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No. 6 of 2020

**RODRIGUES
FOURTH REGIONAL ASSEMBLY**

Debate No. 6 of 2020

Sitting of Tuesday 23 June 2020

The Assembly met in the Assembly House,
Port Mathurin, at 10.30 a.m.

(Madam Chairperson in the Chair)

The National Anthem was played

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RODRIGUES REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY 23 JUNE 2020

CONTENTS

ANNOUNCEMENT

QUESTIONS (*Oral*)

STATEMENT BY COMMISSIONERS

MOTION

ADJOURNMENT

WRITTEN ANSWERS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ANNOUNCEMENT

- PQ B/30 transferred to Commission for Industrial Development & Ors

QUESTIONS (*Oral*)

(No. B/30)	- Office of Economic Development Board (EDB)
(No. B/31)	- School Calendars – Rodrigues – Year 2020/2021
(No. B/32)	- Air Mauritius Flight – Mauritius & Rodrigues – June 2020
(No. B/33)	- Payment of Bad Weather Allowance– Last Three Months to Date
(No. B/34)	- Discovery Rodrigues Company Ltd
(No. B/35)	- Inhabitants of Ste. Marie – New Runway - Plaine Corail Airport
(No. B/36)	- Resettlement of Villagers of Ste. Marie to La Boucherie/Plaine Corail
(No. B/37)	- Maintenance – Tourism Sites
(No. B/38)	- Development Projects – Water Sector – Rodrigues
(No. B/39)	- Management of Outer Lagoon Boats & “La Maison des Pêcheurs” - Public Private Partnership (PPP)
(No. B/40)	- Vehicles Attached – Health Department – Rodrigues
(No. B/41)	- Acquisition of Medical Equipment – Mauritius/Abroad – March/April 2020 – COVID-19 Pandemic
(No. B/42)	- Cyclones Gelena & Joaninha 2019 – Greenhouses Damaged and/or Destroyed
(No. B/43)	- Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Outbreak
(No. B/44)	- Cadastral Unit [<i>Withdrawn</i>]
(No. B/45)	- Import of Motor Vehicles – from January 2018 to date
(No. B/46)	- Mauritius & Rodrigues Submarine (MARS)
(No. B/47)	- Dust Problem – Stone Crusher/Grand La Fouche Corail [<i>Withdrawn</i>]
(No. B/48)	Techno Park – Baladirou [<i>Withdrawn</i>]
(No. B/50)	Access Roads/Track Roads – Grande Montagne [<i>Withdrawn</i>]

/UNREVISED/

- (No. B/51) State Land Leases – Elevation of Infrastructures *[Withdrawn]*
- (No. B/52) - Drainage System – Port Mathurin *[Withdrawn]*
- (No. B/53) - Fond La Bonté Dam *[Withdrawn]*
- (No. B/54) - Tourism Alternative Livelihood Scheme – Budget Speech
2020/2021 *[Withdrawn]*
- (No. B/57) - Acquisition of Medical Equipment – Mauritius/Abroad –
March/April 2020 – COVID-19 Pandemic

STATEMENTS BY COMMISSIONERS

- **The Chief Commissioner:**
 - Worldwide Outbreak COVID-19 – Tourism/Economic Sector
- **The Commissioner for Environment and Others (Mr. J. R. Payendee):**
 - (1) Model Eco-Village Project/Rivière Coco/Co-Funded by European Union
 - (2) FAD Fishery

MOTION

- **Chief Commissioner**

“This Assembly resolves that the First Report of the Standing Orders Committee in regard to the amendments to the Standing Orders and Rules of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, presently in force, more specifically the additional of a new Standing Order 65A, which was laid on the Table of the Regional Assembly on Tuesday 25 February 2020 be approved, and that the amendments contained therein come into operation forthwith.”

ADJOURNMENT

QUESTIONS (Written)

- (No. B/49) - Construction/Track Roads - Quatre Vents
- (No. B/55) - ‘Marché Solidaire’
- (No. B/56) - Reduction of Import of Chicken - Rodrigues

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The Executive Council

(Formed by Mr. Louis Serge Clair, G.C.S.K.)

Mr. Louis Serge Clair, G.C.S.K.	Chief Commissioner, Commissioner responsible for Central Administration, Civil Aviation (Administration), Education (Administration), Legal Services, Marine Services, Registration, Statistics in respect of Rodrigues, State Lands, Town and Country Planning, Tourism
Mr. Nicolson Lisette	Deputy Chief Commissioner, Commissioner responsible for Public Infrastructure including Highways and Roads and Public Buildings and Utilities, Transport, Water Resources
Mrs. Rose Marie Franchette Gaspard Pierre Louis, C.S.K	Commissioner responsible for Child Development, Cooperatives, Family Welfare, Handicraft, Industrial Development, Information Technology and Telecommunications, Prisons and Reforms Institutions (Administration), Trade, Commerce and Licensing, Vocational Training, Women's Affairs
Mr. Simon Pierre Roussety	Commissioner responsible for Civil Status, Community Development, Customs and Excise (Administration), Fire Services, Health (Administration), Judicial (Administration), Meteorology (Administration), Postal Services (Administration)
Mr. Louis Daniel Baptiste	Commissioner responsible for Consumer Protection, Employment, Housing, Labour and Industrial Relations, Social Security (Administration)
Mr. Jean Richard Payendee	Commissioner responsible for Agriculture, Environment, Fisheries. Food Production, Forestry, Marine Parks, Plant and Animal Quarantine
Ms. Marie Rose de Lima Edouard	Commissioner responsible for Arts and Culture, Library Services, Museums, Archives, Historical Sites and Buildings, Youth and Sports

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PRINCIPAL OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS

Madam Chairperson	-	Spéville, Mrs. Marie Pricie Anjela
Clerk	-	Legentil, Miss Marie Lyndia Yannick
Serjeant-at-Arms	-	Constant Perrine, Mr. Stenio

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ANNOUNCEMENT

PQ B/30 Transferred to Commission for Industrial Development & Ors

Madam Chairperson: Respected Members, before we go any further, the table has been advised that PQ B/30 has been transferred to the Commissioner for Industrial Development and Others. Thank you. Yes, Minority Leader?

The Minority Leader: Yes, Mrs. Chairperson, Madam, B/30.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

OFFICE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BOARD (EDB)

(No. B/30) The Minority Leader (Mr. F. A. Grandcourt) asked the Chief Commissioner in regard to the setting up of an office of the Economic Development Board (EDB) in Rodrigues, as recently announced by the Minister of Finance, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information from any relevant authority to:

- (a) state the objectives thereof; and
- (b) table any correspondence between his office and the EDB or any other office in Mauritius prior to the setting up of same?

The Commissioner for Industrial Development and Others (Mrs. R. M. F. Gaspard-Pierre Louis): Madam, Chairperson, with your permission, I would like to reply to Question B 30.

Madam, Chairperson, the proposal for setting-up of an Office to spill-over and coordinate national policies and actions regarding foreign direct investment to Rodrigues emanated during the Rodrigues Investment Policy Forum which was organised by the Commission for Industrial Development together with the Commission for ICT in 2015.

The matter was discussed with Authorities concerned in Mauritius and in February 2020, discussions were further pursued during the pre-budget consultative meeting held at the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development in the presence of the Representatives of the Economic Development Board regarding the need to set up an EDB Office in Rodrigues.

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As such, the announcement of setting up an EDB office in Rodrigues by the Minister of Finance in his budget speech for financial year 2020/2021 is most welcome. The Regional Government, under the chairmanship of the Chief Commissioner, considers that it is high time to give another boost and dimension to the sustainable economic development of the island.

As a matter of fact, the Regional Government has for years, promoted and relied on local and national investments to boost its economy and create jobs.

However, in a fast-moving economy and with the operationalisation of the MARS Cable, there is the urgent need for Rodrigues to enter into a new era of digital development and shift from the traditional sectors to novel ones such as creative industries, life sciences and blue ocean economy to bolster its economy.

It is strongly believed that the Economic Development Board (EDB) which has been established under the Economic Development Board Act 2017 to, inter alia, provide strong institutional support for strategic economic planning and ensure greater coherence and effectiveness in economic policy formulation will enable the Rodrigues Regional Assembly through the setting up of an office in Rodrigues to further promote the economic development of the island through investment facilitation and promotion.

(a) Madam Chairperson, the objectives of setting up an EDB Office in Rodrigues as per part (a) of the question are as follows:

- To promote and facilitate private sector investments in the territory of Rodrigues;
- To establish a Sustainable Social and Economic Development Plan with regards investment and private project implementation;
- To strengthen institutional relations and business-friendly policies; and
- To bring regulatory and administrative support as may be required for the timely and smooth implementation of projects particularly in the fields of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Ocean Economy, Tourism and Agro Industry.

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The EDB Office will be considered as the additional arm of the RRA to propel its economic development to a new height. It will add on to services already being offered by various institutions in Rodrigues namely:

- (i) Invest Rodrigues;
- (ii) SME-Mauritius;
- (iii) The Economic Planning and Monitoring Unit (EPMU); and
- (iv) The Office of Registrar of Companies.

Each entity will be called upon to work together for the common goal of bolstering the economic development of the island.

Madam Chairperson, we are actually in the process of discussing the terms and conditions of the partnership between the RRA and EDB.

Thereafter, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) will be signed to highlight the role of each party in the process of strengthening the socio-economic development of the island. Together, we will develop an action plan to fulfill the objectives of the MOU. Right at the start, one major action will be the organisation of a business forum in Rodrigues.

As regard to part (b), Madam Chairperson, there is no official correspondence to date regarding the setting up of the EDB Office but as I mentioned earlier, same was discussed in a consultative meeting regarding the budget for 2020/2021 in our presence in Mauritius.

The Minority Leader: Madame la présidente, alors, d'après la réponse du Commissaire, il faut que le... On parle de ce EDB office qui va être mis en place à Rodrigues pour pouvoir faire travailler EPMU, Invest Rodrigues, *Registrar of Companies* entre autres, ce qu'elle a cité ensemble. Mais pourquoi ne pas l'avoir fait avant, Madame la présidente ? Pourquoi il faut avoir un bureau du EDB à Rodrigues ? C'est ça notre question. C'est ça ce qu'on voulait savoir.

