine of Rs10 m. per offence.

There are also millions of dollars every year that are channelled into the financing of terrorism. The abuse of Non-Profit Organisations (NPO) to perpetrate the financing of terrorism is also a cause of concern for the FATF which advocates the implementation of a targeted approach to mitigate the risk posed by the domestic NPO sector. A risk assessment of the domestic NPO sector is well underway and is expected to be finalised very soon.

Mr Speaker, Sir, if the world loses the combat against money laundering and financing of terrorism, the stability of the global financial system itself and the world economy and global peace would be severely undermined. It is clear that if these activities were allowed to flourish they would divert significant resources away from economically and socially-productive uses and could destabilise the financial sector and external stability of countries around the world. They also have a corrosive corrupting effect on society and the economic system as a whole and on the integrity of the financial system. The need to effectively combat money laundering and to counter the financing of terrorism is, therefore, urgent.

As Mr Min Zhu, the former Deputy Managing Director of the IMF, stated and I quote –

> “Effective anti-money laundering and combatting the financing of terrorism regimes are essential to protect the integrity of markets and of global financial framework as they help mitigate the factors that facilitate financial abuse.”

Indeed, Mr Speaker, Sir, we have always been fully aligned on the IMF stance on the AML-CFT *régime* and, as a member of the Global Forum of the OECD on Transparency and Exchange of Information for Tax Purposes, Mauritius has spared no efforts to comply with international standards on transparency and exchange of information. In fact, in the Government Programme 2020-2024, we have clearly stated our determination to strengthen our legal, regulatory, and operational framework for combatting money laundering and terrorist financing.

We further reaffirm that Government will ensure that all relevant institutions are fully manned and equipped to fight this battle and enhance the reputation of Mauritius as an internationally preferred jurisdiction for conducting clean and quality business activities. In the same Programme, we have taken the commitment to set up an appropriate coordination mechanism to ensure inter-agency cooperation to combat serious economic and financial crimes.

Mr Speaker, Sir, our actions since 2015 show the extent and depth of our commitment to have a strong AML-CFT *régime* in our jurisdiction, to be compliant with international standards and to firmly keep criminal and tax evasion activities out of our jurisdiction.

Let me outline some of the key actions that we have taken.

In 2015, we enacted the Good Governance and Integrity Reporting Bill which provides for the investigation of any form of unexplained wealth by individuals in Mauritius. It ensures that a person who lives beyond his apparent means has to justify the legitimacy of his financial circumstances. This law allows the authorities to identify and target persons who have accumulated unexplained wealth through unlawful means. We adopted this legislation in order to deter crime, particularly organised crime, by reducing the profitability of illegal activities.

Since last year, 71 cases of unexplained wealth have been under investigation. The Integrity Reporting Services Agency has currently three Unexplained Wealth Orders before the Supreme Court for property confiscations for a total value of around Rs280 m.

Furthermore, in 2018, amendments were made to 19 legislations relating to money laundering. The main legislations amended were –

- the Bank of Mauritius Act to reinforce the powers of the Bank of Mauritius with a view to countering money laundering and preventing the financing of terrorism;
- the Banking Act for every financial institution to, amongst others, identify and assess the money laundering and terrorism financing risks that may arise in relation to the launch or use of new and pre-existing products, practices and technologies. We have also enhanced the powers of the Bank of Mauritius as the designated AML/CFT supervisor of the Banking Sector;
- the Business Registration Act to allow the FIU to share information in the fight against money laundering, terrorism financing and other related criminal behaviour;
- the Civil Status Act to allow the FIU to have real-time access to the Civil Status database with a view to compiling a full profile of suspects, especially in drug cases;
- the Companies Act to allow for disclosure and availability of Beneficial Ownership Information following enquiries related to AML/CFT;
- the Customs Act to allow an officer who reasonably suspects that the amount of currency or bearer negotiable instruments may involve money laundering to pass on information to the FIU, the Police and the ICAC;
- the Financial Intelligence and Anti-Money Laundering Act to, amongst others, provide for necessary sanctions to be imposed where a financial institution fails to comply with guidelines of the Bank of Mauritius for the prevention of money laundering and financing of terrorism;
- the Financial Services Act to reform the global business sector with the abolition of category 2 and reform of category 1 global businesses;
- the Limited Liability Partnerships Act to provide for the disclosure and availability of Beneficial Ownership Information following enquiries related to AML/CFT;
- the Prevention of Corruption Act to allow the Director-General of the ICAC to disclose to investigatory authorities, the FIU and supervisory authorities such information as he considers necessary in the public interest, and
- the Registration of Associations Act to allow the Registrar of Associations to implement anti-money laundering measures by, amongst others, allowing an

auditor of an association to make a report of such transactions to the FIU where he believes the transaction is suspicious.

In September 2018, a new Financial Intelligence and Anti-Money Laundering Regulations was promulgated which set out the whole range of FATF preventive measures to be implemented by the relevant actors in the industry.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in December 2018, we came up with a new Declaration of Assets Bill. In fact, since 2002, with the enactment of the Prevention of Corruption Act which made of the ICAC the depository of all asset declarations made under the Declaration of Assets Act, there have been no substantive changes to the legislation on asset declaration. There was an amendment in 2011, through which the provision for disclosure under paragraph 5 of the Act was simply deleted. This was a subterfuge as it was meant to prevent access to the declared information. This was done by the Labour/PMSD Government.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with the introduction of the Declaration of Assets Bill 2018, we have corrected the amendment which was sneaked in the Local Government Act 2011 and ensured that declarations made by Members of the National Assembly, including you, Mr Speaker, Sir, Members of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, the Councillors of Municipal City Council, Municipal Town Council or District Councils are made public.

The population will also recall the shameful attitude of the Opposition when I introduced the Political Financing Bill in this House last year. My Colleague, Minister Nando Bodha, has just mentioned it. They devised lame excuses and shied away from their responsibilities in order to prevent us from regulating the financing of political parties.

Now, Mr Speaker, Sir, I can understand why one particular Member, Leader of the Opposition Party, was so much against this regulating of the financing of political parties. We will have time to talk about it in the future. I do not want to take the time of the House now, but, Mr Speaker, Sir, let me come back to our actions to further address technical compliance deficiencies in AML/CFT.

In May 2019, the following legislations were enacted –

(a) the Anti-Money Laundering and Combatting the Financing of Terrorism and Proliferation (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2019, and

(b) the United Nations (Financial Prohibitions, Arms Embargo and Travel Ban) Sanctions Act 2019.

The outcomes of these actions have been –

(i) The AML/CFT legal framework has been extensively revamped and Mauritius is now rated compliant or largely compliant with 35 out of the 40 FATF Recommendations.

(ii) More importantly, Mauritius has achieved the FATF expectations of compliance with respect to the "Big Six Recommendations", namely,

- the criminalisation of the money laundering offence;
- the criminalisation of the terrorism financing offence;
- the implementation of a framework for targeted financial sanctions;
- customer due diligence;
- record keeping, and
- the reporting of suspicious transactions.

(iii) Furthermore, we have addressed 53 out of the 58 Recommended Actions contained in the Mauritius Mutual Evaluation Report within a period of one year only.

In addition, we have put in place the necessary mechanism to ensure that information on ownership, accounting information, and banking information are always maintained, can be accessed by the Government authorities, and can be shared with foreign authorities. As a result, Mauritius has been rated as Compliant with the OECD standards on transparency and exchange of information – that is at the same level as Ireland and Norway and even better than some developed countries such as Australia, Canada, and Germany.

The issue we are facing - that of the black listing - relates principally to effectiveness. In other words, to get the EU to take Mauritius out of the blacklist, we need to strengthen areas which are high risk and take corrective actions. However, certain enhancements are also required to our legal and operational framework.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it should, however, be pointed out that the inclusion of Mauritius on the new EU list of third countries, which, according to the European Commission, had strategic deficiencies in their anti-money laundering and countering the financing of terrorism (AML-CFT) regimes, was done, unfortunately, I must say, unilaterally. Mauritius was

unfortunately not given the opportunity to provide any explanation or make any representation to the Commission prior to its inclusion on the list. Mauritius was neither consulted nor informed that a new methodology had come into effect.

I wish to state a few things that will go on record. As I have said, at no point in time have we been warned or communicated that Mauritius will be placed on that list and I must say that I have met Commissioner Mimica, Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development on two occasions, one in Mauritius, one in Vienna, and I can state categorically, because we do have Minutes taken by our officers during those two meetings, that during my two interactions, at no time, and I say again, at no time, has this matter been raised to us. And let me also say that during the last political dialogue that we usually have, I believe, every year, between the EU and Mauritius, again involving a number of Ministers, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Financial Services, I believe, there must have been a few other Ministers also, at no time was this issue raised. I do not want to say more than that because we have been involved, we have interacted with our, I will call them our partners, the EU, but let me say one thing, because in some quarters, some people have been saying that – why I am saying this because some people have been saying that 'well, you have been warned, you were aware, you saw it coming.'

Is there any formal communication from the EU to Mauritius telling us or warning us that: 'Look, if you do not correct, improve or review those indicatives, you will be put on a black list'? I hope we can find the communication somewhere. So, we have to be careful. I say this especially in the light of what hon. Nando Bodha has said about how in other countries they are showing *un élan de patriotisme envers ce que, moi, j'appelle* being unfairly treated. *Je le dis* without – I do not want to say more than that, but, unfortunately, we have been unfairly treated.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Bill will be another strive forward to enable Mauritius to address technical compliance deficiencies in the remaining 5 FATF Recommendations and vest designated AML/CFT supervisors, the Financial Intelligence Unit and law enforcement authorities, with additional powers to gear up in the fight against money laundering and terrorism financing, and improve our capacity to combat money laundering and terrorism financing.

We are confident that all these efforts will ultimately culminate in removing Mauritius from the FATF List of Jurisdictions under Increased Monitoring and the EU list of High Risk

Third Country. It also demonstrates our unflinching commitment to adhere to the international standards and enhance the effectiveness of our AML/CFT measures.

And, Mr Speaker, Sir, I was just saying about how we have been unfairly treated. I think it is good if I say it again. FATF has put us on a light grey list. I do not want to repeat what my colleague, hon. Bodha has said, whether we have been given time to rectify. The EU puts us on a black list; they do not even give us time; they do not even allow us to show the political commitment to review and to remedy. They straightaway put us on a black list and when we ask why is it that we have been treated in that manner, you know what we have been told, 'we do not do any assessment, we go according to what FATF does'. And when you are on the list of monitoring of the FATF, so I take it whether you are on the light grey, on the dark grey, if you are on the black list, of course, you are blacklisted, but if you are on whichever grey list, you will automatically be blacklisted by the EU. But yet, there are countries which are on the FATF light grey list or grey list which have not been blacklisted. I do not want to say more than that. *Est-ce qu'il y a deux poids et deux mesures? Je me demande*, but, anyway.

As regards supervision of the financial sector, with the amendments made at clause 2 and clause 9 of the Bill, it will now be mandatory for the Bank of Mauritius and the Financial Services Commission to determine the frequency and intensity of on-site and off-site AML/CFT supervision of their licensees by taking into account, amongst others, the money laundering and terrorism financing risks associated with the licensee; the findings of the National Risk Assessment; and the characteristics of the licensee.

Indeed, the first pillar of the FATF Recommendation is the implementation of a risk-based approach which allows countries, within the framework of the FATF requirements, to adopt a more flexible set of measures, in order to target their resources more effectively and apply preventive measures that are commensurate to the nature of the risks, and focus their efforts in the most effective way.

The implementation of a risk-based approach to AML/CFT supervision by the Bank of Mauritius and the Financial Services Commission are now being entrenched in the law.

The Bank of Mauritius and the Financial Services Commission must also periodically review the assessment of the money laundering or terrorism financing risk profile of their licensees, which is an important criterion in the implementation of a risk-based approach.

Regarding disclosure and exchange of information, the Bill will promote a greater transparency and due diligence and facilitate reporting of suspicious transactions in the following way –

First, it will now be possible for the Bank of Mauritius to have access to civil status data from the Civil Status Office to facilitate the establishment of the Central KYC Registry and the digital verification of customer identity, which is, of course, of essence for customer onboarding by digital banks and mobile payment operators;

Second, the Companies Act will be amended to ensure disclosure of beneficial ownership of a company. Thus, it will be mandatory for a company to provide the full name and the usual residential address of a beneficial owner or ultimate beneficial owner, and

Third, a reporting obligation is being imposed on Reporting Officers or Auditors should they become aware of a suspicious transaction. The failure by a person to supply any information requested by the FIU shall be severely reprimanded.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in February of this year, we made a high-level political commitment to work with the FATF and ESAAMLG to strengthen the effectiveness of our AML/CFT *régime* and implement the FATF Plan of Action.

The Bill demonstrates clearly the commitment of Mauritius to exit both from the FATF list and the EU list within, I hope, the shortest time frame.

We are also targeting to complete the implementation of the recommended actions under the FATF Action Plan at the earliest. The EU and the German Government are supporting us by providing technical assistance for the implementation of the FATF Action Plan.

Mr Speaker, Sir, let me now come to some comments that have been made by hon. Shakeel Mohamed.

He dared cast doubt on the source and authenticity of the report from the Integrity and Anti-Corruption Office of the African Development Bank that was submitted to me on 23 of June of this year. We know how far he can go in his insinuations and his allegations.

(*Interruptions*)

He did not…

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Mohamed: Can I raise my point of order, Sir?

Mr Speaker: What is your point of order?

Mr Mohamed: My point of order is very simple. The Prime Minister has stated very clearly that I laid doubt on the authenticity, and I think that he should be very, very careful to…

Mr Speaker: This is not a point of order.

Mr Mohamed: It is a point of order.

Mr Speaker: This is not a point of order!

Mr Mohamed: It is about misleading the House. I…

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker: This is not a point of order!

(*Interruptions*)

And don't disrupt the proceedings of the House!

The Prime Minister: Yes.

Mr Mohamed: He is talking.

Mr Speaker: He has the right to talk.

Mr Mohamed: Well, so do I!

Mr Speaker: You do not have the right.

Mr Mohamed: So, do I!

Mr Speaker: You will. You are interrupting.

(*Interruptions*)

Prime Minister, continue!

The Prime Minister: I was saying, Mr Speaker, Sir, we know about his insinuations and his allegations. He did not even hesitate to discredit a respected institution like the African Development Bank and its director also, Mr Alan Bacarese.

I firmly condemn this disdainful attempt by hon. Mohamed to undermine Mr Bacarese when he said, and I quote - listen, probably you have forgotten what you have said.

(*Interruptions*)

I quote –

"This man has difficulty even saying that he has shared it..."

Meaning the report,

"and *il assume ce qu'il a fait. Il n'arrive même pas à venir confirmer.* "

Hitting like that at the Director of the Integrity and Anti-Corruption Office of the ADB under the cover of parliamentary immunity is shameful...

(*Interruptions*)

...not to say cowardly, Mr Speaker, Sir. The people of this country cannot and will not be fooled. They have discovered the dirty game being played by hon. Mohamed and the Opposition in an attempt, of course, to save the Leader of the MMM, hon. Bérenger, whose name, I say again, has been mentioned in the St Louis case.