Mrs. R. M. F. Gaspard-Pierre Louis: Madame la présidente, la réponse a été donnée déjà. J'ai donné les raisons pour laquelle nous voulons... nous sollicitons EDB pour venir à Rodrigues. A aucun moment dans ma réponse, je n'ai dit qu'on fait venir la EDB pour faire travailler EPMU, Invest Rodrigues. Au contraire, j'ai dit que ce sera un *additional arm* qui va venir aider et travailler parce que comme je pense, beaucoup d'entre nous doivent le savoir, la

EDB est une institution de grande renommée mondiale qui a permis à Maurice de grimper les échelons en matière de développement économique. Si on regarde par exemple le *World Bank Ease of Doing Business Report 2020*, c'est bien mentionné dans ce rapport que Maurice aujourd'hui est première en Afrique en matière de développement économique et 13^{ème} sur 190 pays qui aujourd'hui facilite le développement de l'économie qui a tout le mécanisme et l'expertise. Et grâce à la contribution et le travail de EDB à Maurice, cela a permis que Maurice passe de 49^{ème} à 13^{ème} en 2019 en matière de développement économique et grâce au travail de la EDB, aujourd'hui, Maurice est considéré... Maurice peut se comparer/s'aligner avec des pays comme la Nouvelle Zélande, le Singapore, Hong Kong et tout ça, c'est bien mentionné dans ce rapport.

Donc, aujourd'hui, prendre l'expérience, l'expertise de EDB puisque nous sommes dans la République, nous avons notre vision économique pour le développement de ce pays. Pourquoi ne pas avoir une institution tout comme d'autres institutions qui sont venues à Rodrigues ? J'ai mentionné le *Registrar of Companies*. Nous avons le Financial Services Commission. Ce sont les organismes qui ont leur maison-mère à Maurice et qui sont aujourd'hui présents à Rodrigues et qui travaillent dans le cadre de ce développement économique. Pourquoi ? Parce que nous pensons aussi que... Pourquoi on ne l'a pas fait avant ? Chaque chose en son temps. Pourquoi eux, ils n'avaient pas fait... ils n'avaient rien fait avant ? Ils étaient là aussi. Nous avons voulu maintenant prendre avantage de l'expertise de EDB parce que d'ailleurs, c'est bien clair. Dans le cadre de son mandat, la EDB a aussi des antennes au niveau international. Et déjà nous avons commencé à travailler avec la EDB. Par exemple, nous sommes parties prenantes de l'expo, Dubaï Expo 2020 qui a été reporté à l'année prochaine dû à la pandémie. Rodrigues sera parti prenant.

Le CEO de EDB, c'est lui le Commissaire qui est responsable de ce projet. Nous travaillons avec eux pour le marché de l'huile essentielle à travers les antennes qu'ils ont dans d'autres pays. Et je dois dire que pour nous, c'est une très bonne occasion parce que comme on l'a dit, on veut pousser Rodrigues en avant. Et peut-être, il paraît aussi qu'il y a des gens qui pensent que : est-ce que c'est une bonne chose pour l'autonomie ? Oui, Madame la présidente. Parce que l'autonomie n'est pas un processus de l'isolement, de l'isolation. Au contraire, l'autonomie va se consolider si l'économie se consolide. Et cette consolidation va passer à travers la collaboration et la coopération qu'on peut avoir avec des entreprises de qualité, des institutions qui ont de l'expérience. Donc, pourquoi on ne l'a pas fait avant ? On le fait aujourd'hui et nous, on va assurer que ce travail que le EDB va faire en collaboration, je dis bien, avec Invest Rodrigues, avec EPMU et d'autres institutions sera pour le meilleur de Rodrigues.

The Minority Leader: Madame la présidente, la Commissaire a répondu concernant... la réponse concernant les objectifs. D'après le SIDPR, c'est exactement ce que fait, ce qu'aurait pu faire l'EPMU. Je ne sais pas ce qu'ils ont fait d'EPMU. C'est ça le souci. Et le Chef commissaire, on est un peu confus parce que le Chef commissaire dit souvent : « Il ne faut pas faire ce qu'ils font à Maurice ». Ils vont faire la même chose à Rodrigues. Attention que ça se passe à Rodrigues. On fait la même chose qu'à Maurice. Concernant *economic policy formulation*, mais c'est la EPMU qui fait le *economic policy formulation*. Il y a beaucoup d'objectifs qui se rejoignent au EPMU. C'est ça franchir la nouvelle étape. Pourquoi pas renforcer l'EPMU ? Pourquoi pas renforcer l'Invest Rodrigues ? Pourquoi pas ? Parce que nous pensons que l'autonomie veut dire aussi se consolider soi-même. Etre plus fort chez soi, oui, bien sûr, on peut avoir un MOU avec eux mais pourquoi est-ce qu'ils doivent être physiquement présents à Rodrigues ? La question, c'est que : est-ce que ce n'est pas possible qu'on ait un MOU avec la EDB mais qu'ils ne soient pas physiquement présents à l'île Rodrigues ?

Mrs. R. M. F. Gaspard-Pierre Louis: Madame la présidente, Monsieur le *Minority Leader*, je pense, veut être contradictoire dans sa question. Mais si le EPMU et EDB ont la même vision, l'occasion de plus pour travailler ensemble. C'est justement cette collaboration qu'il faudrait. Tout comme la NTA qui est à Rodrigues, tout comme la CEB. Ils travaillent ensemble en collaboration. Si leur vision était contraire, ça aurait été difficile mais nous avons le même objectif. Donc, l'occasion au contraire de créer une synergie pour pousser en avant Rodrigues. Et quelle est la différence avoir le MOU physiquement présent à Rodrigues ? Pour nous, c'est très important que la EDB soit présent à Rodrigues parce que il y a aussi, on doit l'admettre, il y a aussi un processus de *capacity building* qu'on doit faire à travers l'expertise que la EDB a. Aujourd'hui, nous aurons un bureau de la EDB à Rodrigues avec dans un premier temps, quelqu'un de Maurice mais bien sûr, parce qu'on a besoin de cette expertise. Et ils vont nous accompagner tout doucement parce que cette expérience que je vous ai mentionnée comme j'ai dit dans le rapport économique, on ne doit pas prétendre l'avoir. On ne doit pas prétendre l'avoir parce qu'aujourd'hui, c'est un processus. Cette expérience de la EDB depuis la BOI qu'ils ont... donc, depuis dans le temps, Rodrigues a besoin d'acquérir cette expérience. Nous, on va veiller à ce que leur présence physique soit l'occasion de consolider la compétence des gens qui sont ici et que, éventuellement, d'ailleurs c'était dans les discussions, il y aura quelqu'un de Rodrigues qui sera recruté pour mener à bien ce bureau mais bien sûr comme j'ai dit, l'expérience, l'expertise de EDB, ce sera un atout pour *Invest Rodrigues*, pour le développement économique à Rodrigues.

Mr. J. N. Volbert: Merci, Madame la présidente. On veut savoir quel sera le rôle de Invest Rodrigues, EPMU avec l'implémentation de EDB et est-ce que ce qu'on comprendre que les gros investissements 'va' passer à travers l'EDB et les petits investissements à travers le Invest Rodrigues ou le EPMU ?

Mrs. R. M. F. Gaspard-Pierre Louis: Madame la présidente, je dois d'abord dire que c'est bien clair dans le *EDB Act* que le EDB, son rôle, c'est de promouvoir les investissements de plus de Rs20 millions. Donc, les gros projets. Mais bien sûr en collaboration, en concertation avec toutes les Commissions, toutes les autorités Rodriguaises et le rôle de *Invest Rodrigues* restera le même tout comme le rôle de EPMU ou *SME Mauritius*. D'ailleurs, je dois le dire aussi. Je pense que c'est l'occasion de le dire parce que même à Maurice, en aillant le EDB, sous le ministère des entreprises et du business, vous avez la SME Unit, vous avez le *SME Mauritius*. C'est-à-dire que SME Unit a le même rôle que *Invest Rodrigues* et EDB a son rôle. Donc, pour nous, tout ça, c'est très, très clair. C'est très départagé. EPMU aujourd'hui est cette antenne de l'Assemblée régionale qui justement définisse cette politique générale du développement économique et avec le EDB, on va... ce sera aussi un *implementing arm*. EDB, ce n'est pas juste pour faire la stratégie mais aussi comme je vous ai dit, aller sur le terrain à travers les antennes qui existent dans d'autres pays pour promouvoir ces bons produits que nous avons, ces produits qui ont besoins d'un *niche market*, aujourd'hui pour le faire, je vous ai parlé du projet huile essentielle. On cherche acheteur pour un gros volume de jus parce qu'il y aura une partie qui sera transformée, une partie qui sera exportée mais en Afrique aujourd'hui, on a un marché pour tout ça et l'expertise de EDB sera une solution.

Mr. J. N. Volbert: Madame la présidente, est-ce que Rodrigues sera partie prenante dans les décisions qui seront prises par l'EDB ou les décisions pour les investissements bien sûr ou les décisions vont être prises à Maurice et puis, vont implémenter ici ?

Mrs. R. M. F. Gaspard-Pierre Louis: Madame la présidente, je l'ai dit au départ aussi. Déjà, il y a un MOU qui est en discussion en ce moment où on va définir le rôle de chaque entité. On a aussi, je vous ai dit, un business forum qui sera organisé à Rodrigues parce que ce n'est pas EDB qui va définir l'orientation du développement économique de Rodrigues ; c'est dans ce business forum, les *stakeholders*, les autorités, on va le définir ensemble. Et bien sûr, c'est la décision d'implémenter un projet ou pas, *it remains our decision as a government*. Et on va veiller à cela. C'est le rôle du gouvernement d'assurer et de veiller à ce que la politique de développement économique du Gouvernement soit mise en œuvre et pas la politique de EDB et surtout, surtout, je pense que ça va sans dire. Nous avons toujours eu à cœur

l'autonomie de Rodrigues, protéger Rodrigues, protéger son autonomie. On va assurer que toutes les décisions qui 'se prend', que tous les projets qu'ils vont mettre en œuvre 'sera' en ligne avec la vision du Gouvernement de Rodrigues par rapport au développement économique du pays.

The Minority Leader: Madame la présidente, la Commissaire est en train de se contredire elle-même. Elle a parlé dans les objectifs, j'ai bien noté : *economic policy formulation*. Donc, la EDB, ils auront cette responsabilité de *formulation of economic policy*. Maintenant, elle vient dire autre chose. Donc, il faut être clair sur ce que va faire la EDB à Rodrigues. Elle vient de nous dire aussi qu'ils comptent définir les rôles. Mais il faut bien définir les rôles. Il faut bien comprendre dès le départ avant l'implémentation de ce projet à Rodrigues. D'après le *EDB Act*, j'aimerais demander au Commissaire s'il y aura quelqu'un de Rodrigues sur le *board*, s'ils vont faire la demande qu'il y ait quelqu'un de Rodrigues sur le *EDB Board*.

Mrs. R. M. F. Gaspard-Pierre Louis: Madame la présidente, je voudrais revenir sur les objectifs que j'ai énumérés par rapport au MOU. A aucun moment, j'ai parlé de *formulation of policies*. D'ailleurs, je l'aurais dit aussi tout ce qui va se faire, ce sera en ligne avec le MOU. Et oui, hier, j'ai eu l'occasion de discuter avec le CEO de EDB. Je lui ai dit que ce serait dans l'avantage de Rodrigues, dans notre intérêt et dans le cadre de cette accord que Rodrigues soit représenté sur le *board* de EDB. Et pour lui, c'est une chose très faisable. Il trouve que c'est intéressant et pour nous, ce sera aussi l'occasion encore une fois que ces personnes qui forment parties de ce *board* aient l'occasion de rencontrer, de discuter avec d'autres membres. Parce que c'est très clair dans le *EDB Act* comment ces membres sont nommés et des gens d'expérience, d'expertise dans différents domaines, ce sera l'occasion pour celui ou celle qui va représenter Rodrigues de aussi se frotter avec cette expérience qu'il y a à Maurice au niveau du développement économique.

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: Madame la présidente, merci de me donner l'opportunité de dire quelques mots sur ce projet. Le Chef commissaire vient de présenter un budget quelques mois de cela. Même pas un mot du EDB. Madame vient de dire, Madame la Commissaire vient de dire que ce projet émane depuis 2015. Aujourd'hui, nous avons posé des questions, cinq ans déjà, nous avons posé des questions sur les documents qui ont été circulés pour l'implémentation de ce projet qui est quand même un projet costaud. Mais je constate malheureusement qu'avec plusieurs projets qu'ils sont en train d'annoncer d'année en année, il y a aucun concept, aucune discussion au préalable pour la mise en place de certains projets. Est-ce que je peux demander au Commissaire responsable de ce dossier comment se fait-il que depuis tout ce temps, 2015 jusqu'à présent, il n'y a même pas une ligne de communication en

écrit dans un dossier pour qu'on puisse savoir qu'est-ce qui se passe exactement et est-ce que ce projet ne mérite pas l'attention de toute la Chambre, de venir discuter, présenter dans le budget et discuter ? Pourquoi c'est passé en catimini et tout d'un coup, c'est le Ministère de finance qui annonce qu'il y aura un EDB à Rodrigues ?

Mrs. R. M. F. Gaspard-Pierre Louis: Madame la présidente, je suis un peu outrée que quelqu'un qui a été membre du Parlement ici depuis si longtemps. Depuis quand une mesure nationale de budget est annoncée d'abord ici ? Sinon, on aurait parlé du *Waste Water* et de tous ces projets qu'on annonce pour Rodrigues. Mais c'est affreux que quelqu'un qui a de l'expérience ici vienne nous dire que cette mesure aurait dû être discuté là et puis aller discuter là-bas. Sinon, on aurait déjà lu le discours budget du Ministre des finances ici et puis, il aurait lu là-bas à Maurice. Cependant, j'ai dit pourquoi j'ai mentionné 2015. J'ai mentionné 2015 parce que j'avais dit déjà c'est nous qui avons organisé le *Business Investment Forum*. On avait discuté et surtout, c'est pour ça aussi que j'ai mentionné que ce *Business Investment Forum* était organisé par la Commission du développement industriel mais aussi la Commission de l'informatique. Parce que on se préparait à avoir dans quel domaine on pourrait attirer les investisseurs étrangers et l'ICT était un secteur clé. Et si on avait...

Aujourd'hui, on va étendre bien sûr, mais ICT reste le secteur clé. D'ailleurs, le Chef commissaire l'a dit dans son discours budget. On ne va pas avoir que des *call centres* à Rodrigues, que des BPOs. Il faut avoir d'autres types de développement. Et si on l'avait fait avant le câble optique, on nous aurait dit vous avez fait trop tôt, EDB tourne en rond. Et aujourd'hui, on le fait parce que, d'ailleurs dans la réponse, c'est clair, c'est la question de *digital economy* aussi qui nous préoccupe et qui nous intéresse. C'est pour ça que ça arrive avant. On questionne pourquoi c'est là. Maintenant, pourquoi ce n'était pas avant ? Finalement, on ne sait pas qu'est-ce qu'on veut.

Madam Chairperson: Respected Member, please, be short with your question. No statement, please.

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: I must introduce my question, of course.

Madam Chairperson: Supplementary question, there is no need for introduction.

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: Madame la présidente, la Commissaire ne doit pas être outrée parce que je redis encore, cela fait plusieurs années que des projets sont annoncés et ce projet particulièrement a été discuté depuis 2015. Donc, pour nous, c'est mettre 'le' charrue devant les bœufs encore une fois. Je

voudrais poser la question suivante : préserver nos acquis. Préserver nos acquis, on a beaucoup parlé. Il y a même le discours budget qui a été axé à un certain moment donné. Je pense que c'était 2018/2019. Nous avons perdu la MARL, Madame la présidente, parce que soi-disant, nous sommes en train de faire des coopérations avec tout ce qui est fait à Maurice. Le Chef commissaire comme l'a dit bien Grandcourt, le Chef commissaire a souvent dit...

Madam Chairperson: We are still waiting for the question, respected Member.

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: Yes, I am coming with my question.

Madam Chairperson: Please, put your question now!

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: I am coming with my question.

Madam Chairperson: No, you put your question now!

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: *I am coming with my question. I am coming.* Pourquoi le Chef commissaire quand il a annoncé tout ce projet concernant les développements à Rodrigues, est-ce que la Commissaire considère que ce projet de EDB qui va venir empiéter sur Invest Rodrigues et EPMU, est-ce que ce projet va être une complémentarité ou bien elle va être au-dessus de ces deux institutions ?

Mrs. R. M. F. Gaspard-Pierre Louis: Madame la présidente, j'ai essayé d'avoir un anglais clair et simple ou bien un français clair et simple. Toutes ces réponses ont été données déjà et à aucun moment, on a parlé de piétiner, au contraire, de collaboration comme je vous dis aujourd'hui : *governance is corporation and collaboration* et c'est dans cette optique que nous faisons confiance à cette relation de travail qui va s'accroître. Je dis bien, s'accroître, parce qu'on avait commencé déjà avec EDB pour le bien, pour la consolidation de l'économie de Rodrigues. Et c'est une question de vision économique. Si demain... Ils ont parlé de 40 ans la dernière fois. Si dans 40 ans, ils viennent, ils veulent que EDB piétine Rodrigues, ça, c'est leur responsabilité. Nous, nous allons veiller à ce qu'il y a un travail de collaboration dans le cadre de notre vision économique, de notre vision politique pour ce développement de Rodrigues.

Mr. Z. Félicité: Thanks, Madam the Chairperson. So, I heard the Commissioner mention that she organises Business Investment Forum with ICT.... So, can I know from the Commissioner whether she has personally invited the Economic Development Board to implement in Rodrigues?

Mrs. R. M. F. Gaspard-Pierre Louis: Madame la présidente, comme je l'ai dit au départ, la discussion pour... la discussion a été démarrée. En 2015 quand on avait organisé le *Rodrigues Investment Policy Forum*, justement dans un esprit de préparation et de vision économique, on s'asseyait pour voir quelle direction et c'est de là qu'est sorti cette proposition parce qu'il y avait des *stakeholders of all the different sectors of the economy of Rodrigues* et c'est de là avec aussi, il y avait des partenaires de Maurice, des entrepreneurs de renom qui étaient venus et c'est de là qui... d'où la discussion a démarré dans le cadre de cette préparation et c'est à partir de là qu'on a justement discuté avec la EDB avec Ministère des finances et voir l'éventualité que EDB peut avoir une antenne à Rodrigues pour nous aider pour mettre en œuvre ce... les recommandations et ainsi que aussi bien sûr, travailler en collaboration de manière plus rapprochée.

The Minority Leader: Madame la présidente, nous avons Ministère de Rodrigues, Bureau du PPS et les autres bureaux, le bureau de *Island Chief Executive* et Chef commissaire. Comme si EDB maintenant arrive comme un genre d'échappatoire. Comme si Jango arrive, va développer Rodrigues. J'aimerais demander au Commissaire... la Commissaire, pardon, quelle sera la finalité dans quelques années de la présence du EDB à Rodrigues ?

Mrs. R. M. F. Gaspard-Pierre Louis: Madame la présidente, ce que EDB a été pour Maurice en matière de développement économique, je l'ai mentionné aujourd'hui, Maurice est première en Afrique, Maurice est treizième au monde par rapport à *Business Friendly Environment*. Ce que EDB a su être pour Maurice, EDB le sera pour Rodrigues dans le contexte de l'autonomie et prenant en compte cette vision de faire de Rodrigues, une île écologique. Qu'est-ce qu'on attend aujourd'hui ? On ne peut pas prétendre vouloir développer Rodrigues tout seul. C'est-à-dire que à travers ces possibilités, on aura... J'ai parlé de Dubaï Expo 2020. Ce sera une opportunité pour nos produits, pour le secteur touristique et autres de continuer sa promotion à travers cette événement qui sera étalé sur plusieurs mois et où il y aura beaucoup de pays qui vont participer. Donc, quelle sera la finalité ? On va avoir l'occasion de faire découvrir au monde ce que Rodrigues est, ce que Rodrigues a à offrir, les produits, son hospitalité et autres. On aura l'occasion d'avoir d'autres entrepreneurs au niveau de l'informatique. Aujourd'hui, nous continuons à faire... Nous avons un bon safran. Tout le monde parle de la qualité de ce safran. Aujourd'hui, nous l'utilisons que pour faire à manger. Et ce safran en Inde aujourd'hui est utilisé pour faire des gélules qui sont exportées aux Etats Unis. Et si on peut avoir cette expertise pointue qui peut nous emmener les partenaires, ils peuvent nous emmener ces partenaires grâce à leurs contacts, leurs antennes, ils nous emmènent ces partenaires et nous permettent d'apporter

ce développement *very high value added*. Il n'y aura pas de Jango. Si vous voulez faire faire du Jango, vous... Mais vous avez... Mais pourtant, vous avez travaillé avec EDB aussi au départ pour faire *Invest Rodrigues* et vous n'avez plus rien faire de plus avec Invest Rodrigues.