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker, Sir, since the very first day when I received a copy of a Press Release from the ADB on that matter…

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition!

The Prime Minister: I initiated…

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition!

The Prime Minister: Since the very first day…

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition!

(*Interruptions*)

Order!

Mr Mohamed: On a point of order!

Mr Speaker: What is your point of order?

Mr Mohamed: A Member cannot make reference to a document unless he tables the document which he is quoting from. That's Standing Order...

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker: So, the Prime Minister…

Mr Mohamed: or does he have an exception because he is a Prime Minister?

Mr Speaker: You already made your point of order.

Mr Mohamed: Yes. I am making it again for you to understand.

Mr Speaker: You already made your point of order! I heard your point of order and you keep quiet and listen to my Ruling!

(*Interruptions*)

Listen to my Ruling!

(*Interruptions*)

Listen to my Ruling!

(*Interruptions*)

Listen to my Ruling!

(*Interruptions*)

Listen to my Ruling!

(*Interruptions*)

Listen to my Ruling! You keep quiet and listen to my Ruling. Hon. Prime Minister, be ready to table any document you are quoting from.

The Prime Minister: I am not tabling any document.

(*Interruptions*)

I invited the hon. Leader of the Opposition to come to see this document.

(*Interruptions*)

Inn invite twa vinn guetter. He refused.

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker: Order, please! Order! Order! Prime Minister, continue.

The Prime Minister: I take full responsibility for what I am saying in this House, and I say again the name of hon. Bérenger is cited in this report.

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker: Order, please!

(*Interruptions*)

Order, please!

(*Interruptions*)

Order, please!

The Prime Minister: You want me to say more?

Mr Mohamed: Can I have a point of order, Sir? Now, that you have ruled and I have listened to your ruling carefully...

Mr Speaker: Yes.

Mr Mohamed: ...that you asked the Prime Minister to get ready to table and that he has refused to table, in line with the Standing Orders, I request formally that he withdraws what he has said, unless he tables it.

An hon. Member: *Exactement!*

Mr Speaker: This is not a point of order. You continue!

(*Interruptions*)

This is not a point of order.

(*Interruptions*)

You continue, Prime Minister!

The Prime Minister: Mr…

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker: Order!

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am rebutting what hon. Mohamed said in his speech and I am perfectly entitled to rebut…

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker: Honourable Members, this is what I said for those people who did not understand the Ruling. I told the hon. Prime Minister to be ready to table if ever he is quoting from any documents…

(*Interruptions*)

and he said he is not quoting from any documents, he is referring from the…

(*Interruptions*)

Order! You continue, hon. Prime Minister.

(*Interruptions*)

The Prime Minister: I am rebutting your speech…

(*Interruptions*)

So, Mr Speaker, Sir, since the very first day when I received a Press Release from the ADB on that matter, I initiated immediate action to request a copy of the investigation report…

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Shakeel Mohamed, you are going too far.

Mr Mohamed: Pardon me?

Mr Speaker: You are going too far. You are trying to insult the hon. Prime Minister…

Mr Mohamed: I will…

Mr Speaker: ...and I will take action. If you continue insulting the hon. Prime Minister, I will take action.

(*Interruptions*)

An hon. Member: *Malelvé*!

Mr Speaker: You continue, hon. Prime Minister!

The Prime Minister: So, I was saying that I had initiated immediate action to request a copy of the investigation report as we have the responsibility to maintain the integrity of our jurisdiction. Following our repeated requests, Mr Speaker, Sir, the ADB submitted a summary of the investigation report on the St Louis case. This is a fact that cannot be disputed or challenged. I repeat again, whatever I have stated in this august Assembly last week when replying to the PNQ of the hon. Leader of the Opposition is the plain truth. Hon. Mohamed is objecting, is saying I should table. Why should I table? I can say I refer to the PNQ that I answered to the hon. Leader of the Opposition where I said that the name of hon. Paul Bérenger figures in that report. So, when…

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Member of the Opposition!

The Prime Minister: *Quel mor pa*!

Mr Speaker: Don't obstruct!

The Prime Minister: *Quel mor pa*!

(*Interruptions*)

Quel mor pa, Quirin!

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Quirin!

The Prime Minister: *Mwa mo la*!

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Quirin, don't provoke!

(*Interruptions*)

No provocation!

(*Interruptions*)

I heard everything you said. No provocation!

(*Interruptions*)

And if you continue, I will take action!

(*Interruptions*)

If you continue!

(*Interruptions*)

Please continue!

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I was saying, when hon. Mohamed alluded on two occasions…

(*Interruptions*)

...during his speech that, and I quote…

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker: Both Members…

(*Interruptions*)

Both Members, silent. Both Members, both, and you are the third one, honourable.

The Prime Minister: And I quote…

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Quirin!

(*Interruptions*)

Hon. Quirin! This is contempt to the Assembly. Mind your words. Come on, hon. Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister: I quote from hon. Mohamed's speech - 'The report that was supposedly given to me' Unquote. And I quote again - 'if a report was given' Unquote. He is as usual *en train de faire son cinéma de mauvais goût*.

Je dois rappeler à l'honorable Mohamed que vendredi dernier, comme je l'ai dit, j'ai invité l'honorable Dr. Arvin Boolell en sa capacité de Leader de l'Opposition à venir constater de visu l'existence de ce rapport mais il s'est défilé. Alors, d'un côté, M. le président, il demande la publication du rapport, et de l'autre côté, il dit qu'il faut…

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition! Hon. Leader of the Opposition, this is not good Parliamentary behaviour!

The Prime Minister: Alors, d'un côté, il demande la publication du rapport, de l'autre côté, il dit qu'il faut respecter la clause de confidentialité de la Banque Africaine de Développement.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition, this is the last warning I am giving you. You keep obstructing the proceedings of the House.

The Prime Minister: *Alors,* we do not know which is which. *Encore une fois, c'est une manœuvre pour essayer de sauver son voisin.* I leave it to the population of this country to say who is covering whom in the St. Louis case. Mr Speaker, Sir, let me say again, I shall leave no stone unturned to shed light on this matter. This is my commitment to the nation.

Let me come again to what hon. Mohamed said. I have read his speech avec beaucoup…

(Interruptions)

Twa fatigue moi! Hey! What are you talking?

Mr Speaker: No crosstalking! Order, please! No crosstalking! Order please!

The Prime Minister: Let me tell him, in no uncertain terms, that I am in no way frightened or impressed or *fatigué* by his cowardly gimmicks. I face him as I am doing right now, and I will continue to do so without any fear or complacency because I know what the nation thinks about his pyromaniac proclivity.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: This is contempt! This is contempt! Frightening a Member in the House is contempt! Continue hon. Prime Minister! I will take action.

The Prime Minister: Let us see, Mr Speaker, Sir, who is really a coward. Perhaps the House should be reminded of the incident in 2013 involving hon. Mohamed, then Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations, and the son of Nandanee Soornack in the parking of the Ministry, at Victoria House in Port Louis. Hon. Mohamed, in his usual impulsive manner…

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition, quiet! Hon. Leader of the Opposition, quiet!

Continue!

The Prime Minister: He wanted to show to the son of the mistress '*de quel bois je me chauffe'*, by uttering threatening words towards the latter and stating – I do not want to repeat what he said to the address of the son of Soornack.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: No comment, hon. Patrick Assirvaden! No comment! Parliamentary behaviour, hon. Patrick Assirvaden!

The Prime Minister: But, Mr Speaker, Sir, when the son reported the case to the mother, the mother reported the case to the then *prince charmant*, Prime Minister. And then, we know what happened. Hon. Mohamed was reprimanded in such a way that we know, he lost his bearings. *Il avait ravalé son crachat et déguerpi, la queue entre les jambes, M. le président. Tel, un vrai capon*. Now, we see who is the coward.

(Interruptions)

The coward!

Mr Speaker: Order! Order! Order please! Order!

Continue!

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I do not want to go any further, I have plenty of anecdotes to show the despicable way in which he has been acting before.

So, let me end by stating that the current proliferation of money laundering and terrorism financing around the world, in spite of all the actions being taken on all fronts to combat that scourge, speaks of the challenge ahead, not only for Mauritius but also for most countries around the world. To have strong legislations, and stringent rules and regulations are not enough. The regulators must have strong supervisory and control powers and processes.

Money laundering is an activity that grows and evolves with the financial system. The money launderers use new instruments and the new technologies such as digital currency to

carry out their activities. We must, therefore, stand on our guard at all times and proactively consolidate our arsenal to combat these crimes. We will need to constantly plug the loopholes in our legislations and system. Our efforts to combat money laundering are, therefore, continuing.

But, I have just said and would like to reiterate - legislations and systems and processes are necessary but are not sufficient to combat money laundering and prevent terrorism financing. It takes a concerted effort, in fact, amongst Government, the regulators and the operators in the financial system. The responsibility is a collective one. We must each do our share. Only then, we will be able to convince the world of the effectiveness of our efforts and that Mauritius will cooperate fully in the global combat against money laundering and terrorism financing.

I have done, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Members, I suspend the sitting for 30 minutes.

At 5.35 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 6.25 p.m. with Mr Speaker in the Chair.

Mr Speaker: Please be seated! Hon. Minister Seeruttun!

The Minister of Financial Services and Good Governance (Mr Seeruttun): Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. At the very outset, Mr Speaker, Sir, allow me to thank all hon. Members from both sides of the House who have intervened on this very important Bill before us today.

The importance of this Bill which aims at strengthening our Anti-Money Laundering and Combatting the Financing of Terrorism (AML-CFT) framework has been well understood and acknowledged by the hon. Members from both sides of the House. However, some Members of the House have raised certain issues which I would like to clarify in the course of this summing-up.

This Bill, Mr Speaker, Sir, is a demonstration of the commitment of this Government to relentlessly fight money laundering and terrorism financing. It is one among the many actions that this Government is implementing to continuously reinforce the AML-CFT regime of Mauritius and comply with international standards, including the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) recommendations.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Leader of the Opposition and hon. Reza Uteem highlighted that Mauritius has been adopting a laid back approach regarding our inclusion in the list of jurisdictions under increased monitoring since February 2020 and further sought clarification as to why the changes were not brought before to these legislations in spite of the fact that we knew there were these deficiencies.

Mr Speaker, Sir, without repeating myself, such comment is what I refer to as being unpatriotic. Since our inclusion in the FATF list of jurisdictions under increased monitoring and even before, we have been updating this august Assembly of the work being done by my Ministry to accelerate the implementation of the FATF Action Plan and get out of the list at the earliest.

From a technical perspective, since February 2020, Mauritius has set up a governance structure with a committee at the highest level chaired by the hon. Prime Minister to monitor the implementation of the Action Plan. In fact, Mr Speaker, Sir, prior to that, it is important to highlight that the National Committee was ensuring the coordination and monitoring of the implementation of policies and activities regarding AML-CFT.

Since publication of the Mutual Evaluation Report (MER) in September 2018, the National Committee has set up 11 Sub-Committees for each of the FATF Immediate Outcomes which are used to measure the level of effectiveness of a country's AML/CFT regime.

The members of the Immediate Outcome Sub-Committees remain in constant communication and meet virtually or physically on a weekly basis to report on progress. Even during the sanitary curfew, members of the Sub-Committees continued their collaboration and weekly progress reports were being and are still being submitted to my Ministry and I must take this opportunity to commend the dedication of all these officers.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like here for the benefit of hon. Ramful who queried on the frequency of the meetings of the National Committee on AML-CFT to inform the House that from 2017 to date, it met more than 40 times, Mr Speaker, Sir. Since, then, an interim report has been submitted in March 2020, which could, unfortunately, not be considered by the FATF due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we have now been informed by FATF Secretariat that the first progress report on FATF Action Plan be submitted by July 2020.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Leader of the Opposition has also highlighted that we need to change the business model of the financial services sector. I would like to bring to the attention of the House that in September 2018, a Blueprint for the financial services sector of Mauritius was devised, which was a roadmap for the development of the financial services sector over the next 10 years.

Again, Mr Speaker, Sir, in his intervention, the hon. Leader of the Opposition stated that, through a communique of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), Mauritius was categorised as Category 2 of the Foreign Portfolio Investment (FPI). I would like to clarify for the benefit of the House that this is utterly wrong.

On 07 April 2020, the Government of India has officially ratified and recognized Mauritius as an eligible jurisdiction for the purposes of Regulations 5(a)(iv) of SEBI FPI regulations 2019 which enabled Mauritius to be in Category 1 Foreign Portfolio Investment.

I would wish to inform the House that the Government of India had issued this order even after Mauritius was included in the FATF list of jurisdictions under increased monitoring as it had clearly understood the implications of being in that list which did not entail any enhanced due diligence. This also shows, Mr Speaker, Sir, the effort and commitment of this Government to address emerging challenges in our financial services sector at diplomatic level.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Leader of the Opposition also mentioned that the Enforcement Manual which was issued by the Financial Services Commission (FSC) is a good document but is not being applied. I would wish to highlight that a risk based supervision plan has been rolled out at the level of the FSC to meet the FATF requirement.

On 12 June 2020, the Enforcement Manual of the FSC was published. It sets out the Commission’s approach to enforcement and the exercise of its enforcement process and the general policies and procedures which the FSC uses as guidance in detecting, investigating and taking actions in cases where the relevant laws or any other relevant guidelines have been breached. The manual is issued with the intent of increasing transparency and consistency to promote the rule of law principle that underpins all of the Commission’s enforcement actions.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Leader of the Opposition further commented on the time of the reporting of the Suspicious Transactions has been reduced from 15 days to 5 days as from

the time the suspicion has arisen and that this may adversely affect the work of the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU).

Allow me to assure the House, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that this reduction in the time frame for reporting will not impact on the FIU. In fact, the FIU will still receive Suspicious Transaction Reports (STRs) in the same manner it always did. This provision will, on the other hand, affect reporting persons as they will have to report a suspicious transaction in a shorter timeframe after the nature of the transaction is established. This change is necessary to ensure greater effectiveness. For example, Mr Speaker, Sir, the law currently provides for a maximum of 15 working days, that is, three weeks to report a STR from the moment a suspicion is established.

Mauritius has recently experienced a number of cases of electronic fraud, such as 'business email compromise' fraud, where large sums were defrauded from local companies and transferred overseas. If the reporting entity reports the STR after three weeks, as the law currently allows, the likelihood of recovering stolen funds is almost non-existent. Additionally, in extremely serious cases such as terrorism financing, receiving a STR three weeks after the transaction can severely impact the response of competent authorities in preventing a disaster.

Furthermore, Mr Speaker, Sir, in the same wave, hon. Duval stated, I quote - "there is news at the FIU that there are dozens and dozens, if not hundreds of suspicious transaction reports, STRs which have been filed and for which there is no action taken. I cannot see anything here in the laws to deal with this and this is something, obviously, very serious."

It appears, Mr Speaker, Sir, that there is a misconception as to what a Suspicious Transaction Report is and the role of the FIU in producing financial intelligence reports.