[Interruptions]

Madam Chairperson: Order!

Mrs. R. M. F. Gaspard-Pierre Louis: J'ai discuté hier avec la EDB. Quand j'ai vu depuis quand vous avez discuté pour mettre en place *Invest Rodrigues*, qu'est-ce qui s'était passé ? C'est parce que *Invest Rodrigues* a son mandat à lui et EDB a un autre mandat. Donc, c'est justement ça.

The Minority Leader : Madame la présidente, j'ai lu hier, j'étais allé sur le... je suis allée sur le site de EDB. La finalité, c'est qu'ils prônent l'indépendance économique.

[Interruptions]

The Minority Leader: Facilité... Une des objectifs, c'est faciliter *private investment*. Mais qu'en est-il des Rodriguais dans tout ça ? Où se trouve, où se place les investisseurs Rodriguais ? Parce que dites-vous bien, Madame la présidente, il y a des gens qui ont de l'argent ici, qui veulent investir mais il y a toujours les bâtons dans les roues. Alors, est-ce que ce bureau va traiter seulement les dossiers de ceux qui viennent d'ailleurs ou bien ceux qui viennent aussi, les Rodriguais qui veulent investir ? C'est-à-dire, maintenant...

Madam Chairperson: Yes, thank you for your question.

Mrs. R. M. F. Gaspard-Pierre Louis: Madame la présidente, c'est clair, je l'ai mentionné. *Invest Rodrigues* continue son travail. EDB sera l'occasion de faire du *capacity building* et aussi, pourquoi est-ce que... Quelle différence ? S'il y a des investissements étrangers, c'est EDB qui s'en charge de plus Rs20 millions. Mais si c'est local, Invest est là, Invest va faire son travail. Vous pouvez ne pas être d'accord. Vous n'êtes d'accord avec rien ! Parce que vous êtes une opposition carton aujourd'hui, vous n'êtes d'accord avec rien ?

[Interruptions]

Madam Chairperson: Order!

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[Interruptions]

Madam Chairperson: Order! Order!

[Interruptions]

Mrs. M. T. Agathe: Point of Order, Madam. Si je suis en carton, je pars.

[Interruptions]

Madam Chairperson: Yes, Commissioner, you have to withdraw because the Opposition Members are elected Members of the House. This is nor parliamentary. So, you have to withdraw.

[Applause]

Mrs. R. M. F. Gaspard-Pierre Louis: I withdraw, Madam.

Madam Chairperson: One last.

The Minority Leader: Il me semble que *Invest Rodrigues...*

Madam Chairperson: Be short with your question.

The Minority Leader: Yes, I will be short.

Madam Chairperson: No statement, please.

The Minority Leader: Non, non. *I am not making a statement. Please, allow me.* Mrs. Chairperson, Madam, il me semble que Invest Rodrigues, c'est pour les Rodriguais et EDB, c'est pour les étrangers. Mais si un Rodriguais a plus de Rs20 millions ? Si les Rodriguais peuvent prendre en emprunt à la banque ou bien il a son argent, il veut investir, est-ce que ce Rodriguais-là aura droit à se présenter devant le bureau du EDB ?

Mrs. R. M. F. Gaspard-Pierre Louis: Madame la présidente, Monsieur le *Minority Leader...*

Madam Chairperson: Order! Respected Members! Commissioner, please. Respected Members from the Minority Side, please, I should be able to hear the answer of the Commissioner without any interruption, please.

Mrs. R. M. F. Gaspard-Pierre Louis: Madame la présidente, Monsieur le *Minority Leader* ne veut pas de EDB mais en même temps, il veut que le Rodriguais passe devant EDB. C'est clair que le mandat de EDB comme il l'a lu sur le *website*, c'est pour promouvoir l'investissement étranger, le *Foreign Direct Investment*. C'est clair. Donc, ce Rodriguais, s'il a même Rs100 millions même un milliard, s'il va développer, c'est un projet mais *Invest Rodrigues* va l'accompagner. Là, c'est plus parce que il y a des procédures bien spécifiques qu'un étranger doit faire pour pouvoir venir à Rodrigues. Donc, ce Rodriguais, s'il a son projet, il va pouvoir le faire et ça, je donne garanti à tous les Rodriguais que *Invest Rodrigues* sera là pour l'accompagner mais pourquoi pas demain avoir l'expertise aussi de EDB ? Pour... parce qu'il y aura un travail de collaboration.

Madam Chairperson: Next question.

The Minority Leader: B/31

SCHOOL CALENDARS – RODRIGUES – YEAR 2020/2021

(No. B/31) The Minority Leader (Mr. F. A. Grandcourt) asked the Chief Commissioner in regard to school calendars in Rodrigues for the academic year 2020/2021, he will inform the House on:

- (a) who prepared the school calendar previously proposed by the Executive Council; and
- (b) the measures being taken by his Commission for the implementation of the new school calendar submitted by the Ministry of Education in Rodrigues?

The Chief Commissioner: Madam Chairperson, as there was no case of COVID-19 in Rodrigues, the Central Government agreed that the Curfew Order in Rodrigues would lapse on the 15 April 2020 to allow economic and other activities to resume. And as regards to the education sector, the Ministry has proposed that resumption may be contemplated as from early May 2020 in a phased manner.

Consequently, since there was no reported case of COVID-19, the Executive Council met on Friday 24 April 2020 and agreed that schools resume normally in Rodrigues as from Monday 04 May 2020 for the Secondary and MITD and for the primary, as from Wednesday 06 May 2020 for grades 5 and

6; on Monday 11 May 2020 for grades 1-4, followed by the pre-primary section as from 18 May 2020 for years 4+ and 25 May 2020 for years 3+.

And as regards to part (b), Madam Chairperson, I am informed that following the resumption of schools, consultation meetings were held between different stakeholders of the education sector to discuss on a proposed school calendar for Rodrigues. In a meeting under my chairmanship on Friday 08 May 2020, it was decided that a subcommittee comprising of college representatives and Trade Unions be set up to work out a proposed school calendar for the secondary sector. The subcommittee met on 12 May 2020 and a school calendar proposal of 40 weeks was reached.

I am further informed that amendments were made to the proposal school calendar and an amended proposed school calendar of 37 weeks was presented to the subcommittee.

The following essential points were taken into consideration when amendments were made in the interest of our students:

- To maintain maximum access to education for students of Rodrigues as there was no reported case of COVID-19 in Rodrigues. This was an opportunity to have longer teacher-student contact time prior to resumption of flights.

It was also an attempt to improve the percentage pass rate as for both School Certificate and Higher School Certificate has decreased in Rodrigues during the past years.

- It was advisable to keep minimum break period in between the terms, so as to maintain the learning rhythm of students, especially for those sitting for the Primary School Achievement Certificate (PSAC), National Certificate of Education Grade 9, School Certificate and Higher School Certificate.

However, due to the grievances from the teaching staff, the Executive Council met on Friday 22 May 2020 and decided to stay action concerning the implementation of a revised 37 weeks' school calendar for the Primary and Secondary Sector for Rodrigues. The calendar will be adjusted accordingly should the need arise in context of the pandemic or the national decision on national examinations.

As regards to part (b) Madam Chairperson, I am informed that as per common practice, all Heads of Primary and Secondary schools are communicated the school calendar upon receipt of same by the Ministry of Education for implementation in schools.

My Commission has also taken the lead in the procurement of frontal thermometers to be used by all schooling institutions and heads of schools have been urged to take all the necessary recommended sanitary measures for the resumption of schooling activities, in context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

I wish to inform the House that after consultation with the Ministry of Education, a proposed school calendar was released by the end of May 2020 by the Ministry of Education. My office is still in consultation with the Ministry of Education to align the school calendar of the secondary sector with that of the primary sector in Rodrigues.

Madam Chairperson, we are not satisfied that School holiday for Secondary Schools will be more than two months after the second term that is in November and December 2020 especially for those who will sit for SC and HSC exams. Therefore, we have made an appeal to the Ministry of Education to align the school calendar for Rodrigues to that of the new calendar for Mauritius as from resumption of school in Rodrigues on 03 August 2020 to 27th November 2020.

A break from 19 October to Friday 23 October is... Excuse me. A break of 19 October to Friday 23 October is being 'examined'. Thank you.

Mr. J. N. Volbert: Merci, *Madam Chairperson*. J'aurais aimé au Chef commissaire s'il y avait eu litige entre les *Educators* de REDCO et le Conseil exécutif par rapport au calendrier proposé par le Conseil exécutif.

The Chief Commissioner: Oui mais comme je disais, il y avait des rencontres et plusieurs mêmes rencontres avec les syndicats des collèges et ainsi de suite et on est arrivé à un calendrier accepté par tout le monde.

Mr. J. N. Volbert: Est-ce que le Chef commissaire peut nous dire si le calendrier proposé par le Conseil exécutif a été rejeté et le calendrier du Ministère de l'éducation qui est adopté pour le reste du calendrier scolaire ?

The Chief Commissioner: Oui mais c'est ce que j'ai dit dans ma réponse, Madame.

The Minority Leader: J'ai cru comprendre de la part du Chef commissaire qu'il y a un comité qui a travaillé là-dessus pour préparer le calendrier. Bon, j'aimerais demander. Je ne sais pas, il parle lent... à voix très bas, je n'ai rien compris. Est-ce qu'ils ont eu l'approbation du Ministère de l'éducation avant de proposer ce calendrier, le premier ?