For the benefit of the House, allow me to confirm that a suspicious Transaction Report is a piece of information relating to a transaction which gives rise to a suspicion of possible money laundering and terrorism financing. STRs are filed by reporting entities with the FIU through a software developed by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), called goAML.

All the information received through STRs are compiled on the goAML system, given a prioritization rating and then enriched and analysed. The FIU then disseminates intelligence reports to investigatory and supervisory authorities and overseas FIUs based on the results of

the analysis. Accordingly, action is taken on all STRs but not all STRs will lead to a dissemination to competent authorities.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I cannot but thank hon. Uteem and hon. Duval who made fruitful contributions to the discussions with respect to the provisions contained of this new Bill to the House. Indeed, they raised three important issues which I will now enumerate - firstly, hon. Uteem highlighted a strategic deficiency in the Bill regarding the Trust Act whereby it is difficult to access the beneficial ownership information.

I would like to remind the hon. Member, who I understand that he is well versed with this piece of legislation, that, as per Section 33(3) of the Trust Act 2001, it is clearly mentioned that, I quote - "notwithstanding any another enactment, the Court or the judge in Chambers shall not make an order for disclosure or production of any confidential information referred to in subsection (2) except on an application by an investigatory authority and on being satisfied that the confidential information is *bona fide* required for the purpose of an enquiry relating to, or a trial regarding a financial crime."

Consequently, an investigatory authority which wishes to have access to any information pertaining to trust can access same through an order of the Court or Judge in Chambers.

Secondly, it has also been highlighted that charitable foundations are not required to file returns. It is worth drawing the attention of the hon. Member that foundations which are residents in Mauritius are required to submit returns including a summary of their financial statements to the Mauritius Revenue Authority, in the same manner as a company resident in Mauritius. Such returns are subject to an audit by the Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA) on a risk-based approach. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, thirdly, hon. Duval who highlighted that the Bill did not foresee the impact of crypto currency on the issues of AML-CFT.

Allow me to inform the House that the definition of "property" in the Financial Intelligence and Anti-Money Laundering Act (FIAMLA) is defined as a property of any kind, nature or description, whether moveable or immovable, tangible or intangible and includes, amongst others –

(i) any currency, whether or not the currency is legal tender in Mauritius and any bill, security bond, negotiable instrument or any instrument capable of being

negotiated which is payable to bearer or endorsed payable to bearer, whether expressed in Mauritius currency or otherwise, and

(ii) includes any right of interest in property. Consequently, the above definition is wide enough to include cryptocurrency.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to the Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA), hon. Uteem underscored that these are being regularly revoked and renegotiated on worse off terms since 2016 which is detrimental to our sector.

It is very paradoxical that the hon. Member is highlighting that we are downplaying threats being faced by Mauritius and at the same time criticising the fact that we have had to renegotiate our DTAAs.

I would like to inform the House that Mauritius is renegotiating most of its DTAAs as we have had to adhere to Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS) standards as well as the Multilateral Instrument since July 2017.

Had we not complied with these standards, Mauritius would have been signalled as being a non-cooperative jurisdiction from a tax perspective and this is one of the reasons for which Mauritius has been whitelisted by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am of the view that the Members on the other side of the House believe that the grass is greener elsewhere. I have heard several Members, including hon. Uteem mentioning the development of the Kigali Financial Centre. It is true that Rwanda is making strides in developing its financial services sector.

However, it is important to note, Mr Speaker, Sir, that we need to compare like with like. Suffice for me to say that I would like to invite them to consult the rating given to Rwanda by the ESSAMLG to really understand how far Mauritius is compliant with regard to FATF Recommendations as compared to the Rwanda.

Mr Speaker, Sir, hon. Ramful stated that there is a failure to demonstrate that LEAs have the capacity to conduct money laundering investigations and in particular parallel financial investigations. I would wish, therefore, to clarify that the Independent Commission

Against Corruption (ICAC) has already reviewed its investigation's strategy in line with the risks identified in the National Risk Assessment.

Additionally, mechanisms have been put in place, among Law Enforcement Agencies, with a view to ensuring better cooperation and timely sharing of information and undertaking parallel financial investigation. This will lead to increased effectiveness in the fight against money laundering and other complex financial crimes.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in this context, I wish to highlight that the different stakeholders such as the Police has conducted capacity building on complex financial crimes and money laundering.

It is worth mentioning that more than 460 Police Officers have been trained on money laundering investigation. Furthermore, specialised training on financial investigation has been provided to Police Officers.

I would also seize the opportunity, Mr Speaker, Sir, to draw the attention of the hon. Ramful that he hastily came forward to justify that during 2008 to 2016, there have been many amendments to the FIAMLA.

However, it is important to note that most of the changes pertained to minor issues such as the issue of guidelines or the administration of the Board. In fact, the hon. Prime Minister did mention earlier on the amendment that they brought about in 2012 whereby they were reversing the clauses, the provision that had to combat this particular *fléau*.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is only in 2015, when this Government was elected that we brought major changes with the introduction of the Asset Recovery Investigative Department under the Asset Recovery Act.

Thereafter, in May 2019, a major piece of legislation that is the Anti-Money Laundering and Combatting the Financing of Terrorism and Proliferation (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2019 was enacted. And today, another major legislation on AML-CFT is being discussed in this august Assembly.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Shakeel Mohamed highlighted that institutions should not be at loggerheads. I would like to remind the hon. Member that the whole implementation of the FATF plan is possible because of the close collaboration between the several institutions.

There is regular exchange of information/intelligence between the FIU and the Police. On the basis of intelligence shared by the FIU, following receipt of STRs, Police has been able to investigate and detect crimes where accused have been charged with both predicate and money laundering offences. Moreover, during proactive investigations the Police constantly resort to the FIU for the provision of information or intelligence. Similarly, there is regular sharing of information among the other LEAs and regulatory bodies.

Mr Speaker, Sir, much have been said on the EU List. Allow me to highlight that the EU listing is a separate process and additional measures have been put into place to facilitate our expeditious exit from the list.

However, before delving further into the EU list issue, I would like to clarify for the benefit of the House that hon. Uteem mentioned that there are only 12 countries which have been identified for the EU black list. However, I wish to correct this statement made by the hon. Member as the Delegated Act issued by the EU does not mention this information. It is wrong to aver that there are only 12 countries which are on the EU blacklist as there are, in fact, a total of 22 countries which have been blacklisted.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the contention of Mauritius regarding the EU blacklist is that there has been no prior consultation before including Mauritius on the list. In fact, the EU has amalgamated the countries which are on the FATF list of jurisdictions under increased monitoring and the FATF list of high risk jurisdictions and established a unique blacklist without applying the same measures which the FATF are calling for.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to shed some light on a comment from the hon. Ramful who advised that the Directive 2015/849 should have already informed us of the possibility of being blacklisted by the EU. I would like to inform the House that sometimes little knowledge is always dangerous.

As per the EU Directive 2015/849, only the methodology was published for European Union (EU) to identify high risk countries. At that time, Mauritius was not even subjected to its Mutual Evaluation exercise.

Furthermore, I wish to inform the House, that two lists were drawn on this methodology which were rejected by the EU Parliament on the basis of lack of independent assessment by the EU.

It is only in May 2020, that the EU Commission, through a Delegated Act, amended the methodology such that countries in the FATF lists could be automatically transposed into the EU black list. That very same day when the list came out, the methodology was rendered public.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I would also wish to inform hon. Duval here that as to the actions taken by Government not to be included in the EU black list after it was placed in the FATF list of jurisdictions under increased monitoring.

I would like to clarify firstly that at all times in view of the long-standing relationship between the EU and Mauritius, there was always prior consultation before any major decision was taken by the EU with respect to Mauritius.

In fact, since Mauritius was included in the FATF list, I engaged with the EU Ambassador in Mauritius who comforted me that should Mauritius be considered for the black list; we would be consulted beforehand.

However, whilst on 05 May 2020, we took cognizance of the inclusion of Mauritius on the list, a series of actions have been triggered as I mentioned in my intervention on the Budget Speech.

Mr Speaker, Sir, besides meeting the EU Ambassador, I have met several ambassadors and high commissioners, including the French Ambassador, the US Ambassador, the British High Commissioner even the Australian High Commissioner to share the work being undertaken by Government to address the deficiencies highlighted by the FATF. My other colleagues, Ministers as well, have been sharing those information with different representatives of countries in Europe.

Mr Speaker, Sir, given that now the European Parliament has already adopted the Delegated Act, we are engaging with the relevant authorities for the possibility of an autonomous assessment by the European Commission.

At our request, the European Union has also agreed to set up a Committee comprising the technical team of the European Commission based in Brussels which is involved in drawing the list of High Risk Third Countries and a Technical Team from Mauritius to carry out an on-going assessment of the progress being made on the implementation of the FATF Action Plan.

The Committee will hold its first meeting this week itself.

Mr Speaker, Sir, Government, through this Bill is sending a strong signal not only to the business and investors community but also to the international organisations, such as the FATF and EU to reassure them regarding our political commitment to tackle money laundering and terrorism financing.

This Government is determined to continue in its unflinching effort to comply with all international standards.

It is worth highlighting that the financial services sector is an important pillar of the economy which we are committed to protect and develop.

And with these words, Mr Speaker, Sir, I commend the Bill to the House.

(Applause)

Question put and agreed to.

Bills read a second time and committed.

COMMITTEE STAGE

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

THE ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING AND COMBATTING THE FINANCING OF TERRORISM (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) BILL

(No. V of 2020)

Clauses 1 and 2 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 3 (Civil Status Act amended)

Motion made and question proposed: "that the clause stands part of the Bill."

Mr Seeruttun: Mr Chairperson, I move for the following amendment –

"in clause 3 –

(i) in paragraph (a), in the proposed section 8C, in paragraph (b), by deleting the words "Bank of Mauritius Act" and replacing them by the words "Bank of Mauritius Act or to facilitate the verification of the identity of customer through any other system maintained and operated by the Bank of Mauritius";

(ii) in paragraph (b), by deleting subparagraph (ii) and replacing it by the following subparagraph –

(ii) in subsection (2), by inserting, after the word "Unit", the words "established under the Financial Intelligence and Anti- Money Laundering Act and the Bank of Mauritius";"

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 3, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clauses 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 10 (Foundations Act amended)

Motion made and question proposed: "that the clause stands part of the Bill."

Mr Seeruttun: Mr Chairperson, I move for the following amendment –

"in clause 10, by deleting paragraph (d) and replacing it by the following paragraph –

(d) in section 39, by inserting, after subsection (4), the following new subsection –

(4A) Where a Foundation, Council member, former Council member, secretary or former secretary, as the case may be, has failed to comply with section 36(1)(d) or (e) or (5), the Registrar shall remove the name of the Foundation from the register."

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 10, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 11 (Gambling Regulatory Authority Act amended)

Motion made and question proposed: "that the clause stand part of the Bill."

Mr Seeruttun: Mr Chairperson, I move for the following amendment –

"in clause 11 –

(i) in paragraph (e), in the proposed new section 26B –

(A) in subsection (1), by deleting the word "hotel";

(B) in subsection (3), by deleting the words "hotel casino" and replacing them by the words "gaming house";

(ii) in paragraph (o) –

(A) by deleting the words "section 134A" and replacing them by the words "section 134B";

(B) by deleting the words "134B**.**" and replacing them by the words "134C**.**";"

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 11, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clauses 12 and 13 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 14 (Jewellery Act amended)

Motion made and question proposed: "that the clause stand part of the Bill."

Mr Seeruttun: Mr Chairperson, I move for the following amendment –

"by deleting clause14 and replacing it by the following clause –

14. Jewellery Act amended

The Jewellery Act is amended –

(a) in section 2 –

(i) by deleting the definition of "dealer" and replacing it by the following definition –

"dealer" –

(a) means a person who deals in jewellery, precious stones or precious metals; and

(b) includes a person who –

(i) manufactures, processes, buys, sells, imports or exports jewellery, or supplies jewellery for sale;

(ii) processes, buys, sells or imports precious metals, or exports melted precious metals; or

(iii) processes, buys, sells or imports precious stones or semi-precious stones;

(ii) by deleting the definition of "jewellery" and replacing it by the following definition –

"jewellery" means any article –

(a) made of a precious metal, other than silver, or of its alloy; or

(b) for personal adornment made of silver or of its alloy,

and which exceeds one gramme;

(iii) in the definition of "precious metal", by inserting, after the word "silver", the words ", palladium";

(iv) in the definition of "precious stone", by inserting, after the word "diamond", the words ", sapphire, ruby, emerald, alexandrite or tanzanite".

(b) in section 3, by adding the following new subsection –

(3) Part III shall apply to jewellery which relates to an article for personal adornment made of a precious metal or of its alloy, and which exceeds one gramme.

(c) in section 15 –

(i) by repealing subsection (1) and replacing it by the following subsection –

(1) No person shall deal in jewellery, precious stones or precious metals unless he is registered with the Controller.

(ii) by adding the following new subsection –

(6) This section shall not apply to the Bank of Mauritius and to any bank which has been granted a banking licence to carry on exclusively private banking business by the Bank of Mauritius to hold, store or sell gold, silver, platinum, and other precious metals, as part of the management of its client's investment portfolio."

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 14, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 15 (Limited Liability Partnerships Act amended)

Motion made and question proposed: "that the clause stand part of the Bill."

Mr Seeruttun: Mr Chairperson, I move for the following amendment –

"in clause 15, in paragraph (b), in the proposed new subparagraph (viia), by inserting, after the words "where a", the word "limited";"

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 15, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 16 (Limited Partnerships Act amended)

Motion made and question proposed: "that the clause stands part of the Bill."

Mr Seeruttun: Mr Chairperson, I move for the following amendment –

"in clause 16, in paragraph (b), in the proposed new subparagraph (va), by inserting, after the words "where a", the word "limited";"

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 16, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clauses 17 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 18 (Notaries Act amended)

Motion made and question proposed: "that the clause stand part of the Bill."

Mr Seeruttun: Mr Chairperson, I move for the following amendment –

"in clause 18, in paragraph (b), by deleting the proposed new paragraph (c) and replacing it by the following new paragraph –

> (c) Where any payment of the purchase price or consideration is made by bank cheque in the name of a notary or bank transfer in the bank account of a notary, the notary shall, notwithstanding section 34(3), pay the purchase price or consideration to the transferor of the immoveable property not later than 5 working days after the deed is signed and executed by all parties."

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 18, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clauses 19 and 20 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Mr Seeruttun: Mr Chairperson, I move that a new clause 21 be added as follows –

"by adding the following new section –

21. Commencement

Section 11(c), (d) and (e) shall come into operation on a date to be fixed by Proclamation."

New Clause 21 brought up and read a first time.

Mr Seeruttun: Mr Chairperson, I move that new clause 21 be read a second time.

Question put and agreed to.

New clause 21 read a second time and ordered to stand part of the Bill.

The title and enacting clause were agreed to.

The Bill, as amended, was agreed to.

On the Assembly resuming with Mr Speaker in the Chair, Mr Speaker reported accordingly.

Third Reading

The Anti-Money Laundering and Combatting the Financing of Terrorism (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill (No. V of 2020) was read a third time and passed.

ADJOURNMENT

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Tuesday 14 July 2020 at 11.30 a.m.

The Deputy Prime Minister seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Mr Speaker: The House stands adjourned.

Let me trust my eyes!

Hon. David!

MATTERS RAISED

(7.01 p.m.)

METRO EXPRESS FEEDER BUSES – OPERATION

Mr F. David (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West): Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. My question is addressed to the hon. Minister of Land Transport and Light Rail. Hon. Minister, it appears that the Metro Express feeder buses which were operating since 10 January 2020 stopped at some point before the lockdown and did not resume operation since then. This situation is obviously an obstacle for the Metro Express passengers. May I, therefore, ask the hon. Minister when exactly the feeder buses operations stopped, the reason behind this service interruption and when this facility will resume?

Thank you.

Mr Speaker: Who is answering?

The Minister of Land Transport and Light Rail (Mr A. Ganoo): Mr Speaker, Sir, this issue would have better been dealt with by way of a PQ, but I will try to be as brief as possible because I know there are many Members wishing to intervene. So, to answer to the hon. Member, the feeder bus routes were conceptualised by the Singapore Cooperation Enterprise. And with regard to the question when did they start, in fact, the operation started on 10 January of this year and coincided with the commencement of the commercial operations of the Metro Express.

In that respect, the NLTA, in fact, varied the licence of Rose Hill Transport, United Bus Service Ltd, National Transport Corporation and Triolet Bus Service, those were the four companies, the four operators to provide feeder buses which initially involved a fleet of 29 buses operating on 15 feeder routes, Mr Speaker, Sir, to serve the seven light rail stations along Port Louis to Rose Hill. This was done with a view to inducing the patronage of the feeders and of the light rail, and the services were free to all passengers for an initial period of 10 January to 29 February. Then, the feeder buses became payable at a flat rate of Rs15 and a rebate of Rs5 was provided to Metro Express. But with the introduction of these paid feeder services, we noted a decline of more than 50% of the feeder ridership between 01 and 10 March 2020 and this prompted the bus companies, the operators, to initially reduce the number of buses serving on the routes, whilst some of them even discontinued their services.

And, consequently, because of this very low ridership, the operators deplored that the operation of the routes were not financially viable and they gradually ceased to provide service on most of the routes. Then, came the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the decree of the lockdown, and therefore, feeder buses did not become operational.

Mr Speaker, Sir, to answer, in fact, there were several constraints which reduced the operation of these buses because of traffic congestion around the feeder routes. The feeder routes were overlapping with the existing normal bus routes, lack of proper signage and infrastructural connectivity to the light rail station, the size of the buses and so on. So, finally, as at now, Mr Speaker, Sir, it is only CNT which is operating two or three feeder buses. And what we are doing at the Ministry, we are at the moment reflecting on the possibility of designing another method to induce ridership, and at the moment, a Committee is working on that possibility, and this Committee is made up of officers from the NLTA and my Ministry. We hope that in the days to come, we will come up with another solution.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie!

(7.06 p.m.)

RICHELIEU BRANCH ROAD – REOPENING

Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (Fourth Member for GRNW & Port Louis West): Merci, M. le président. Ma requête s'adresse au ministre du transport aussi. M le président, tout développement est censé faciliter la vie de la population et non constituer un inconvénient. Avant l'arrivée du métro, les habitants de Richelieu, Petite Rivière et Montée S avaient l'habitude d'emprunter le Richelieu Branch Road à Coromandel pour aller travailler. Maintenant, avec le métro, les résidents doivent prendre le bus à Richelieu ou à Petite Rivière ou alors à Montée S pour aller à Grande Rivière.

De là, prendre un deuxième bus pour aller vers les Plaines Wilhems, causant des frais additionnels pour le transport que certains employeurs refusent de rembourser. Ce qui fait que quelques personnes ont dû cesser de travailler parce que l'argent qu'ils gagnent ne suffise pas à couvrir les frais de transport. Je sollicite, donc, le ministre à faire diligence pour que le Richelieu Branch Road soit rouvert.

The Minister of Land Transport and Light Rail (Mr A. Ganoo): I am aware of this problem, Mr Speaker, Sir. We have taken note of the concerns of the inhabitants, letters have been sent to the Technical Department of my Ministry. We have looked into the matter

and I can assure the hon. Member that, at the moment, we are looking into the feasibility of implementation of another pedestrian route or pedestrian footbridge in the vicinity of Richelieu Branch to cater for the movement of the public between Coromandel and Richelieu.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Ittoo!

(7.07 p.m.)

SIVANANDA AVENUE – ROAD ACCESS – PHASE II OF METRO EXPRESS

Mr A. Ittoo (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal): Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. My request is addressed to the hon. Minister of Transport and Light Rail, hon. Ganoo. During a series of meetings held with residents of Sivananda Avenue affected by Phase II of the Metro Express Project, along with Mayors of Curepipe, Vacoas, CEO of Metro Express and officers of the Ministry of Housing, myself, Minister Bodha and PPS Bablee, the residents reported that they are still awaiting formal proposals from the authorities pertaining to the acquisition details, compensation and road access solutions. Would the hon. Minister please look into the matter, as the inhabitants, we are made aware, are not against the project, but are eagerly waiting to clear their confusion. Thank you.

The Minister of Land Transport and Light Rail (Mr A. Ganoo): Mr Speaker, Sir, we have said in the past. My predecessor and myself, we have had dedicated meetings on this problem. In fact, regularly, every week or twice a week, meetings under my Chairmanship and even the Chairmanship of hon. Bodha where the Deputy Prime Minister has also been present, we have looked into the various land issues along the stretch from Curepipe to Vacoas for the implementation of the Phase II of the Metro Project, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Along Sivananda Avenue, there are, in fact, 55 cases of encroachment on State land, which consist mainly of walls and fencing. Most of these structures, I must say, have been already removed following consultations with the persons concerned.

I would like to thank the hon. Members themselves - hon. Bablee, hon. Dhunoo, my two colleagues, Ministers I have just mentioned, and the Mayor, because a lot of door-to-door work, public relations have been effected, Mr Speaker, Sir. There is a question of compulsory acquisition and also encroachment, and meetings are being held with the owners and a round

of public relations exercise is being carried out. Technical meetings are under way with the owners to finalise the process. I have all the cases with me, the 55 names of encroachment, the 39 plots to be acquired. I will not go into all these documents, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Quiet please!

Mr Ganoo: I wish to assure the hon. Members of the constituency, even those in the Opposition, and the public at large, the residents of those areas, that my Ministry, my officers and the Municipality of Curepipe, we are doing our level best so that works proceed as smoothly as possible, and, in fact, just to give you one example…

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Hon. Minister, do not give any example!

Mr Ganoo: Just one example...

Mr Speaker: No! Hon. Armance!

(7.11 p.m.)

POINTE AUX SABLES TRAFFIC CENTRE

Mr P. Armance (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West): Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

My request also goes to the Minister of Land Transport and Light Rail. It is particularly addressed regarding the new traffic centre of Pointe aux Sables. The construction has been completed since nearly one year and already inaugurated, but it is still not operational, and, in the same line, he answered questions in the House, regarding the bus route from Pointe aux Sables to Rose Hill, which is also not operational. Can the hon. Minister please have a look at the two matters?

The Minister of Land Transport and Light Rail (**Mr A. Ganoo):** Okay. I am aware of the first case, Mr Speaker, Sir, the traffic centre at Pointe aux Sables, which has not yet inaugurated. I know that there is a problem concerning the NDU also. I was present in a meeting which looked into this issue. I can assure the hon. Member that I will take up the

matter with the officials concerned and see to it that the solution is brought to this problem, and I will also look into the second matter raised by the hon. Member.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Dhunoo!

(7.12 p.m.)

A10 ROAD, CUREPIPE – DRAINS

Mr S. Dhunoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands): Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

I am raising an issue that concerns the hon. Minister Hurreeram, Minister of National Infrastructure and Community Development, and more specifically, the Road Development Authority. I refer to road A10 in Curepipe near Pâtisserie Suisse and Tasha Best Décor Ltd.

There was an existing covered drain in front of these shops which had been covered when the RDA had done the asphalting of A10. During rainy days, it causes much inconvenience to the school children and inhabitants using the adjacent footpath along A10, and I would request the hon. Minister if he could look into the matter as the users have sometimes to walk into water.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

The Minister of National Infrastructure and Community Development (Mr M. Hurreeram): Mr Speaker, Sir, I thank the hon. Member to have given me advanced notice of this problem. The RDA will be looking into and I will invite my hon. Colleague for a site visit so as we can look into the matter together.

Thank you.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Nagalingum!

(7.13 p.m.)

MALAYSIA – MAURITIAN NATIONALS – PETITION

Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill): Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

My request is addressed to the hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs. It has been brought to my concern that the repatriation flight for Mauritian nationals stranded in Malaysia is scheduled for the mid of July 2020. I will be grateful, Mr Speaker, Sir, if the Minister could

confirm the date of the repatriation flight. It has also been brought to my attention that a fee of 1,070 Euros, equivalent to Mauritian rupees 48,406 at the current exchange rate, is being charged to the stranded passengers for the flight to Mauritius. I have been told also that these passengers need to undergo a COVID PCR Test which costs equivalent of around 4,000 Mauritian rupees.

You would admit, Mr Speaker, Sir that there are many parents who have sacrificed their earnings to send their children for further studies in Malaysia. For those parents and even other passengers to find more than Rs50,000 to be able to return to Mauritius is not an easy task. More so, no one of them was prepared to face such a situation which arose due to COVID-19.

Mr Speaker, Sir, many of the stranded passengers were already at the airport on the 19...

Mr Speaker: Hon. Member, it is a speech you are making!

Mr Nagalingum: No, it is not a speech.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Members are waiting for you!

Mr Nagalingum: So, I would make an appeal to the Minister to see because we received a petition about 500 signatories protesting against the excessive airfare for the Kuala Lumpur flight to Mauritius and argue Air Mauritius to review its prices to ensure that the same is comparable to other repatriation flights.

Therefore, I make a humble request, on behalf of the stranded passengers and their families to the hon. Minister to see to it that Air Mauritius practices the normal fares with no additional charge for the repatriation flight from Kuala Lumpur to Mauritius, and student passengers, who have open ticket in their possession, are not charged additionally.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is very unfair that these passengers have to make this…

Mr Speaker: Please, conclude the speech!

Mr Nagalingum: So, I make a humble request to both the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of Finance to find a solution for the excessive airfare plus the fees for excess luggage.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade (Mr N. Bodha): Mr Speaker, Sir, this is a very difficult task. The problem for the KL flight is that usually, we have people flying into KL with cargo and we have cargo coming back, which means that the flights are affordable. For KL, we have no passengers flying to Malaysia, no cargo to Malaysia, and no cargo from Malaysia. I am totally aware of this problem.

The problem also, we try to work it out with Air Mauritius so that we find some sort of a balance with other flights, but because Air Mauritius, being in voluntary administration, this is not being allowed by the administrator.

But we are going to work on it so that we have an affordable price. I can also confirm that the flight is coming on the 11th. We are working on this possibility that Air Mauritius will be able to provide them with an affordable fare, but we will have to see *une sorte de péréquation avec d'autres vols.*

Mr Speaker: Hon. Assirvaden!

(7.17 p.m.)

AUSTRALIA – MAURITIAN NATIONALS – RETURN FLIGHT

Mr P. Assirvaden (Second Member for La Caverne & Phoenix): Ma requête est semblable à celle de l'honorable Nagalingum, adressée au Ministre des Affaires Etrangères, concernant les Mauriciens bloqués en Australie, où beaucoup sont ceux qui sont des retraités qui visitent leurs enfants et il se retrouve que ces gens-là sont à court de médicaments et aussi leurs pensions ici ont été supprimées. Je ne sais pas si le ministre peut nous aider dans cette direction.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade (Mr N. Bodha): Je veux tout faire pour aider, le problème c'est que ce mois-ci nous ramenons 1,400 personnes sur sept vols. Il y a des endroits où on n'a jamais été, par exemple, le Pakistan, le Canada. Il y a déjà eu un vol en Australie.

Je pense que je suis très concerné par tout cela et on va travailler sur la possibilité de ramener autant que possible nos compatriotes de l'Australie, mais je tiens quand même à le dire ce ne sera pas en juillet. Mais après on peut bien sûr considérer.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Mrs Luchmun Roy!

(7.18 p.m.)

LONG MOUNTAIN HOSPITAL PHARMACY – OPENING HOURS

Mrs S. Luchmun Roy (Second Member for Port Louis & Montagne Longue): Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. My concern is addressed to Dr. the hon. Minister of Health and Wellness on behalf of the inhabitants of Long Mountain and surrounding areas. They complain about the opening hours of the pharmacy in the Long Mountain Hospital.

As at now, it opens from 8 a.m. till 8 p.m., and their request is, if they could extend the opening hours of the pharmacy in the hospital. I would request the hon. Minister to look into the matter.

Thank you.

The Minister of Health and Wellness (Dr. K. Jagutpal): Mr Speaker, Sir, extending hours from 8 p.m. to 8 a.m. will require additional staff.

Obviously, I am going to look into the matter because we have to see how many patients are attending before at that time, and also, maybe we can give medication for the 12 hours and then the next day, the patient can collect the prescriptions at the pharmacy.

Anyway, I will look into that if it is possible to open the pharmacy after 8 p.m., at night.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Ameer Meea!

(7.19 p.m.)

ETIENNE PELLEREAU STREET – CWA PIPES – LEAKAGE

Mr A. Ameer Meea (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East): Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. The issue I am raising tonight is addressed to the hon. Minister of Public Utilities, but since he is not here, I will address it to his colleague, the Minister of National Infrastructure. The Etienne Pellereau Street was tarred some one month back and the next day that the road was tarred, there was leakage from CWA pipes on three different spots of the same road. I must say that I raised this issue on 09 June this year, that is, almost one month and nothing has been done up to now.

Mr Speaker, Sir, water is being wasted, but also is causing much discomfort and nuisance to the inhabitants and users of this street. So, I am hereby requesting the hon. Minister to instruct the CWA to do needful urgently.

Thank You.

The Minister of National Infrastructure and Community Development (Mr M. Hurreeram): I take note of the issue, Mr Speaker, Sir, and I will refer it to my colleague.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Lobine!

(7.20 p.m.)

CONSTITUENCY NO. 15, LA CAVERNE/PHOENIX – STREET LIGHTINGS

Mr K. Lobine (First Member for La Caverne & Phoenix): Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. My request is addressed to Dr. the hon. Anwar Husnoo, Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government. It concerns several areas and localities in Constituency No. 15, La Caverne and Phoenix, where street lightings are out of use for several weeks.

Complaints have been made to the Municipal Council of Vacoas-Phoenix by inhabitants and they have been informed that actually there are no stocks of street lights and they have to wait for a while. They have not been given a time frame for how long to wait. Can you use your good office and see to it that this is remedied at the earliest?

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management (Dr. A. Husnoo): Mr Speaker, Sir, I will talk to the Chief Executive of Vacoas-Phoenix to see if they can expedite matters.

Thank you.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Osman Mahomed!

(7.21 p.m.)