The Chief Commissioner: Nous avons toujours suivi. Nous avons toujours été en contact avec le Ministère de l'éducation et même moi, j'ai eu

une conversation avec la Ministre. Et c'est pourquoi j'ai dit à la fin que le Ministère de l'éducation a accepté des propositions qu'on a faites justement pour le calendrier et là, on est toujours en contact avec eux justement en ce qui concerne 'cette' calendrier du secondaire. Pour le secondaire, il y a la fin de l'année 2020, deux mois de vacances : novembre et décembre. Alors que pour le primaire, le primaire termine 27 novembre et il y aura seulement un mois de vacance. Alors, puisque Madame la présidente, nous avons toujours vu les résultats des étudiants du secondaire en SC et HSC on ne veut pas que pour l'année 2021 pour les examens de SC et HSC que ces résultats baissent encore.

Alors, nous luttons pour ça. Nous luttons pour que justement, qu'il n'y ait pas trop de vacances, que ces deux mois de vacances novembre et décembre... Et c'est pourquoi on a fait appel au Ministère de l'éducation et pour que on puisse suivre le même programme, le même calendrier scolaire du primaire. Le calendrier du primaire termine le 27 novembre et qu'ils auront simplement au mois de décembre, des vacances. Et alors que le troisième trimestre va commencer en 2020 pour terminer en 2021. C'est ça, l'autre année scolaire va commencer après. Alors, c'est ça, notre préoccupation. Notre grande préoccupation, il faudrait que l'examen de SC et HSC, qu'on ait un bon résultat. Et c'est pourquoi nous invitons les enseignants à justement accepter ce que nous proposons et que ces enseignants puissent vraiment accompagner ces étudiants SC et HSC pour qu'ils aient un meilleur résultat aux examens de l'année prochaine.

The Minority Leader: Madame la présidente, le Chef commissaire a parlé de ce comité encore une fois, de ce calendrier scolaire. J'aimerais poser la question : et pourquoi est-ce que ça a été si contesté par les enseignants, les parents, les élèves ? Pourquoi ? D'après lui, ça a été contesté. Quelles sont les raisons et qu'est-ce qu'il va... qu'est-ce qu'il a fait ?

The Chief Commissioner: Au contraire, les parents n'ont pas apprécié ces deux mois de congés dans le secondaire. C'est ça justement. Deux mois de congés ? Novembre, décembre ? Vous comprenez. Et nous, on a voulu faire comprendre aux enseignants qu'ils sont là au service des étudiants. Et même la semaine dernière, un parent est venu me voir. Et nous, dans les rencontres que nous avons eues avec les *PTAs*, *Student's Council* ainsi de suite, tout ça, on a parlé que la priorité, ce sont les enfants. Vous comprenez là ? Et un parent m'a dit la semaine dernière, m'a dit cette semaine-ci là qu'un enseignant dans un collège a dit aux enfants, je suis obligé de répéter ça : « *Mo pas zot esclave* ». L'enseignant est au service des enfants pour que ces enfants puissent réussir. J'ai vu à la rentrée des classes du primaire un reportage de la MBC à l'école Basile Allas. Un enfant a dit : « *Mo konten revine lekol pou ki plitar mo gagne ene travay* ».

Déjà, là, il pense à l'avenir, cet enfant. Et c'est pourquoi je dis il faudrait revoir un peu aussi la formation de nos enseignants ; pas juste anglais, français, mathématiques, science mais il faudrait que l'enseignant puisse arriver par sa formation psychologique et sa formation d'avenir pour qu'il puisse y parler à ces enfants-là. Vous comprenez là ? Pour que ces enfants-là ou même dès maintenant, ils commencent à réfléchir qu'est-ce qu'ils vont faire dans les années à venir. C'est important, ça, Madame. C'est très important. Alors, moi, je pense que à Maurice, bon, ils ont ; c'est leur affaire. Mais ici, nous avons une autonomie ! Mais oui ! Mais il ne faudrait pas trop nous imposer ! Et que justement...

[Interruptions]

Madam Chairperson: Order!

The Chief Commissioner: Non, EDB...

[Interruptions]

Madam Chairperson: Order!

The Chief Commissioner: EDB, nous travaillons avec EDB pour que Rodrigues aille plus loin !

Madam Chairperson: Order!

The Chief Commissioner: Nous ne voulons pas être une île isolée. Pourquoi avant ? Il faut coopérer, collaborer avec les autres organisations internationales. C'est pourquoi je dis que Rodrigues n'est pas une île isolée dans l'Océan indien.

[Interruptions]

The Chief Commissioner: *Ah bé aret réagir alors.* Non, Madame, j'ai bien répondu. Nous avons aussi un grand tracass. Moi en tant que Commissaire de l'éducatia... l'éducation.

[Interruptions]

The Chief Commissioner: *Cabris manze lakasia non ? To pa konten lakasia?*

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[Interruptions]

Madam Chairperson: Order! Respected Members, no cross-talking, please!

The Chief Commissioner: *Mo enan ene ti coson kot moi li manze lakasia.*

[Interruptions]

The Chief Commissioner: Madame, je pense que j'ai bien expliqué notre grande préoccupation pour nos enfants, qu'ils passent trop de temps dans les vacances mais au moins que réduire un peu ces vacances et qu'ils ont quand même si on a prévu des *break* d'une semaine ou deux semaines et nous souhaitons et nous invitons... Là, j'invite tous les enseignants à justement regarder ces enfants, surtout *School Certificate* et HSC pour que... après les examens *School Certificate*, la HSC, nous puissions avoir de bons résultats et ça va refaire notre renommé au niveau de l'éducation. Merci.

Madam Chairperson: Next question. Next question, respected Members. We have still many questions to consider on the Order Paper of today.

[Interruptions]

Madam Chairperson: We have been on this question for 20 minutes and others Members have the right to put their questions also. So, this is my ruling. Next question!

Mr. F. A. Grandcourt: I already said. B/32.

[Interruptions]

AIR MAURITIUS FLIGHT – MAURITIUS & RODRIGUES – JUNE 2020

(No. B/32) **The Minority Leader (Mr. F. A. Grandcourt)** asked the Chief Commissioner in regard to the Air Mauritius flights between Mauritius and Rodrigues during the month of June 2020, he will state, for the benefit of the House, the: -

- (a) number of flights requested so far by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly including the number of passengers concerned; and
- (b) number of passengers still awaiting to be transferred to Rodrigues to date and the measures being taken by his office regarding the issue?

The Chief Commissioner: Madam Chairperson, as the House is aware, further to the first confined cases of COVID-19 in Mauritius, the Honorable Prime Minister announced a sanitary lockdown on 19 March 2020. As a precautionary measure, Rodrigues went also into lockdown as from 21 March 2020 to ensure the safety of the population.

Consequently, a request was made to the Honourable Prime Minister so that passenger flights between Mauritius and Rodrigues be stopped as from Sunday 22 March 2020.

Following the efficient preventive measures put in place by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, no case of COVID-19 has been registered in the island as at date. Moreover, the Government of Mauritius agreed that the Curfew Order in Rodrigues would lapse on 15 April 2020 to allow economic and other activities to resume, except for schools that remained closed until May 2020.

Meanwhile, passenger flights did not resume since there were still active cases of COVID-19 in Mauritius. After removal of the curfew order in Mauritius, my Government started to plan for the repatriation of passengers stranded in Mauritius.

It is to be noted that several factors have to be taken into account for that exercise, namely:-

- a) The risk of importing the virus to Rodrigues;
- b) The availability of equipment to deal with confirmed case in Rodrigues;
- c) Availability of space both in terms of bedrooms and other prerequisite facilities for quarantine;
- d) Availability of personnel to be posted there while taking into account the smooth operation of the health services and the fact that if there is a confirmed case, all the personnel posted there will have to further quarantine;

- e) Facilities for COVID-19 testing of all passengers in Mauritius prior to embarking.

Taking the above in consideration, the Executive Council has decided that a weekly flight will be the most appropriate to manage. It should also be noted for flights departing from Mauritius to Rodrigues, compulsory social distancing should be strictly observed on board thereby, reducing the number of passengers on board to only 40.

Madam Chairperson, I am further informed that priority for travel on the Rodrigues-Mauritius leg was given as follows:

- i. Patients referred to Mauritius for further treatment;
- ii. University students who have to sit for examinations;
- iii. Mauritians domiciled in mainland Mauritius; and
- iv. Foreign nationals boarding repatriation flights.

Priority on the Mauritius-Rodrigues route was given to patients in Mauritius for further treatment; Officers of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and other Rodriguans.

According to records available and further to communiques issued by my office, 275 passengers have expressed their wish to travel from Rodrigues to Mauritius and 70 passengers excluding patients and accompanying relatives to travel from Mauritius to Rodrigues.

Madam Chairperson, I have been informed that as to date, two repatriation flights were scheduled on the 03 June and 12 June 2020. 38 patients and accompanying relatives reached Rodrigues on the 03 June 2020 and were quarantined at Les Cocotiers Hotel until Friday 19 June 2020.

On the second flight on 12 June 2020, there were 30 Rodriguan patients previously referred to Mauritius for further treatment and their relatives; two visiting specialists; and 10 officers of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly who were stranded in Mauritius.

Madam Chairperson, I am further informed a total of 123 passengers left Rodrigues by both flights as detailed hereunder:

- i. 19 patients and accompanying relatives referred by the Commission for Health,
- ii. 31 tertiary students;
- iii. 60 Mauritians; and
- iv. 13 foreign nationals.

I wish to inform the House that a third repatriation flight is scheduled tomorrow Wednesday 24 June 2020. Subsequent flights will be arranged thereafter to cater for the remaining passengers.

Madam Chairperson, a decision is also being taken as to whether to start a phased resumption of normal flight as from July 2020.

Madam Chairperson: Respected Members, before going any further, I would like to draw the attention of respected Members to Standing Order 22 on Supplementary Questions whereby, it is mentioned that Supplementary Question is meant for clarification. So, there is no need for introduction. Be concise with your supplementary question because we have still many questions to consider on the Order Paper for today. So, be concise with your supplementary questions.