TRADE LICENCES – RENEWAL

Mr Osman Mahomed (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central): Mr Speaker, Sir, thank you. I would like to address the hon. Minister of Finance

tonight and it has to do with the payment for renewal of trade licences which before was done, I have been given to understand, at District Councils and at some point in time, it was able to be done online.

For some reasons, people have to come to One Cathedral Square to do the payment and these days, the queue there is very, very, very long. I have photos of this; I can show to the hon. Minister later. And my appeal to him tonight is to look at this state of affairs because this is causing a lot of undue waiting time to people wanting to pay.

Thank you.

The Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development (Dr. R. Padayachy): M. le président, je suis au courant de cette affaire. J'ai discuté de cela avec la directrice concernée et on est en train de revoir la procédure, et je reviendrai là-dessus.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Mrs Mayotte!

(7.22 p.m.)

GEOFFROY STREET, BAMBOUS – BUS TRANSPORT

Mrs S. Mayotte (Second Member for Savanne & Black River): Merci, M. le président. Ma requête s'adresse également à mon collègue, le ministre du Transport, concernant un problème récurrent dans notre circonscription, un problème de transport pour les enfants, les étudiants. Il y a un manque d'autobus à Route Geoffroy à Bambous. Maintenant que les enfants ont repris le chemin de l'école, donc ils ont du mal à arriver à heure à l'école et donc ils ont besoin de fournir une explication écrite tous les jours, concernant la cause de leur retard à l'école.

Et même situation à Mont Blanc. Mont Blanc qui se trouve juste à côté de Chamouny où les enfants doivent parcourir un bon bout de chemin, avant d'atteindre la route principale, pour prendre le bus pour aller à l'école. Alors, si M. le ministre peut considérer cette requête en urgence.

Merci.

The Minister of Land Transport and Light Rail (Mr A. Ganoo): I thank the hon. Member, Mr Speaker, Sir. Both of these cases have been brought to my knowledge and I have already done the needful with the NLTA to remedy the situation. I hope this will be done as quickly as possible.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Uteem!

(7.23 p.m.)

AIR MAURITIUS – EMPLOYEES (FORMER) – EARLY RETIREMENT

Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central): Thank you, I would like to raise an issue which concerns both the hon. Prime Minister as Minister responsible for External Communications and the Minister of Labour.

It concerns the employees of Air Mauritius who have completed more than 33 1/3 years of service. These former employees, in the month of May, were given an option, either they were retrenched and received only one month salary or they were given the option of early retirement, in which case they will be given their full pension, plus 3% adjustment.

Unfortunately, after all these employees have signed the early retirement form, they have now been informed by the Administrators that if there is any deficit in the Air Mauritius Pension Fund, Air Mauritius will only be able to fund that deficit after a meeting with the creditors in the DOCA, which was never told to these employees before they signed their preretirement option form.

So, now, I would urge the hon. Prime Minister and the Minister of Labour if they can take up the matter with the Administrators because many of these former employees would not have gone on early retirement, had they been informed that they would not be given their full pension.

Thank you.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, this is a matter which is being dealt by the Administrator.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Ramful!

(7.24 p.m.)

KENYA, CAMP CAROL – STATE LAND – LEASE

Mr D. Ramful (First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien): Mr Speaker, Sir, I have an issue which concerns the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Housing and Land Use Planning. It concerns the lease holders of State land in the village of Kenya, Camp Carol in Constituency No.12. In 2013, the State Land Act was amended to allow landholders to purchase their property for the sum of Rs2,000.

Now, in that particular village, there were about 120 applications and I am grateful I have to place on record that Government has regularised quite some of those applications, about more than half of them, but there are a few that need to be regularised.

Now, this is causing them prejudice given that they cannot effect any construction or they cannot take any loan on their land. Can I just request the hon. Deputy Prime Minister to kindly look into the matter so that those who are left can be regularised?

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Land Use Planning, Minister of Tourism (Mr S. Obeegadoo): I shall certainly enquire, Mr Speaker, Sir, and try my utmost to solve the problem of the remaining cases.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Mrs Tour!

(7.26 p.m.)

NOTRE DAME – CWA WORKS

Mrs J. Tour (Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue): Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. My query is addressed to the Minister of National Infrastructure and Community Development, hon. Hurreeram.

Following works undertaken by the CWA, some two weeks ago, there is a pothole on the main road, close to the service station in Notre Dame. It is a real danger for the road users. I would, therefore, kindly request the Minister to promptly remedy the situation, please.

The Minister of National Infrastructure and Community Development (Mr M. Hurreeram): Mr Speaker, Sir, I thank my hon. colleague for having given me advance notice of this question. I have already referred the matter to the CWA and I have got commitment from the General Manager that tomorrow morning, the contractor will be on site for the repairs.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Ms Anquetil!

(7.26 p.m.)

MINORS – SEXUAL ABUSE

Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas & Floreal): Je vous remercie, M. le président. Ma requête s'adresse à la ministre de l'Egalité du genre, du développement de l'enfant et du bien-être de la famille.

Madame la ministre, plusieurs cas d'abus sexuels sur les filles mineures âgées respectivement de 3, 7, 8 et 9 ans ont été signalés dans notre pays en l'espace de deux semaines. Hier encore, un autre cas d'abus sur un enfant de 5 ans a été enregistré.

Ces cas extrêmement troublants et traumatisants démontrent clairement de grosses failles dans le fonctionnement de la *CDU,* dont le système d'alerte. Je voudrais solliciter…

Mr Speaker: So, you are making a speech, hon. Member.

Ms Anquetil: Pardon?

Mr Speaker: You are making a speech!

Ms Anquetil: No. *Je voudrais solliciter.*

Mr Speaker: Raise the issue! Raise the issue!

Ms Anquetil: Je voudrais solliciter votre intervention en attendant l'introduction du *Children's Bill* devant l'Assemblée nationale pour mettre en place, en vue de l'urgence, un nouveau protocole avec un comité de crise à la *CDU* afin de mieux protéger nos enfants.

Je vous remercie, M. le président.

The Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare (Mrs K. Koonjoo-Shah): Mr Speaker, Sir, although I believe this is not adjournment matters; I will indulge the hon. Member with a reply. The Children's Bill is at the moment currently being drafted at the Attorney General's Office and it is imminently coming to Parliament for the First Reading.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Doolub!

(7.28 p.m.)

BLUE BAY BEACH – STREET LIGHTINGS

Mr R. Doolub (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien): Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. My request is addressed to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Tourism. It has been reported to me that street lightings, some at least around Blue Bay Beach are not functioning.

Considérant que ladite plage est très prisée dans le sud, je demanderai au ministre s'il pourrait s'enquérir auprès des autorités concernées afin d'y remédier au plus vite.

Merci.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Land Use Planning, Minister of Tourism (Mr S. Obeegadoo): I surely will, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Shakeel Mohamed!

(7.29 p.m.)

NEW CHINA TOWN FOUNDATION

Mr S. Mohamed (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East): Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. The issue which I wanted to address, I wanted to address it to the hon. Minister of Public Infrastructure and it is the same issue which also should be addressed to the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government.

It is with regard to the request made by the New China Town Foundation that I would like to place on record, is doing a fantastic job in China Town in Mauritius with regard to the change of the environment there and bringing youth together. They have made a request that Venpin Street be turned into a pedestrian street on a permanent basis and they have also made a request that the drains be covered at Dr. Sun Yat Sen Street from Royal Road to Remy Ollier Street because a lot of users are having huge problems using it, since the tarring of the road has elevated it to such an extent that the drains are quite low now.

So, I'll be very grateful if the good work of New China Foundation could be encouraged with the support on the part of the Minister of National Infrastructure and Community Development Public Infrastructure and the hon. Vice-Prime Minister whose constituency it also belongs.

Thank you.

The Minister of National Infrastructure and Community Development (Mr M. Hurreeram): Mr Speaker, this matter has been referred to the Vice-Prime Minister, Dr. Husnoo already, and I know my colleague the PPS Rawoo is looking into the matter.

Thank you.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Nuckcheddy!

(7.30 p.m.)

ST JULIEN VILLAGE – DRAINAGE PROJECT

Mr S. Nuckcheddy (Third Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil): Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. My request tonight is addressed to hon. Minister of National Infrastructure and Community Development and it concerns the drainage project at St Julien Village in my constituency.

This project, Mr Speaker, Sir, is at a standstill and the excavated trenches, pits and hoardings are causing various inconveniences to the inhabitants. I paid a visit to these people yesterday and witnessed their daily hassle.

I would thus request the hon. Minister if he could liaise with the contractor so that the works can be completed expediently.

Thank you.

The Minister of National Infrastructure and Community Development (Mr M. Hurreeram): We will look into the matter, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: Time is over. Thank you very much.

At 7.31 p.m., the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday 14 July 2020 at 11.30 a.m.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

WHEEL LOADER - COCAINE - SEIZURE

(No. B/211) Mr A. Ameer Meea (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity whether, in regard to the discovery of 95 kgs of cocaine in an engine on a wheel loader, on or about 10 July 2019, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to –

(a) where matters stand as to the inquiry initiated thereinto, indicating if the assistance of other countries has been sought and obtained in relation thereto and

(b) if consignments of such types of equipment are henceforth examined and scanned and if not, why not.

(Vide Reply to PQ No. B/207)

TROMELIN ISLAND – SOVEREIGNTY

(No. B/212) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (Fourth Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity whether, in regard to the sovereignty issue over the Tromelin Island, he will state where matters stand.

Reply: Mauritius maintains unequivocally that the Island of Tromelin forms an integral part of its territory and that it has full and complete sovereignty over the Island of Tromelin, including its maritime zones.

Mauritius does not accept France's claim of sovereignty over Tromelin and does not recognise the validity of the purported inclusion of Tromelin by France in the so-called *"Iles Eparses"* and *"Terres australes et antarctiques françaises"*.

The sovereignty dispute between Mauritius and France over Tromelin arises from their differing interpretation of Article VIII of the Treaty of Paris of 30 May 1814 by which, *inter alia*, French possessions in the American, Asian and African continents and seas captured by the United Kingdom during the Napoleonic Wars were restored to France. Mauritius and its dependencies were not part of the deal and the Treaty refers to them as follows in the English version, I quote, "with the exception of … the Isle of France and its Dependencies, especially Rodrigues and *Les Séchelles*", Unquote, while in the French version, the words, I quote, *"à l'exception … de l'Ile de France et de ses dépendances, nommément Rodrigues et Les Séchelles*", Unquote, are used.

Mauritius relies on the English version of the Treaty which uses the word "especially" in support of its position that Tromelin also formed part of the dependencies of Mauritius which were ceded by France to the United Kingdom and, therefore, now forms an integral part of the territory of Mauritius. For its part, France has adopted a literal and restrictive interpretation of the word "*nommément"*, which happens to be the translation of the word "especially" in the French version, to contend that Tromelin was not ceded by France to the United Kingdom.

The legal aspects of the issue of sovereignty over Tromelin were discussed between Mauritius and France at a meeting of legal experts in December 1990 and at an experts' level meeting in March 1995. However, no common understanding was reached between Mauritius and France.

In January 2006, another bilateral meeting at experts' level was held, during which it was decided that a *Commission mixte franco-mauricienne* would be set up to exchange views on Tromelin. However, discussions on sovereignty over Tromelin in the *Commission mixte* were never held. Pending the holding of the 2007 Presidential elections in France, the setting up of the *Commission mixte* was kept in abeyance.

During his official visit to France in June 2008, the then Prime Minister of Mauritius had a meeting with the then French President Nicolas Sarkozy, during which it was agreed that Mauritius and France would discuss modalities for the co-management of Tromelin pending a decision on the issue of sovereignty.

Subsequently, three bilateral meetings were held at senior officials' level in 2008, 2009 and 2010, respectively, following which Mauritius and France agreed upon a Framework Agreement which provides for the establishment of a *régime* of economic, scientific and environmental co-management relating to Tromelin as well as its territorial sea and exclusive economic zone. Mauritius and France also finalised three Implementing Agreements on archaeological research, fisheries and the protection of the environment, respectively. These Agreements, which were concluded without prejudice to the sovereignty of Mauritius over Tromelin, were signed on 7 June 2010 in Mauritius.

The Framework Agreement and the three Implementing Agreements have still not entered into force since they have not yet been ratified. A Bill aimed at enabling France to ratify the Agreements was adopted by the French Senate on 18 December 2012. The Bill, which was subsequently forwarded to the French National Assembly, was approved by its Foreign Affairs Committee on 20 March 2013. However, it has so far not been debated by the French National Assembly because of objections from some of its members.

According to information, the then Prime Minister of Mauritius had a meeting with the former French President François Hollande on 03 October 2014 during which he told the latter that he was no longer in favour of the 2010 agreement and that the whole question of sovereignty over Tromelin should be revisited.

He proposed that if France were to acknowledge the sovereignty rights of Mauritius over Tromelin, Mauritius would be ready to conclude a new bilateral agreement with France for the sharing on a 50/50 basis of the natural, mineral and other resources of Tromelin, and their joint exploitation on the same basis. It was reported that the former French President

indicated that the proposal would be considered by the French Government. There has been no indication of any subsequent reaction to that proposal.

During discussions which I had with the French Minister of Foreign Affairs during his visit to Mauritius on 20 February 2020, he indicated that despite the fact that the agreement on co-management of Tromelin was good and practical, the discussions on that issue with the French Parliament continue to be difficult and that the French Government would need to pursue the matter with the French parliamentarians.

The Framework Agreement on the co-management of Tromelin and the three Implementing Agreements, as agreed in 2010, were meant to be valid for a period of five years with the possibility of renewal for another term of five years. Given that 10 years have now elapsed since these Agreements were signed, without their coming into force, both parties will have to agree on the way forward. We are pursuing the matter with France, accordingly.

In line with the Government Programme 2020-2024, the Government will, for sure, continue to pursue its efforts for the early resolution of the sovereignty dispute between Mauritius and France over the Island of Tromelin in a spirit of dialogue and friendship.

MUSLIM FAMILY COUNCIL – MUSLIM RELIGIOUS MARRIAGES – 01.01.2019-03.11.2020

(No. B/213) Mr Osman Mahomed (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity whether, in regard to the Muslim Family Council, he will state if consideration will be given for amendments to be brought to the rules and regulations thereof with a view to allowing the registration of the Muslim religious marriages contracted over the period 01 January 1982 to date and which are still awaiting registration.

Reply: The Muslim Family Council (MFC) was established under section 29 of the Civil Status Act 1981 following an amendment to the Act in 1990. The functions of the Council, under section 30 of the Act are to –

(a) keep a register of all marriages celebrated in accordance with Muslim rites;

(b) keep a register of all provisional decrees of divorce communicated to it under section 31 of the Act, and

(c) make rules governing marriages celebrated in accordance with muslim rites and the dissolution of such marriages.

The Registrar of Civil Status has informed that, for period January 1982 up to 10 November 1987, prior to the setting up of the MFC, Muslim religious marriages were governed by sections 29 to 32 of the Civil Status Act, commonly known as the Muslim Personal Law ("MPL"). During that period 2,584 Muslim religious marriages had been registered under the MPL.