The Minority Leader: Justement, je réfléchis sur la question. Est-ce que... Quel est l'avis du Chef commissaire concernant les quarantaines ? Est-ce que à Maurice, ils sont déconfinés ? Est-ce qu'il y a ce besoin que tous ceux qui viennent de Maurice doivent être... doivent passer une période de quarantaine ? Par contre, ceux qui sont... qui partent à Maurice, donc, ils sont... ils partent chez eux. Donc, j'aimerais avoir son avis là-dessus. Qu'est-ce qu'il pense de ça ?

The Chief Commissioner: Mme. la présidente, c'est vrai quand on écoute la radio ou quand on regarde la télévision, il y a des Mauriciens qui sont rapatriés d'autres pays et qui vont en quarantaine à Maurice. Et ici on a eu que les patients, premier vol, les patients qui ont été envoyé à Maurice pour être soigné et qui sont retournés et ils sont partis en quarantaine. Il y a un deuxième avion mais là aussi peut-être, ils sont partis en quarantaine. Mais nous sommes en train de voir et ça très souvent je rencontre et je pose... quand je parle avec le Premier Ministre, quand est-ce qu'il y aura des vols entre Maurice et Rodrigues, est-ce qu'il faudra que les personnes qui de Maurice viennent à Rodrigues soient en quarantaine ? Mais je dois dire que même ces patients qui étaient

envoyés à Maurice et avant de venir ils ont suivi des tests, des tests PCR.
(Trouver là !)

[Interruption]

Et là, je pense que ces types de question ce devrait être mon collègue qui devrait répondre à cela. Mais justement, c'est que, comme j'ai dit dans ma réponse on a commandé au niveau des médicaments, des PCR, des équipements et ceci, cela. Tous cela s'est arrivé pour que vraiment s'il y a des personnes qui arrivent, on puisse faire des tests le plus vite possible et ne pas les garder en quarantaine trop longtemps. Parce que vous savez, Mme. la présidente, aller en quarantaine, laissez-moi vous dire, ça coûte beaucoup d'argent pour l'Assemblée Régionale. Mais là, il nous faut être bien sûre et tout dépend de la réponse que le Premier Ministre va nous donner - quand est-ce que les vols vont reprendre entre Maurice et Rodrigues. En tout cas, ce ne sera pas des vols quotidiens. Ce sera peut-être trois vols par semaine mais pas des vols quotidiens comme on avait autrefois, deux vols, trois vols, quatre vols par jour. Non, il n'y aura pas ça. Mais même ces personnes qui viennent à Rodrigues mais il faudrait justement, et là peut-être que je demande à mon collègue, est-ce que même à l'avenir est-ce qu'il faudrait ces personnes-là subissent un test à Maurice avant de prendre l'avion.

Alors, il y a tous cela que nous sommes en train de voir mais il faut savoir, Mme. la présidente, que nous ne voulons pas avoir à Rodrigues un cas de COVID-19. Et, c'est pourquoi même si demain l'avion reprend, on est en train justement de faire suivre le protocole, seulement pour les enfants, et on a aussi cette appareil pour prendre les températures, tout ça. Et, dans les écoles les enfants doivent se laver les mains et tout ça. Et, tout ça, nous sommes en train de faire et justement que si demain ces vols réguliers entre Maurice et Rodrigues... mais nous ne voulons pas que ce soit tous les jours. Mais dans la première étape peut-être, trois vols par semaine et puis au fur et à mesure. Tout dépend. Le COVID-19 à Maurice, est-ce qu'il est en train de disparaître à Maurice. Tout dépend. Vous comprenez ? Alors, on n'a pas pris des décisions encore définitives mais nous sommes en train quand même de prévenir, et au cas nous ne voulons pas qu'il y est un cas de COVID-19 à Rodrigues demain. Merci bien.

Mr. J.L.R. Perrine: *Yes, Madam.* Permettez-moi de demander au Chef Commissaire, j'ai entendu le Chef Commissaire parlait de l'hôtel Les Cocotiers. Peut-on savoir s'il y a eu les procédures normales pour la sélection des différentes quarantaines qui sont actuellement établie à Rodrigues. Je sais que ces deux centres de quarantaine il y a eu, il y a l'hôtel Les Cocotiers, il y a

Les Flomboyants, il y a Mourouk, est-ce qu'il y a eu un système, un protocole pour ça ?

Madam Chairperson: Respected Member, I am sorry but this is not related to the main question. It is very far from the main question. The main question is with regard to Air Mauritius flights.

Mr. J.L.R. Perrine: Il a parlé de quarantaine, il a parlé qu'ils étaient au Cocotiers. J'aimerais poser la question...

Madam Chairperson: Yes, in his answer but the main question, you should be asking for elucidation, further elucidation of information requested as per Standing Order 22(1).

Mr. F. A. Grandcourt: Mme. la présidente, permettez-moi de poser une question. Concernant ceux qui voyage par justement Air Mauritius. Pourquoi est-ce qu'ils doivent passer par l'Administration avant, par exemple, d'aller acheter un billet à Air Mauritius. Donc, est-ce que le Chef Commissaire peut nous expliquer l'importance de cette mesure ?

The Chief Commissioner: Mme. la présidente, ces vols entre Maurice et Rodrigues c'est bien spécifique. On ne peut pas accepter n'importe qui. Et, c'est pourquoi ces personnes qui veulent aller à Maurice, ils doivent mettre leurs présences à l'Administration et aussi voir avec Air Mauritius tout ça. Mais ce n'est pas... Si demain je veux partir pour Maurice, pour aller me promener, *to zafer*, ça c'est non. Mais il faudrait que la personne ait vraiment une préoccupation quelconque avec obligation de voyager d'aller à Maurice.

Madam Chairperson: Next question.

Mr. F. A. Grandcourt: Mrs. Chairperson Madam, B/33.

PAYMENT OF BAD WEATHER ALLOWANCE – LAST THREE MONTHS TO DATE

(No. B/33) **Mr. F. A. Grandcourt (Minority Leader)** asked the Commissioner of Fisheries and Others whether, in regard to the payment of bad weather allowance to fishermen in Rodrigues for the last three months to date, he will state and table, for the benefit of the House, the amount paid there

The Commissioner for Environment and Others (Mr. J. R. Payendee): Mrs. Chairperson, Madam, I am informed that for the month of March and up to the 15th of April 2020, due to confinement period

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registered fishers of Rodrigues have been paid an amount of Rs 9,491,635 as detailed below:

- (i) On the 1st of March to 20th of March 2020 – the Bad Weather Allowance paid:-
 - (a) 602 Off-lagoon Fishers have been paid seven days of bad weather at the rate Rs 365 per day, amounting to a total of Rs 1,538,100;
 - (b) 541 Lagoon Fishers have been paid two days of Bad Weather Allowance for the four zones have recorded two days' weather allowance each at the rate of Rs 365 per day, amounting to a total of Rs 394,930;
 - (c) on the 21st March to 15th of April 2020, while Rodrigues was in confinement period, all eligible fishers have been paid 21 days at the rate again Rs 365 per day, excluding Sundays and Public Holidays where:
 - Off-lagoon fishers have received the following:
 - (a) 21st March to 31st March, eight days amounting to Rs 1,757,840
 - (b) for the 1st April to 15th of April, 13 days amounting to a total of Rs 2,856,490.
 - Lagoon fishers have received the following:
 - (a) for 21st March to 31st March, eight days amounting to a total of Rs 1,579,720
 - (b) for 1st April to 15th of April, 13 days amounting to a total of Rs 2,567,045.

Mrs. Chairperson, Madam, it is important for me to clarify the matter with regard to 481 octopus's fishers who are also registered Lagoon fishers. Apart from the Bad Weather Allowance paid to them, these octopus fishers were also paid normal stipend under the alternative livelihood for Octopus Closed Season as per the decision of the Executive Council prior to the extension of the octopus's closure period and, an amount of Rs 1,202,500 was

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already paid to them. Unfortunately, Madam Chairperson, this sum had to be deducted in order to prevent double payment.

Mrs. Chairperson, Madam, from 16th of April to 30th of April, registered fishers have received an amount of Rs 3,131,335 as Bad Weather Allowance as detailed below:

- (i) 601 off-lagoon fishers have been paid 11 days of bad weather, again at the same rate Rs 365 per day, amounting to Rs 2,413,015.
- (ii) As regards to lagoon fishers, the payment was as follows:
 - (a) Zone 1, 104 Lagoon Fishers have been paid one day of bad weather at the rate of Rs 365 and this amounts to Rs 37,960;
 - (b) For Zone 2, 80 Lagoon fishers was paid two days and amounting to Rs 58,400;
 - (c) In Zone 3, 316 Lagoon fishers have been paid five days amounting to Rs 576,700; and
 - (d) In Zone 4, 31 lagoon fishers have been paid four days and this amounts to Rs 45,260.

As regards to the months of May 2020, an amount of Rs 4,941,300 have been paid as Bad Weather Allowance.

600 Off-lagoon Fishers have been paid 20 days of bad weather amounting to Rs 4,380,000 plus one fisherman re-issued has been paid 15 days amounting to Rs 5,475 and this cause to a total of Rs 4,335,475.

As regards to lagoon fishers, the payment was as follows:

- (a) There was no bad weather days in Zone 1, hence, no Bad Weather Allowance paid;
- (b) In Zone 2, 81 Lagoon fishers have been paid three days of Bad Weather Allowance and amounting to Rs 88,695;
- (c) Zone 3, 308 Lagoon fishers have been paid four days and this amounts to Rs 449,680 and two new fishermen who have just been issued new cards, have been paid three days amounting to Rs 2,190, making a total of Rs 451,870;

- (d) And finally, in Zone 4, 31 fishers have been paid four days of Bad Weather Allowance at the rate of Rs 365 per day, amounting to Rs 45,260.

And, I table the information.

Mr. J. N. Volbert: Merci, Mme. la présidente, étant donné que Rodrigues est autonome dans la pêche, j'ai fait une demande au Commissaire de.. en forme de question, bien sûre, au Commissaire de la Pêche. Le Rs 425 que touche les pêcheurs, si c'est possible de ramener la somme à Rs 500, d'ajouter Rs 75 pour que ces pêcheurs à quelque chose.

Mr. J. R. Payendee: Mrs. Chairperson, Madam, even if Rodrigues is autonomous, the Chief Commissioner said it, my colleagues said it, this is not, the Bad Weather Allowance is not a salary. It is governed (do you want me to finish or do you want me to continue?), the Bad Weather Allowance is not a salary, it comes from the Social Security where we are not autonomous. And, this decision is national and it is the same thing, it cannot be changed in Rodrigues.

Mr. F. A. Grandcourt: *It can be topped up*, s'ils ont la volonté de le faire, Mme. la présidente. Mme. la présidente, il y a ce souci, cette plainte plutôt de la part des pêcheurs qui disent qu'ils ne savent pas, arriver à la fin du mois combien de jour, dépendant des zones, combien de jour de mauvais temps ils auront et ce n'est pas compatible avec le nombre des fois même s'ils comptent aussi à la radio, ce n'est pas compatible avec l'argent qu'ils reçoivent. Donc, est-il possible, je demande au Commissaire, est-il possible de mettre une notice, que ce soit à travers la radio, je ne sais pas, c'est à lui de voir, à travers aussi sa commission quelque part dans les débarcadères pour que les pêcheurs puissent savoir exactement combien d'argent ils touchent, combien de jour et combien d'argent ils vont toucher chaque fin du mois ?

Mr. J. R. Payendee: Madam Chairperson, Madam, this is a social aid as I said. It is not a salary and.. (*laisse mo fini*).

Madam Chairperson: Order!

Mr. J. R. Payendee: This is a social aid and if someone wants to know how much money that person is supposed to get, he just has to follow. Because it is said everyday in the radio. So, they do not want to do anything. They do not want to sit down and get the money. Yes. So no, Madam Chairperson, we have got a lot of work to do. We have no time to spend like putting things on the

board saying this month you will get so much money, there is so many days of bad weather allowance. What is this? What are we trying to do in this island? Are we going to... *Ils ont droit, oui!*

Madam Chairperson: Minority Leader, you cannot put question from a sitting position, please.

Mr. J. R. Payendee: Ceux qui veulent savoir, il y a la Commission de l'Environnement qui est en face du collège de St. Barnabas et là les infos sont là clairs. Mais qu'est-ce que c'est que ça ? On va faire le tour de Rodrigues maintenant on va mettre des panneaux partout pour dire vous aurez tant d'argent ce mois-ci. *What is this ? If it was outside, I would say another word, but I prefer not to say it, Madam.*

Madam Chairperson: Next question.

Mr. J. N. Volbert: B/34, Madam Chair.

DISCOVERY RODRIGUES COMPANY LTD

(No. B/34) Mr. J.N. Volbert (Second Local Region Member for La Ferme) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to Discovery Rodrigues Company Ltd, he will obtain information therefrom to inform the House if there has been any recruitment process for the post of Manager thereof cum/ or Tourism Office recently indicating: -

- (a) the number of applications obtained therefor and the name of the selected candidate;
- (b) the salary and any other benefits attached to the post; and
- (c) to table the detailed composition of the selection board?

The Chief Commissioner: Madam Chairperson, as the House is aware, Discovery Rodrigues Company Ltd. is a private company incorporated in November 2006 and operational since 2007. The two main mandates of the company are, firstly, the management of two tourist sites, namely, Ile aux Coco and Caverne Patate, and secondly the promotion of Rodrigues island as a tourist destination.

I am informed that following the resignation of the former Managing Director of Discovery Rodrigues Company Ltd. in April 2019, a recruitment exercise was launched on the 29th April 2019 with the closing date set for

10th May 2019. I am further informed, Madam Chairperson, that at the closing date, 24 applications were received. Following a preliminary screening exercise, seven candidates were called for interview, out of which four candidates were from Mauritius. Hence, the interview was carried out in two batches, that is, in July for candidates domiciled in Rodrigues and in August for those domiciled in Mauritius, respectively.

Following the interviews, it was reported that out of the seven candidates called, four attended the interview was made following recommendation of the interview panel to the best qualified and experienced candidate in November 2013 (9). The selected candidate assumed duty on 13 January 2020.

I wish to point out Madam Chairperson, that the Manager of Discovery Rodrigues Limited, presently in post, holds a Bachelor Degree in Hospitality and Tourism Management, followed by a Master's Degree in Marketing Management and has more than 10 years of experience in the field of Tourism in Mauritius compared to the requirement of the post which stipulated that the candidate should possess a Degree in Management/Marketing/Tourism/Hospitality or any other related qualification acceptable to the board and have a minimum of five years' experience in the field of tourism or marketing.

With regard to part (b) of the question, Madam Chairperson, I am informed that the salary package and benefits of the actual Manager of Discovery Rodrigues Company Ltd. with her qualification and proven experience in the field.

Madam Chairperson, Discovery Rodrigues Company Limited, being a private company, it will not be appropriate to disclose the terms and conditions of its staff to the public.

With regard to part (c) of the question, I am informed that the selection board comprised of the full board of Directors of the Board of Discovery Company Ltd.

Mr. F. A. Grandcourt: Mme. la présidente, j'aimerais demander au Chef Commissaire. Discovery Rodrigues Limité à qui ? Quels sont les actionnaires de cette compagnie ?

The Chief Commissioner: C'est le RRA qui a mis sur pied ce Discovery Rodrigues. Donc, le Discovery Rodrigues et son fonctionnement vient du RRA.

Mr. F. A. Grandcourt: Justement, ça vient du RRA, ça veut dire, le propriétaire et l'Assemblée Régionale. Comment se fait-il, pourquoi est-ce qu'il ne peut pas nous dire là, combien est-ce qu'on paye le salaire de la candidate qui a été nommé à ce poste.

The Chief Commissioner: J'ai mentionné, Madame, que le Discovery Rodrigues est une compagnie privé – *private*.

Mr. F. A. Grandcourt: Transparency, where is transparency?

Mr. J.L.R. Perrine: Can the Commissioner confirm to this House whether this manager earns a package of Rs 95,000?

The Chief Commissioner: I do not have the information, Madam.

Mr. J.L.R. Perrine: Yes, this is not correct, Madame. This is not correct. Can the Commissioner inform the House, why if he said that *la compagnie* Discovery Rodrigues is a private company, can I ask him why the financial statement of the company is being tabled each year in this House? If it is a private company.

The Chief Commissioner: The Regulations of the RRA.

Mr. J.L.R. Perrine: *Yes, Madame. But this is a question of transparency.* Le Chef Commissaire nous martèle souvent avec la bonne gouvernance. S'il n'a rien à...

Madam Chairperson: Respected Member, I would like to draw your attention to Standing Order 21(4) – “An answer to a question cannot be insisted upon if the answer is refused by the Commissioner.” So, you put another question.

Mr. J.L.R. Perrine: Can the Chief Commissioner inform the House whether this candidate who has been selected as Manager is a Rodriguan born candidate?

The Chief Commissioner: *I have been told this, Madam Chairperson, that the Rodrigues Discovery is a private company. And, I can... Ce n'est pas possible pour moi de divulguer les noms ou les salaires ou les ceci, cela, hein.*

Mr. J.L.R. Perrine: What is the difference in figures between the salary from the ancient Manager, the ex-Manager of Discovery Rodrigues and the new one?

The Chief Commissioner: I cannot answer to the question.

Mr. F. A. Grandcourt: Mme. la présidente, le Discovery Rodrigues tombe sous la Commission de...

Madam Chairperson: Respected Member Perrine you will have the floor to put your question.

Mr. F. A. Grandcourt: Je reprends, je recommence. La Discovery Rodrigues Company Ltd. tombe sous la Commission du Tourisme. Alors, pourquoi est-ce qu'on a fait *advertisement open*. Pourquoi est-ce qu'on n'a pas demandé seulement aux Rodriguais parce que nous avons des Rodriguais qui sont capable. La qualification dont le Chef Commissaire a parlé, ben il y a des gens qui ont ça ici. Alors, pourquoi est-ce qu'on a fait ça *open* ? Pourquoi est-ce qu'on n'a pas fait ça *restricted* seulement pour les Rodriguais ?

The Chief Commissioner: Et il y a aussi des Rodriguais qui ont envoyés leurs candidatures. Il y a eu une interview chez les Mauriciens et chez les Rodriguais.

Mr. J.L.R. Perrine: Yes, est-ce que je peux demander au Chef Commissaire si les interviews concernant les candidats, les différents candidats ont été fait sur le sol Rodriguais ou ailleurs ?

The Chief Commissioner: Pour les Rodriguais c'est à Rodrigues, pour les Mauriciens c'est à Maurice.

Mr. J.L.R. Perrine: Combien de personne se sont déplacé pour faire cette interview à Maurice ?

The Chief Commissioner: Alors là, justement je ne peux donner une réponse au nombre de personne. Je sais que c'est le *board* qui a fait l'interview.

Mr. J.L.R. Perrine: Mme. la présidente, est-ce que le Commissaire peut nous dire, peut confirmer dans cette Chambre s'il y a eu sept membres de *board* qui ont fait le déplacement pour l'interview de cette candidate ?

The Chief Commissioner: Je ne peux pas répondre à cette question, Madame.

Mr. J.L.R. Perrine: Mme. la présidente, le DH est dans la Chambre. C'est elle qui s'occupe du dossier du tourisme. Il suffit de demander au DH de

répondre, de donner le petit papier. Le Chef Commissaire est-ce qu'il nous cache...

Madam Chairperson: You put your question now.

Mr. J.L.R. Perrine: Qu'est-ce que le Chef Commissaire nous cache derrière toutes ces non, ces refus de réponse ?

[Interruption]

Madam Chairperson: Next question.

Mr. F. A. Grandcourt: Mme. la présidente, n'est-il pas vrai que tous les membres du *board* sont parti à Maurice pour faire l'interview, c'est-à-dire, sept membres de Rodrigues pour aller faire l'interview...

Madam Chairperson: Minority Leader, this is question time, put your question.

Mr. F. A. Grandcourt: ...mais seulement trois candidats à Maurice ? *Sept pou trois, avek lotel, avek tou transport, avek billet.*

Madam Chairperson: Next question.

[Interruption]

Madam Chairperson: Order! Respected Member, Perrine.