The said sections 29 to 32 of the Civil Status Act governing the MPL were repealed on 10 November 1987.

Following amendments made to the Civil Status Act in 1990, the MFC was set up and became operational in May 1992. The MFC consists of a Chairperson, two persons conversant with Muslim marriages and traditions and two persons officiating as Muslim priests. Since its establishment, the MFC has, *inter alia* –

(a) registered around 12,743 Muslim religious marriages (*"nikah"*);
(b) examined around 3,394 cases consisting of dissolution of Muslim religious marriages, mediation and registration of Imams;
(c) provided information in 75 known cases of widows whose *nikahs* are not currently registered by the MFC.

Muslim religious marriages could not be registered –

(a) between November 1987 and December 1990, owing to the repeal of the provisions of the Civil Status Act governing the MPL, and
(b) between December 1990 and December 1992 owing to the fact that the MFC was constituted but not yet operational.

For the period January 1993 to date, the MFC has kept a register of Muslim religious marriages celebrated by authorised persons. The modalities of such registration were formalised by the Civil Status (Muslim Family Council) Regulations 2005 which came into force on 23 April 2005.

The Registrar of Civil Status has informed that there have been consultations with the MFC with a view, amongst others, to addressing the issues related to the registration of Muslim religious marriages celebrated between 1987 and 1992.

Provision has been made in the Finance (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2020 for the consolidation of the composition of the MFC. It is expected that the proposed new structure of the MFC will assist in bringing a solution to the issue of unregistered Muslim religious marriages.

NATIONAL SECURITY SERVICE – SURVEILLANCE ACTIVITIES

(No. B/214) Mr P. Assirvaden (Second Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity whether, in regard to the National Security Service, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to if the mode of the surveillance activities thereof has been reviewed and, if so, indicate the –

(a) nature thereof, and

(b) reasons therefor.

(Withdrawn)

SCOMAT LTD – COCAINE – SEIZURE

(No. B/215) Dr. M. Gungapersad (Second Member for Grand'Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity whether, in regard to the seizure of 95 kgs of cocaine worth Rs1.4 billion rupees on 10 July 2019 in the premises of Scomat Ltd, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to where matters stand as to the inquiry initiated thereinto, indicating the number of arrest effected in connection therewith, if any.

(Vide Reply to PQ No. B/207)

PANCHAVATEE, ILE D'AMBRE – MR P. C. – DEATH

(No. B/216) Dr. M. Gungapersad (Second Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity whether, in regard to the death of Mr P. C. on his plantations found at Ile d'Ambre, on or about 03 April 2020, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to where matters stand as to the inquiry initiated thereinto.

Reply: The Commissioner of Police has informed that on 02 April 2020 at 23 40 hrs, following a request from one Mr N. C., Police Officers of Rivière du Rempart Police Station proceeded to a sugarcane track at Panchavatee, Ile D'Ambre where they found a motorcycle belonging to one Mr P. C. Following a search carried out, a dead body later identified as that of Mr P. C. was found floating in an irrigation pool. They also noted that the latter had sustained injuries on his face and head.

On 03 April 2020, an autopsy was carried out by the Chief Medical Officer, who attributed the cause of death to a "*Fracture Dislocation of the neck*".

An enquiry was initiated by the Police and same was referred to the Major Crime Investigation Team (MCIT) for in-depth investigation. During the course of the investigation, 23 persons were interviewed by the Police. Though there has been no arrest so far, the investigation is ongoing.

I seize this opportunity to express my sympathy to the bereaved family and close relatives of Mr P. C. who died in such a tragic manner.

ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES COMMISSION – REPORT

(No. B/217) Mr K. Lobine (First Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity whether, in regard to the Report of the Electoral Boundaries Commission which was due in 2019, he will state if copy thereof has been remitted thereto and, if so, indicate when same will be presented to the House and, if not, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commission, information as to if the Report is ready and when same will be communicated thereto.

Reply: By virtue of section 39(2) of the Constitution, the Electoral Boundaries Commission is mandated to review the boundaries of the constituencies of the Republic of Mauritius and present its Report to the Assembly 10 years after presentation of its last Report.

The House is aware that the last Report was tabled in the National Assembly on 10 November 2009.

According to information, the Electoral Boundaries Commission was in the process of completing the review exercise in September 2019. However, due to the issue of writs of

elections in October 2019, the holding of the National Assembly Elections on 07 November 2019 as well as the outbreak of the COVID-19 Pandemic this year, the exercise was put on hold.

According to further information, the Electoral Boundaries Commission is now finalising its Report and is proposing to submit same in the near future.

NEW TRUNK ROAD (M1), PHOENIX – MR A. A. B. S. – FATAL ACCIDENT

(No. B/218) Mr K. Lobine (First Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity whether, in regard to the fatal hit and run road accident that occurred on the M1 Motorway at Phoenix, on Thursday 18 June 2020 wherein Mr A. A. B. S. lost his life, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to where matters stand as to the inquiry initiated thereinto, indicating if any arrest has been effected in connection therewith.

Reply: The Commissioner of Police has informed that on 18 June 2020 at about 07 40 hours, a fatal road accident occurred along New Trunk Road (M1), Phoenix (opposite Oxenham winery, near pedestrian flyover bridge), involving a motorcycle ridden by late Mr A. A. B. S. The latter was reportedly proceeding towards St Jean when the accident occurred, as a result of which he got seriously injured and was conveyed to Candos Hospital by SAMU.

On the same day at 10 45 hours, the victim passed away in the surgical theatre. The body of late Mr A. A. B. S. was, thereafter, referred to Police for investigation.

At 14 30 hours on the same day, Dr. Sunassee, Police Medical Officer carried out an autopsy upon the body of the deceased and attributed the cause of death to “Shock due to traumatic rupture of liver and fracture of pelvis”.

An enquiry has been initiated in the present case with a view to determining the exact cause of the accident. Based on evidence obtained so far, statements have been recorded from six persons and no arrest has to date been effected.

The hon. Member presumes in his Question that the fatal road accident, which occurred on 18 June 2020 along New Trunk Road (M1), is a case of hit and run. However,

the Commissioner of Police has informed that since the enquiry is ongoing, it cannot, at this stage, be established whether the fatal road accident is a case of hit and run or not.

I seize this opportunity to express my sincere condolences to the bereaved family.

COVID-19 – VACCINE

(No. B/223) Dr. F. Aumeer (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to the eventual availability of a COVID-19 vaccine on the international market as being announced, he will state the level of preparedness of Government for the acquisition thereof at the earliest possible in terms of commitment of funds, contacts with laboratories and pharmaceutical companies presently heavily involved in the development and manufacturing thereof.

Reply: I am informed that the vaccine for the COVID-19 is not yet available and research is ongoing. The Government is monitoring the situation very closely as well as maintaining the scientific watch, as has been the case since the beginning of the pandemic.

The Prime Minister has proposed a token contribution of USD 2500, as a gesture of goodwill to support the UK's initiative to GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance, which is working on a COVID-19 vaccine. The token pledge by Mauritius would be seen as our commitment to the global fight against the pandemic and in the routine immunization in poor countries.

Recently, in the World Health Assembly 2020 held in May 2020, Cameroun, on behalf of the African Member States, made a plea for any vaccine available for COVID-19, to be shared among Member States, at an affordable price. Mauritius supported the submission of Cameroun.

The Ministry has several established procedures for the procurement of pharmaceutical products, including vaccines. Depending on the urgency of the situation, the quickest method of procurement, which is the direct procurement, may be resorted to, to purchase the vaccine, once it is available on the market. Otherwise, the Government to Government negotiation may be used to activate the purchase of the vaccine.

A1-M1 LINK ROAD PROJECT – IMPLEMENTATION

(No. B/247) Mr A. Ameer Meea (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure and Community Development whether, in regard to the A1-M1 Link Road Project, he will, for the benefit of the House,

obtain from the Road Development Authority, information as to where matters stand as to the implementation thereof, indicating –

(a) the expected completion date thereof, and

(b) if any additional claims have been received in relation thereto and, if so, give details thereof.

Reply: I am informed by the Road Development Authority (RDA) that the contract for the Road Decongestion Programme (RDP) which comprises the construction of grade separated junctions at Pont Fer/Jumbo/Dowlut roundabouts and the A1-M1 Link Road has been awarded to a joint venture, Transinvest-GCC Bouygues – VSLi Junction Pont Fer & A1-M1 Rd Joint Venture Ltd.

The A1-M1 Link Road will be an approximately one km long dual carriageway. It will link the Port Louis-St Jean Road A1 at Chebel through an approximately 330m long bridge spanning over the Grand River North West valley to the Motorway M1 and the existing Ring Road Phase 1 at Sorèze. The project also comprises a grade separated junction at Chebel and an interchange at Sorèze.

The contractual completion date for the roadworks is 19 November 2020 and the revised completion date for the A1-M1 Bridge is 09 January 2022. The revised project value for A1-M1 Link Road is Rs2,770,520,877.55.

I am informed that the overall progress on A1-M1 Link Road as at date is 44.5%.

As regards part (a) of the question, due to the COVID-19 lockdown in Mauritius, the Contractor has submitted 58 days interim Extension of Time for A1-M1 Link Road. The delay/Extension of Time is being assessed by the Engineer of the Korea Expressway Corporation, which is the Consultant for the RDP, taking into account the following factors –

(a) programme of works;
(b) rate of progress and disruption;
(c) operations imposed post lockdown period;
(d) disruption in supply chain – certain critical items such as the traveller formwork for the Bridge Pier from Spain, Beacon Lighting and road furniture for road safety from China, Drilling Excavators from Germany, among others, have been delayed;
(e) post lockdown sanitary measures imposed on work sites, and

(f) impossibility of mobilising foreign key personnel due to international borders being closed.

It is to be pointed out that all projects of the RDA are governed by Contract Agreement with explicit conditions. Therefore, it is important to follow the procedure laid down therein.

Following the announcement of the 2-weeks' lockdown on 19 March 2020, which was subsequently extended up to 30 May 2020, the RDA took various steps to protect the interest of the projects and to mitigate future claims whilst at same time giving the Contractors the opportunity to optimise their resources with clear indications from the Employer.

1. Suspension of Works

Contractors were instructed via a notice to suspend all works on site starting from 20 March 2020 up to the end of the lockdown in line with Sub-Clause 8.8 of the FIDIC Red Book 1999 Conditions of Contract. During such suspension, the Contractor has the responsibility to protect, store and secure such part of the Works against any deterioration, loss or damage.

Contractors were thus given the opportunity to mitigate losses with regard to their mobilisation and to keep records thereof.

2. Force Majeure

In FIDIC Red Book 1999, Sub-clause 19.1, *Force Majeure* is defined as an exceptional event or circumstance –

(a) which is beyond a Party's control;

(b) which such Party could not have reasonably provided against before entering into the Contract;

(c) which, having arisen, such Party could not reasonably have avoided or overcome, and

(d) which is not substantially attributable to the other Party.

In line with the above provisions, the RDA issued Notices of Force Majeure to all its contractors as a general rule.

There are several outcomes and consequences of Force Majeure both for the Contractors and for the RDA.

For the RDA, the foremost intent of issuing the Notices of Force Majeure were predominantly to rescind all costs arising due to the suspension of works during the lockdown period.

On the contractors' side, they have the possibility to submit and justify any claim due to this Notice of Force Majeure. The RDP Consultant will proceed with determination of such claims, all in accordance with the Contract.

3. Aftermath

Immediately after the lifting of the sanitary curfew, the Contractors were informed that they could resume work provided they had the necessary work permit and complied with the prescribed sanitary protocol. Eventually, on site construction is almost back to normal. However, it was anticipated that some activities would still be affected due to local and international restrictions.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that the Contractor has submitted the following claims –

1. an Interim claim of MUR 159,252,899, exclusive of VAT, Price Adjustment and Finance Cost related to suspension of works due to COVID-19 – Force Majeure;
2. claims related to post COVID-19 sanitary measures, and
3. additional claims associated with Extension of Time due to delay in land acquisition and handing over of sites.

No additional payments have been effected with regard to these claims as at date.

The determination of these claims will be subject to strict compliance with the provisions of the Contract and upon recommendation of the RDP Consultant.

AUTO/MOTORCYCLES – MODIFIED & NOISY SILENCERS – CONTRAVENTIONS

(No. B/248) Mr A. Ameer Meea (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change whether, in regard to auto/motorcycles emitting loud noises due to modified silencers, he will state the number of contraventions booked and convictions secured over the past two years, district-wise, indicating the additional measures that will be taken to address this issue, if any.

Reply: Over the past two years, i.e. 2018, 2019 and 2020 (as at 30 June), 754,525 auto/motorcycles have been checked by the Police. Of these, 4,151 have been contravened in respect of excessive/greater noise emitted from modified silencers in breach of Road Traffic (Construction & Use of Vehicles) Regulations 2010 as amended by GN 72 of August 2018 as follows –

No. of Contraventions established for excessive/greater noise emitted from Modified Silencers

Year	**Divisions**							**Total**
	Northern (Pamplemousses/ Riviere du Rempart)	Port Louis North	Port Louis South	Eastern (Moka/ Flacq)	Western (Black River)	Central (Plaines Wilhems)	Southern (Grand Port/ Savanne)	
2018	657	188	434	269	579	207	158	**2492**
2019	204	100	643	121	124	56	43	**1291**
2020 (as at 31 May)	137	78	53	54	17	17	12	**368**
TOTAL	**998**	**366**	**1130**	**444**	**720**	**280**	**213**	**4,151**

As regards convictions, 1,018 of same have been secured as follows –

No. of Convictions secured (Fined)

Year	**Divisions**							**Total**
	Northern (Pamplemousses/ Riviere du Rempart)	Port Louis North	Port Louis South	Eastern (Moka/ Flacq)	Western (Black River)	Central (Plaines Wilhems)	Southern (Grand Port/ Savanne)	
2018	214	63	21	39	278	42	56	**713**
2019	57	41	20	37	84	02	22	**263**
2020 (as at 30 June)	04	0	0	36	01	0	01	**42**
TOTAL	**275**	**104**	**41**	**112**	**363**	**44**	**79**	**1,018**

The Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change is well aware that this issue of modified silencers is causing much nuisance and discomfort to the whole population of Mauritius, especially in densely populated residential areas.

As regards measures being taken, in addition to operations carried out regarding vehicles emitting noise pollution, sensitisation campaigns are being conducted by officers of the *Police de l'Environnement* through Community Policing with the support of neighbourhood officers from Police Stations round the island. Also, regular preventive patrols and Stop and Check operations at sensitive areas are being carried out by the Police. In addition, the public is sensitised on this issue through *info-route* and TV programmes.

Following the "*Assises de l'Environnement"* held in December 2019, whereat concerns were raised with regard to further action to be taken to abate noise from modified and noisy silencers, recommendation was made to increase the quantum of Fixed Penalties under the Road Traffic Act as a deterrent.

In this context, the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change, in collaboration with the Ministry of Land Transport and Light Rail, is reviewing the regulations to address this pertinent issue.

FISHERMEN - BAD WEATHER ALLOWANCE

(No. B/249) Mr F. David (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the Fishermen Bad Weather Allowance, he will state the quantum of compensation paid and corresponding number of bad weather days over the period 15 May to 30 June 2020, indicating the number of fishermen concerned therewith.

Reply: My Ministry effects payment of Bad Weather Allowance to registered fishers, based on the official report regarding the general state of the sea around Mauritius, issued by the Mauritius Meteorological Services at the end of each month.

Two types of fishing grounds are used for the calculation of Bad Weather Allowance, that is, in-lagoon and off-lagoon, but fishers are registered to operate either in-lagoon, both in-lagoon and off-lagoon, or off-lagoon. The in-lagoon is further divided into four regions –

Region 1: Cap Malheureux to Pointe aux Sables

Region 2: Pointe aux Sables to Le Morne

Region 3: Le Morne to Blue Bay

Region 4: Blue Bay to Cap Malheureux

Earlier, fishers used to register as either in-lagoon or off- lagoon. However, due to overfishing, a policy decision was taken in 2006 to train fishers to extend their fishing activities off-lagoon.

There are currently 65 in-lagoon registered fishers, who due to their age and health were unable to follow the training course and thus were unable to extend their fishing activities off-lagoon. These fishers are paid their Bad Weather Allowance based on the general state of the sea report from the Mauritius Meteorological Services report, for the regions within which they operate in-lagoon.

The rest of the 1,822 registered fishers operate both in-lagoon and off-lagoon, and are paid Bad Weather Allowance based on the general state of the sea off-lagoon.

The first step for the payment of Bad Weather Allowance for a month is the stamping of fisherman registration cards, which is carried out from the 01 to the 08 of the following month.

The second step is to crosscheck the records of fisherman registration cards which have been stamped, against the main register in the fisheries post, to ascertain that the fisher is indeed active in fishing activities and is not drawing any other social benefit.

However, in spite of bad weather, a few fishers have been found to go out for their fishing activities. During random checks by officers of my Ministry on bad weather days, these fishers have been found at sea and thus lose their eligibility for the Bad Weather Allowance.

I wish to inform the House that these fishers sign the Record Book at the Fish Landing Station and also have their catch (that is, fish species and weight) recorded, even on bad weather days. These records are then checked against the report from the Mauritius Meteorological Services for the general state of the sea to ascertain the eligibility of registered fishers for the Bad Weather Allowance.

For the period 15 to 31 May 2020, out of the 1,887 registered fishers, 125 fishers did not stamp their cards between the 01 to 08 June 2020. 1,762 fishers stamped their cards, but only 1,756 were eligible for the Bad Weather Allowance. Five registered fishers from Regions 1 and 2 were not paid Bad Weather Allowance as the general state of the sea was favourable for fishing activities. One registered fisher was on a fishing campaign, and as such was not eligible for Bad Weather Allowance.

Thus, for the period 15 May to 31 May 2020, Bad Weather Allowance was paid to 1,756 eligible fishers, amounting to Rs4,399,345.00, which was effected on 22 June 2020.

The exercise for the payment for Bad Weather Allowance for the month of June is ongoing. In fact, registered fishers have until 08 July to stamp their fisherman card, following which the payment will be worked out and payment made to eligible fishers, at latest by 20 July 2020.

The quantum for Bad Weather Allowance for the month of June 2020 will depend on the number of eligible fishers who stamp their cards. As at 06 July 2020, an average of 61% of registered fishers had stamped their fisherman registration cards, representing a total of 1,155 registered fishers.

I wish to inform the House that since the payment for Bad Weather Allowance started, this is the first time that we have had 24 bad weather days recorded off-lagoon.

Thus, the quantum for the month of June 2020 is expected to be around Rs16 m. and each registered off-lagoon fisher is expected to receive Rs8,760 as Bad Weather Allowance.

I am laying in the library of the National Assembly a detailed breakdown on the number of bad weather days for the period of 15-31 May and the month of June as provided by the Mauritius Meteorological Services in its official report.

METRO EXPRESS – FEEDER BUSES

(No. B/250) Mr F. David (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Land Transport and Light Rail whether, in regard to the Metro Express, he will state when the feeder buses started operating and when same ceased, indicating –

(a) the reasons therefor, and

(b) if the operation thereof will resume and, if so, when and the interim measures taken pending same.

Reply: With a view to best integrating the bus and the light rail systems, feeder routes were conceptualised by the Singapore Cooperation Enterprise and implemented by the National Land Transport Authority (NLTA).

With regard to part (a) of the question, the feeder services started on 10 January 2020 and coincided with the commencement of the commercial operations of the Metro Express. In that respect, the NLTA varied the licences of RHT Bus Services Ltd (RHT), United Bus Service Ltd (UBS), National Transport Corporation (NTC), and Triolet Bus Service (TBS) for the above bus operators to provide feeder services which initially involved a fleet of 29 buses operating on 15 feeder routes and serving the 7 light rail stations along the Port Louis-Rose Hill corridor.

I have to inform the House that with a view to inducing the patronage of the feeders and of the light rail, the feeder services were free to all passengers for the period 10 January to 29 February 2020.

Following the promulgation of the Road Traffic (Bus fares) (Amendment) Regulations 2020, effective as from 01 March 2020, feeder services became payable at a flat

rate of Rs15. However, a rebate of Rs5 is being provided by Metro Express Ltd (MEL) for those using the feeders to connect to or from the light rail upon presentation of the ME Card.

With the introduction of paid feeder services, a decline of more than 50% of the feeder ridership was recorded between 01 and 10 March 2020. This prompted bus companies to initially reduce the number of buses serving on the feeder routes while services were discontinued on some of them.

In fact, a survey carried out by the NLTA revealed that ridership on feeder buses varied between 2 and 11 passengers per trip during the peak periods. It was also observed that basically no passenger boarded the feeder buses during the off-peak periods and that commuters were favouring other means of transport to connect to the light rail.

On reason of the very low ridership, bus operators deplored that the operation of the feeder routes was not financially viable and gradually ceased to provide service on most of the routes.

Following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and the decree of the national lockdown on 23 March 2020, only minimal bus services were being provided and feeder services were not operational as the Metro Express was not providing services.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I am further informed that, on 15 May 2020, the NTC resumed with the provision of feeder services along two routes, namely 518 and 519.

The feeder services constitute an important component for ensuring the first and last mile connectivity. In that context, discussions have been initiated to consider alternative measures for enhancing connectivity to or from the light rail stations.

DISABILITY BILL – INTRODUCTION

(No. B/251) Mr F. David (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity whether, in regard to the proposed introduction of a Disability Bill in the Assembly, she will state where matters stand.

(Withdrawn)

LOCKDOWN PERIOD – ONLINE TEACHING – EFFECTIVENESS

(No. B/252) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (Fourth Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology whether, in regard to the online teaching conducted during the lockdown period, she will state if consideration will be given for the advisability of carrying out an empiric and scientific study to assess the effectiveness thereof.

(Withdrawn)

RICHELIEU BRANCH ROAD - RE-OPENING

(No. B/253) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (Fourth Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Land Transport and Light Rail whether, in regard to the Richelieu Branch Road, he will state if he is in presence of representations from inhabitants of Résidence Richelieu for the re-opening thereof and, if so, indicate if consideration will be given thereto.

Reply: I am informed that the Richelieu Branch Road (B107) was constructed across the former railway track at Richelieu. The B107 road starts from the junction with Rivière Noire Road (A3) and ends with the junction Port Louis-St Jean Road (A1). With the undertaking of the Metro Project, the alignment of the Metro Express crosses the Richelieu Branch Road, (B107) at grade and cancels the connection between A3 and A1 in that region.

I am informed by the Road Development Authority that inhabitants of Résidence Richelieu have made representations for the re-opening thereof, through a letter dated 11 February 2020, to the Mayor of the Municipality of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill and same has been forwarded to them on 18 June 2020 for consideration.

Additionally, this issue was discussed at the Metro Express Collaborative meetings in the presence of representatives from the Police Traffic Branch, Road Development Authority, Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit. It was agreed by all parties that the residents could be connected to A1 and A3 roads via internal roads.

I am apprised also that the T-junction at Montée S has been re-engineered to provide for better visibility and traffic movement. In addition, a pedestrian footbridge has been constructed at Coromandel Station, which is approximately 800 metres north of Richelieu Branch Road. I am equally informed that a fencing for safety and security reasons has been installed thereat at grade. The fencing will prevent movement across the Railway track to prevent any mishap.

I take note of the concerns of the inhabitants of Richelieu. The technical department of my Ministry and the Ministry of National Infrastructure and Community Development (National Infrastructure Division) together with other authorities concerned will look into the feasibility of implementing another pedestrian footbridge in the vicinity of Richelieu Branch road to cater for the movement between Coromandel and Richelieu.

CHILDREN'S BILL – INTRODUCTION

(No. B/254) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (Fourth Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare whether, in regard to the proposed introduction of a Children's Bill in the Assembly, she will state where matters stand.

Reply: I wish to inform the House that the Children's Bill is at the level of the Attorney General's Office. Some amendments are being made thereto, in light of consultations I have had at the level of my Ministry and with other stakeholders, including the Police Department, representatives of the Attorney General's Office, the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions and representatives of the "*Conseil des Religions"*.

Consideration has also been given to the Concluding Observations and Recommendations of International Treaty Bodies, such as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Convention on the Eliminations of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) as well as the representations made by the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.

WASTE SUPPLY AGREEMENTS - PROJECTS

(No. B/255) Mr Osman Mahomed (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change whether, in regard to wastes, he will give details of the Waste Supply Agreements that have been committed since 2015 to date or expected to be committed for projects or prospective projects.

Reply: My Ministry entered into a Waste Supply Agreement with a Compost Plant Operator, namely Solid Waste Recycling Ltd since August 2013 for a period of 20 years for the supply of 600 tons of wastes per day. However, since January 2018, the composting facility has been placed under receivership and no waste is being supplied.

Furthermore, I am informed by the Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities that the Board of the Central Electricity Board has cancelled, in August 2020, the Waste-to-Energy project for which a provision was made for a Waste Supply Agreement.

Consequently, there is no commitment for my Ministry to supply wastes in respect of any project to date.

SIGNAL MOUNTAIN - HEALTH TRACK - TROPICAL STORM BERGUITTA - CLOSURE

(No. B/256) Mr Osman Mahomed (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change whether, in regard to the announced countermeasure works required at Signal Mountain in the aftermath of severe tropical storm Berguitta, he will state where matters stand as to the implementation thereof.

Reply: Prior to severe tropical storm Berguitta, available information indicate that the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Centre (NDRRMC) had already initiated countermeasures such as closure of the Health Track in case of heavy rainfall and regular patrol by the Police. Moreover, the Living Environment Unit (LEU) of the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change was carrying out the maintenance of the Health Track.

However, following the passage of the severe tropical storm Berguitta, the situation had worsened and the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Centre (NDRRMC) had advised to close the track as a precautionary measure.

The NDRRMC has informed that a three-phase project comprising of countermeasures to deal with the problem of rockfall at Signal Mountain is being envisaged and are as follows -

i. Phase I deals with Urgent Hard Countermeasure Works;

ii. Phase II deals with Short-term Countermeasure Works, and

iii. Phase III deals with Long-term Countermeasure Works.

The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Centre (NDRRMC) is identifying funds for implementation of the works.

VALLÉE PITOT – BOULEVARD HUGON – ROAD – UPGRADING

(No. B/257) Mr Osman Mahomed (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure and Community Development whether, in regard to Upper Boulevard Hugon at Vallée Pitot, more precisely, in the vicinity of the Izzat Ul Islam Sounnee Mosque, he will state if consideration will be given for either the upgrading of the existing road or for the provision of a new road to facilitate access of emergency services in the locality.

Reply: During a site visit carried out on 30 January 2020 by Dr. the hon. Mrs Marie Christiane Dorine Chukowry, Parliamentary Private Secretary, the inhabitants of the region requested for the upgrading of the existing drain at Boulevard Hugon and the conversion of the pedestrian access path at the end of Boulevard Hugon near Izzat-Ul Islam Mosque into a vehicular access. They also requested the removal of handrails in order to enlarge the access to enable movement of vehicles.

However, a proper engineering survey needs to be carried out to determine whether the existing drain substructure can sustain vehicular load and whether the creation of a vehicular access is feasible from a traffic management and road safety point of view. The issue is presently being examined by the Engineering Unit of the National Development Unit and the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit. On obtention of their views and upon the roads being declared public, consideration will be given for the upgrading of the existing road or provision of a new road thereat.

DRUG ADDICTS – TREATMENT & REHABILITATION

(No. B/258) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to the treatment and rehabilitation of drug addicts, he will state the policy of his Ministry in relation thereto.

(Withdrawn)

COVID-19 PANDEMIC – ARTISTS PERFORMING IN HOTELS – FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

(No. B/259) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Arts and Cultural Heritage whether, in regard to the artists performing in hotels, he will state the measures taken by his Ministry to extend financial assistance thereto amid the COVID-19 Pandemic.

(Withdrawn)

SOCIAL REGISTER OF MAURITIUS – STUDENTS – GRADE 10 TO 13 - TABLETS

(No. B/260) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity whether, in regard to the proposed provision of 2,570 tablets to children of grade 10 to 13 of families on the Social Register of Mauritius, as announced in the Budget Speech 2020-2021, she will state where matters stand.

(Withdrawn)

TOKYO OLYMPIC GAMES 2021 – ATHLETES

(No. B/261) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation whether, in regard to the provision of Rs5 m. for the preparation of athletes for participation in the Tokyo Olympic Games 2021, as announced in the Budget Speech 2020-2021, he will give a breakdown of how same will be disbursed.

(Withdrawn)

MR H. S. & MR S. S – ALLEGED FRAUD & CORRUPTION

(No. B/262) Mr P. Assirvaden (Second Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Financial Services and Good Governance whether, he will state if he is in presence of a letter, dated 03 December 2019, allegedly for fraud and corruption committed by Mr H. S. and Mr S. S. and a specified Management Company operating in the financial services sector and, if so, indicate the actions taken in relation thereto, if any.

(Withdrawn)

METRO EXPRESS LTD – FINANCIAL SITUATION – CURFEW PERIOD

(No. B/263) Mr P. Assirvaden (Second Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Land Transport and Light Rail whether, in regard to the Metro Express Ltd, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the financial situation thereof prior and after the curfew period, indicating the losses accumulated during the curfew period, and how same will be compensated.

(Withdrawn)

CENTRAL ELECTRICITY BOARD - ELECTRICITY BILLS – NON-PAYMENT

(No. B/264) Mr P. Assirvaden (Second Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the non-payment of electricity bills, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Electricity Board, information as to the –

(a) amount due in relation thereto for the last financial year, indicating the number of domestic and commercial customers concerned therewith, and

(b) policy thereof regarding disconnection of electricity supply as a result thereof.

(Withdrawn)

OUTER ISLANDS – SHIPPING VESSEL

(No. B/265) Mr J. Léopold (Second Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the shipping vessel due to be delivered to serve the Outer Islands of the Republic of Mauritius, including Rodrigues, as announced in the Budget Speech 2020-2021, he will state the type thereof.

Reply: I am informed that the shipping vessel due to be delivered to serve the Outer Islands of the Republic of Mauritius including Rodrigues, as announced in the Budget Speech 2020-2021, is a multipurpose cargo vessel of around 8200 Dead Weight Tons (DWT) with an approximate of 400 loaded containers of twenty feet equivalent units (TEUs). It is important to note that the cost of the new vessel will be borne exclusively by the MSCL, that is, without any funding from the Government.

As the House is aware, presently, M/V Trochetia, which is a passenger cum cargo vessel, was procured in 2001 as a backup of Mauritius Pride. However, MSCL was advised that for sustainability of the company, MSCL should have one passenger cum cargo vessel as well as one cargo vessel only. Thus, after the sales of Mauritius Pride in 2014, M/V Anna was chartered as a cargo vessel to service the island of Rodrigues and later replaced by another chartered vessel M/V Black Rhino.

In view of the fact that M/V Trochetia is now 19 years old, it is contemplated to replace it by a passenger cum cargo vessel.

RODRIGUES – SEA FREIGHT RATES

(No. B/266) Mr J. Léopold (Second Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the sea

freight rates to and from Rodrigues, he will state if he is in presence of representations to the effect that same are exorbitant and, if so, indicate the consideration given thereto, if any.

Reply: I wish to inform the House that, as at date, according to records available at my Ministry no representation has been received with regard to any exorbitant sea freight rates to and from Rodrigues. I am also informed that at the level of the Mauritius Shipping Corporation Ltd, no such request has been received.

However, on 18 February 2011, there was a Cabinet decision, amongst others, as regards the tariffs on the Rodrigues route to be revised every 2 years to adjust for inflation.

The tariffs for passenger fare and freight were increased by 20% and 30% respectively, effective as from April 2011. The cumulative inflation rate for the years 2011 and 2012 was 10.4% and the tariffs (both passenger and cargo) were increased accordingly by 10.4% which took effect as from April 2013.

For the year 2015, the proposed increase in tariffs based on the last two years' cumulative inflation rate was 6.7% and should have been effective as from April 2015. However, following representations made by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly (RRA), the increase in tariffs was kept in abeyance for more than 4 years, that is, until July 2017.

The reviewed sea freight rates in Rodrigues route were effective as from 01 July 2017. These new sea freight tariffs and structure were reviewed after consultation with the representatives of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly (RRA) in April/May 2017. The RRA proposed to increase the freight for both alcoholic and soft drinks to lower its consumption and social impacts and to decrease freight on commodities such as animal feed and goods exported from Rodrigues such as live animals to encourage production and exportation. I wish to inform the House that there are different tariffs for different commodities and I am laying a copy of the minutes of meeting held on 27 April 2017 at Rodrigues and a copy of the different tariffs in the Library of the National Assembly.

However, I must stress that the passenger fares have remained unchanged. The next tariff review was due in July 2019 and I am informed that consultation with the RRA and other stakeholders will be held shortly.

I would like to invite my hon. colleagues representing the island of Rodrigues to make proposals for any review of freight charges through Rodrigues Regional Assembly (RRA) and in view of COVID-19 negative impact, consideration will definitely be given to –

(i) revise the freight charges on essential commodities such as rice, flour, milk, live animals and others, and

(ii) boost both exportation and importation of products to cater for food security.

RODRIGUES – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BOARD

(No. B/267) Mr J. B. Léopold (Second Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development whether, in regard to the proposed setting up of an office of the Economic Development Board (EDB) in Rodrigues, as announced in the Budget Speech 2020-2021, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the EDB, information as to –

(a) how same will be set up;

(b) the types of economic promotion that will be conducted by the said office;

(c) how the existing structures in Rodrigues will be reconciled with those of the EDB, and

(d) how the office proposes to function within the decentralized administration of Rodrigues.

Reply: Concernant la partie (a) de la question, l'*EDB* signera un protocole d'accord avec la *RRA* pour l'établissement d'un bureau à Rodrigues.

Ce bureau travaillera en tandem avec la *RRA* et d'autres agences sur la planification économique stratégique, la promotion des investissements, du commerce et des services financiers, et le déploiement d'un environnement propice aux affaires à Rodrigues.

Le bureau de l'*EDB* collaborera également avec la *RRA* pour évaluer le potentiel de nouveaux secteurs en vue de diversifier le paysage économique de l'île et de créer des emplois dans de nouveaux pôles de croissance.

Cette collaboration visera également à faciliter la participation accrue des institutions basées à Rodrigues, et des opérateurs économiques, aux initiatives de marketing et de promotion menées par l'*EDB*.

Le bureau sera composé d'officiers du bureau de l'*EDB* de Maurice et de personnel qui sera recruté à Rodrigues.

En ce qui concerne la partie (b) de la question, le bureau de l'*EDB* de Rodrigues s'appuiera sur le réseau des bureaux de l'*EDB* à l'étranger et des conseillers économiques de

nos ambassades, pour promouvoir les produits et services uniques de Rodrigues à l'échelle internationale ainsi que pour attirer des investissements durables dans l'île.

L'*EDB* facilitera également la participation de Rodrigues à des événements et forums internationaux, ce qui permettra d'accroître la visibilité des opérateurs économiques et de leur ouvrir l'accès aux marchés d'exportation.

L'*EDB* soutiendra la *RRA* et d'autres institutions, pour accompagner l'entrepreneuriat local. Il partagera son expérience et renforcera les capacités au sein d'autres institutions.

Le bureau de l'*EDB* à Rodrigues travaillera également en étroite collaboration avec le *RRA* pour concevoir et exécuter des programmes de renforcement des capacités sur-mesure, basés sur les besoins des entreprises locales, afin d'améliorer leur préparation à l'exportation.

En ce qui concerne la partie (c) de la question, ce bureau de l'*EDB* à Rodrigues ne remplacera ni ne reprendra le rôle d'aucune autre agence existante à Rodrigues.

Plusieurs institutions publiques desservent déjà Rodrigues, telles que *SME Mauritius*, la Banque de développement de Maurice, le *Registrar of Companies*, la Banque de Maurice et la *Financial Services Commission*.

Le bureau de l'*EDB* à Rodrigues fournira des services similaires à ceux que l'*EDB* fournit actuellement à l'île Maurice, en travaillant en étroite collaboration avec la *RRA* et les institutions existantes, pour atteindre les objectifs de développement de Rodrigues.

Concernant la partie (d) de la question, le bureau de l'*EDB* à Rodrigues sera ouvert à la suite de la signature d'un protocole d'accord qui se fera entre la *RRA* et l'*EDB*.

L'*EDB* fonctionnera comme un partenaire de la *RRA*. Les décisions finales sur la stratégie économique, l'accueil des investissements étrangers et l'amélioration du climat des affaires appartiendront à la *RRA*.

MARE D'ALBERT VILLAGE COUNCIL – COUNCILLOR

(No. B/268) Mr D. Ramful (First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management whether, in regard to the last vacancy that occurred in the position of Village Councillor at the Mare d'Albert Village Council, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the said Village Council, information as to if same has been filled and, if so, give the name of the incumbent.

(Withdrawn)

COTE D'OR NATIONAL SPORTS COMPLEX – MONTHLY EXPENSES

(No. B/269) Mr D. Ramful (First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation whether, in regard to the Côte d'Or National Sports Complex, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Multi-Sports Infrastructure Ltd, a breakdown of the monthly expenses incurred since the coming into operation thereof to date.

(Withdrawn)

METRO EXPRESS LTD – REVENUES & EXPENSES

(No. B/270) Mr D. Ramful (First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Land Transport and Light Rail whether, in regard to the light rails, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from Metro Express Limited, information as to the daily –

(a) ridership cost thereof, and

(b) expenses incurred and revenues and profits generated therefrom.

(Withdrawn)

PRIMARY & SECONDARY SCHOOLS (PRIVATE & PUBLIC) – WI-FI FACILITIES

(No. B/271) Dr. M. Gungapersad (Second Member for Grand'Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology whether, in regard to online education, she will state the number of private and public primary and secondary schools which are fully equipped with Wi-Fi facilities and in positions of readiness to provide unhindered teaching and learning support to staff members and pupils.

(Withdrawn)

PRIVATE & STATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS – ONLINE EDUCATION – EDUCATORS – TRAINING

(No. B/272) Dr. M. Gungapersad (Second Member for Grand'Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and

Technology whether, in regard to online education, she will state the number of educators working in both private and state secondary schools who have received formal training in relation thereto, indicating –

(a) who were the trainers, and

(b) the modules and duration thereof.

(Withdrawn)

YVES CANTIN COMMUNITY HOSPITAL – RIVIÈRE NOIRE – RENOVATION

(No. B/273) Mrs S. Mayotte (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to the Yves Cantin Community Hospital in Rivière Noire, he will state where matters stand as to the renovation works to be carried out thereat for the proposed conversion thereof into a full fledge hospital.

(Withdrawn)

ST DENIS BRIDGE – CHAMAREL – RECONSTRUCTION

(No. B/274) Mrs S. Mayotte (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure and Community Development whether, in regard to the reconstruction of the St Denis Bridge at Chamarel, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Road Development Authority, information as to the –

(a) cost, and

(b) duration thereof.

(Withdrawn)

F. J. – SUSPECTED CASE OF INFANTICIDE

(**No. B/275) Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas & Floréal)** asked the Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare whether, in regard to the suspected case of infanticide of F. J., she will state –

(a) when the case was reported to her Ministry, and

(b) when and what action, if any, was initiated by her Ministry in relation thereto.

(Withdrawn)

CONSTITUENCY NO. 15 – WATER PIPES & NETWORKS – REHABILITATION

(No. B/276) Mr K. Lobine (First Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the projects for the rehabilitation of old water pipes and networks in Constituency No. 15, La Caverne and Phoenix, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to –

(a) the regions where same will be implemented;
(b) when works will start, and
(c) how many households will benefit therefrom.

(Withdrawn)

MAURITIUS STANDARD BUREAU – STANDARDS COUNCIL

(No. B/277) Mr K. Lobine (First Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Industrial Development, SMEs and Cooperatives whether, in regard to the Standards Council at the Mauritius Standard Bureau (MSB), he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the MSB, information as to the –

(a) names of the members of the Board and of the Chairperson thereof, and
(b) reasons why Mrs R. N., Acting Director of the Mauritius Standard Bureau, since year 2012 has not been appointed in a substantive capacity as Director.

Reply: With regard to part (a) of the question, a copy of the composition of the Standards Council is being laid in the Library of the National Assembly.

As for the second part of the question, Mrs R.N., the then senior most Head of Unit and subsequently Deputy Director, was assigned the duties of Director since 18 June 2012, following the vacation leave and leave without pay of the then Director of the Mauritius Standards Bureau (MSB).

Thereafter, the then Director made a request to retire from the services of the Bureau with effect from 06 January 2016, which was approved by the Standards Council of the MSB.

With the vacancy of the post of Director, it was decided to review the existing Scheme of Service for the post of Director as it dated as far back as 1999 and did not reflect

the salary attached to the post. On 15 June 2016, the Standards Council decided that the post be advertised. Meanwhile, Mrs R.N. has continued to act as Director of the MSB.

It is worth noting that assignment of duties is a matter of administrative convenience and does not give rise to an officer to claim permanent appointment.

The post of Director was advertised on 22 July 2016. An interview was carried out on 24 and 29 August 2016. The Selection Panel recommended to the Council to carry out a second round of interview. However, the Standards Council approved that a new panel be constituted to interview the first three best candidates on the merit list.

While a new panel was being reconstituted by the Standards Council, the Ministry was apprised in October 2016, by way of a Cabinet Decision (No. 1163 of 2016), to stay action on the filling of the vacancy for the post of Director at the MSB pending the completion of an enquiry by the then Ministry of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms which was looking into the case of the Acting Director of the MSB.

Consequently, no decision could be reached regarding the appointment for the post of Director in view of the fact that there was an investigation on the Acting Director by the Office of Public Sector Governance (OPSG).

The findings in connection with the investigation were, subsequently, referred to the ICAC on the recommendation of the OPSG.

ICAC had, on 06 August 2018, informed the Ministry that the investigation carried out had not substantiated elements of offences falling under the Prevention of Corruption Act (PoCA) or the Financial Intelligence and Anti-Money Laundering Act (FIAMLA).

Nevertheless, no appointment of Director has been made. Mrs R. N. is still acting as Director.

At its meeting of 12 June 2020, Cabinet was apprised that action would be initiated to appoint Mrs Deveena Boygah as General Manager of the Mauritius Standards Bureau. Subsequently, at its meeting held on 06 July 2020, the Standards Council of the Mauritius Standards Bureau approved the appointment of Mrs Deveena Boygah as General Manager of the Mauritius Standards Bureau.

Mrs R.N. will, following the appointment of Mrs D. Boygah as General Manager, revert to her position of Deputy Director.

JUNIOR AFRICAN CHAMPIONSHIP 2019, UGANDA – ATHLETE A. M.

(No. B/278) Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas & Floréal) asked the Minister of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation whether, in regard to the Mauritius Weightlifting Federation, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to why athlete A. M. was not selected for the Junior African Championship, held in Uganda in 2019.

(Withdrawn)

ELITE ATHLETES – TRAINING

(No. B/279) Mr R. Doolub (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation whether, in regard to the training of elite athletes, he will state the measures taken by his Ministry to ensure the provision of adequate training thereto in view of the forthcoming competitions.

(Withdrawn)

SCHOOLS (PRIMARY & SECONDARY) – EDUCATION & SCHOOL ACTIVITIES – RESUMPTION – SANITARY MEASURES

(No. B/280) Mr R. Doolub (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology whether, in regard to the resumption of education and school activities at the primary and secondary schools, she will state the sanitary measures taken to ensure a safe environment for the students.

(Withdrawn)

M4 MOTORWAY – CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/281) Mr R. Doolub (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure and Community Development whether, in regard to the proposed construction of the M4 Motorway, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Road Development Authority, information as to the –

(a) alignment;

(b) total project cost, and

(c) expected start and completion dates thereof.

(Withdrawn)

EBENE RECREATIONAL PARK PROJECT – IMPLEMENTATION

(No. B/282) Mr S. Dhunoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Land Transport and Light Rail whether, in regard to the Ebène Recreational Park Project, he will state where matters stand as to the implementation thereof.

(Withdrawn)

ABBE DE LA CAILLE MALHERBES-SERRE STREET, CUREPIPE – SEWERAGE INFRASTRUCTURE

(No. B/283) Mr S. Dhunoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the rehabilitation of the sewerage infrastructure at the Abbé De La Caille Malherbes-Serre Street, in Curepipe, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Waste Water Management Authority, information as to where matters stand, indicating the estimated impact of the COVID-19 lockdown on the implementation schedule and delivery thereof.

(Withdrawn)

METRO EXPRESS PROJECT – PHASE II – COVID-19 LOCKDOWN – IMPACT

(No. B/284) Mr S. Dhunoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Land Transport and Light Rail whether, in regard to Phase II of the Metro Express Project, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from Metro Express Ltd, information as to the estimated impact of the COVID-19 lockdown on the implementation schedule and delivery thereof.

(Withdrawn)