INHABITANTS OF STE MARIE – NEW RUNWAY - PLAINE CORAIL AIRPORT

(No. B/35) Mr. J.N. Volbert (Second Local Region Member for La Ferme) asked the Chief Commissioner whether in regard to the resettlement of inhabitants of Ste. Marie in connection with the construction of a new runway at Plaine Corail Airport, he will state and table:

- (a) the name of any organisation(s) financing the project and the cost of each housing unit;
- (b) the number of families concerned indicating the surface area allotted to each family and exact location;

- (c) the contractor(s) undertaking the construction of houses therefor indicating the selection process therefor; and
- (d) if any of the sites allotted therefor was previously subject to any restriction for construction of residential dwelling?

The Chief Commissioner: Madam Chairperson, following a first consultative meeting held in July 2018, the inhabitants of Ste. Marie Village were apprised of the imminent construction of a new runway at Plaine Corail Airport whereby the Rodrigues Regional Assembly will facilitate and provide all means for their relocation for safety reasons and to guarantee a better living environment.

It has to be pointed out, Madam Chairperson, that a participatory approach was adopted since the onset of this project through various consultations. As a basic rule, the 15 concerned families were given the opportunity to choose the relocation site.

The Resettlement Process had to be in line with the European Union and the '*Agence Française de Développement*' (AFD) standards as it was a prerequisite to secure financing from the European Union and the *Agence Française de Développement*.

I wish to point out, Madam Chairperson, that the resettlement cost estimated at Rs 26 m. is being fully financed under the Rodrigues Regional Assembly's budget.

Madam Chairperson, following intensive consultations and discussions, a Resettlement Agreement was signed between the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and the inhabitants in August 2019.

It was mutually agreed, Madam Chairperson, that the Rodrigues Regional Assembly would finance the construction of new houses with all amenities for the inhabitants as a resettlement compensation instead of a cash compensation. The houses shall be of a minimum of 50 m² for those whose present building is less than 50 m² at least the same surface area as their existing ones.

Madam Chairperson, moreover this office has also provided the services of a Draughtsman for the design of house plans to facilitate the process of obtaining a Building and Land Use Permit. The services of a private engineer have also been retained to supervise construction works on behalf of the inhabitants and to ensure quality control over the works.

Madam Chairperson, it was expected that construction works would be completed in March 2020. However, with the advent of the Covid-19 pandemic and the confinement, the completion date is now expected by August 2020. As at date, it is reported that construction works are completed to 83%.

With regard to part (b) of the question, the total extent of land allotted to the 15 families is around 10,500 m² with a minimum of 600 m² per lot.

Following several site visits, eleven families have chosen to be relocated at Plaine Corail, two at Cascade Jean-Louis, one at Grand La Fouche Corail and one at Mt Cherie.

The surface area allotted to each family, the exact location and the cost of each housing unit is being tabled.

Madam Chairperson, a grant to meet the construction for each building is being given to each beneficiary who has in turn had to choose a preferred contractor from a list of 27 accredited registered local contractors in line with the Construction Industry Development Board. Payment is effected directly to the contractor upon request by the beneficiary at approved stage completion of works.

Madam, with regard to part (d) of the question, according to our records the allotted sites were not subject to any restriction for construction.

Mr. J.L.R. Perrine: Yes, Madam Chairperson, can I ask the Chief Commissioner to confirm to this House whether in the year 1995 there has been a trust fund house which has been pulled down belong to IAC?

[Interruption]

Madam Chairperson: Respected Member, can you be more precise about your question?

The Chief Commissioner: I am not aware, Madam Chairperson.

Mr. J.L.R. Perrine: I will make the information available to this House because I will not say the name of this person but anyway the initial of this person is IAC, a vulnerable family who has got a Trust Fund house which has been pulled down by the Minister for Rodrigues, by company Allied Builders

Ltd. To put on records. Can I ask the Chief Commissioner, *est-ce que je peux demander au Chef Commissaire...*

Madam Chairperson: Order. No-cross talking, please.

Mr. J.L.R. Perrine: Pourrais-je demander au Chef Commissaire concernant les facilités qui ont été alloués à des enfants qui ont 18 ans ou plus qui ont fait demande d'un bail résidentiel, si ces facilités-là ont été accordés à ces jeunes appartenant à ces 15 familles ou non ?

The Chief Commissioner: Nous ne sommes pas au courant, Madame, de cette demande des mineurs ou bien des 18 ans qui ont demandés des baux. Nous allons... *We take notice of the question.*

Mr. F. A. Grandcourt: Concernant les sites qui ont été choisis pour construire les maisons, j'aimerais demander au Chef Commissaire si c'est la commission qui a proposé à ces gens ou bien c'est eux qui ont choisi leurs sites afin de faire construire leurs maisons ?

The Chief Commissioner: Il me semble qu'eux-mêmes ils ont choisi. Puisqu'il y en a parmi qui ont au lieu de construire à Plaine Corail, ils ont été à Montagne Chéri ou Grande La Fouche Corail et ainsi de suite. C'est eux qui ont choisis.

Mr. J.L.R. Perrine: (*Zordi so zour zordi, pas prend li compte*). Et, le Chef Commissaire nous semble être ne pas être au courant de beaucoup de chose dans cette Chambre. Mais pour son information encore, je donne ces informations pour que ce soit on record, il y a deux maisons qui ont été construites. On n'est pas contre ces maisons qui ont été construites, hein qui ont été accordées *extended facilities to children over 18 years who have made an application for land lease. This is okay. But we would ask the Chief Commissioner whether these facilities could be granted to villages in the vicinity, young people above 18 to build a house in the vicinity? Can he extend these facilities?*

The Chief Commissioner: I take notice of the question.

Madam Chairperson: Next question.

Mr. J. N. Volbert: B/36, Madam Chair.

**RESETTLEMENT OF VILLAGERS OF STE. MARIE TO
LA BOUCHERIE/PLAINE CORAIL**

(No. B/36) Mr. J.N. Volbert (Second Local Region Member for La Ferme) asked the Commissioner responsible for Agriculture and Others whether, in regard to the resettlement of villagers of Ste. Marie to La Boucherie/Plaine Corail, he will state and table: -

- (a) the list of registered farmers from all concerned locations together with their respective strength of livestock;
- (b) the area available in the vicinity for farming detailing on any study and/or recommendations regarding the impact of merging the two flocks; and
- (c) if his Commission conducted any meeting with farmers of both villages, indicating if yes, when and in the negative why?

The Commissioner for Environment and Others (Mr. J. R. Payendee): Madam Chairperson, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that as per available database, the number of farmers and associated actual strength is as follows:

Localities	No. of Farmers	Strength		
		Cattle	Goats	Sheep
Ste. Marie	14	8	123	227
Plaine Corail	17	76	147	113
Cascade Jean Louis	81	336	572	424

Madam Chairperson, for ethical reason it is not appropriate to disclose the names of the farmers together with the number of animals they possessed.

Madam Chairperson, with regard to part (b), the total area of land available from Les Salines to Cité Perdu is estimated to be 86 hectares. My commission is already aware of the problems that may arise when merging flocks of animals together. As such, prior to the movement of the animals close monitoring will be done by the Veterinary Services of my commission to ascertain the health of the animals. A Movement Certificate will be issued to authorise movement of animals that are in good health in view of minimizing the risk associated with the merging of flocks. If ever, there are animals that are not in good health and pose a risk of transmitting diseases, Veterinary Services will not issue Movement Permit.

With regard to part (c), Madam Chairperson, my commission has participated in two meetings and several sites visits organised by the Chief

Commissioner's Office at Ste. Marie Community Centre in connection with the Airport Development Project. A project piloted by the Chief Commissioner's Office.

There have been consultations to explain to the farmers the relocation of their stocks of animals as a result of airport extension project and the implications thereof. The farmers have been given the opportunity to choose the new places for the relocation of their animals. Madam Chairperson, I am tabling the information.

Mr. J. N. Volbert: *Yes, Madam Chairperson, j'aurais aimé demander au Commissaire étant donné que la superficie existante pour les animaux a été envahie par l'espèce piquant loulou, est-ce qu'il compte faire le nécessaire pour enlever ces piquants loulous ?*

Mr. J. R. Payendee: Bien sûr, Madam Chairperson. On ne va pas donner des terrains à des gens comme ça. Bien sûr, toutes aides qu'on peut apporter au niveau de la commission sera fait.

Mr. J. N. Volbert: Je peux savoir du Commissaire si des rencontres ont eu lieu entre les éleveurs de La Boucherie/Plaine Corail et la Commissaire de l'Agriculture ?

Mr. J. R. Payendee: Oui, Madam Chairperson, malheureusement je n'ai pas le plan avec moi, je voulais l'emmener mais c'est un peu large, on a eu des réunions avec ces gens-là. Et, en même temps, il y a eu un *survey* de tous les sites pour distribuer des terres à tous ces gens. L'endroit où on va distribuer des terres ce ne sera pas forcément que pour les gens de Ste. Marie, il y a aussi des applications qui ont été fait à la Commission de l'Agriculture par des gens la boucherie et ça aussi ça a été pris en compte et le plan a été bien fait et bientôt la distribution sera faite.

Mr. J. N. Volbert: Can we know whether farmers from Ste. Marie will be provided with animal pen?

Mr. J. R. Payendee: Oui, Madam Chairperson, tous ceux... normalement le projet on ne veut pas faire du mal à ces gens sachant que déjà ils sortent de... on les a bougés de leurs sites de naissance et, toutes les facilités qui été là, on va même... sera reconstruit et en même temps on va peut-être même améliorer ce qu'ils avaient avant pour venir en ligne avec la vision de l'Assemblée Régionale, c'est-à-dire, au lieu de... ces gens-là auront l'occasion comme ils faisaient avant peut-être lâcher leurs animaux un peu partout, on va

leur donner les facilités qu'il faut pour que les animaux soient vraiment fermés et arriver à la technique de *cut and carry*.

Mr. J. N. Volbert: Est-ce que le Commissaire compte étendre cette facilité au... surtout aux éleveurs de Plaine Corail ?

Mr. J. R. Payendee: C'est ce que j'ai dit, Madam Chairperson. Le terrain en entier, toute la zone a été *surveyed* et sera donner/partager, les gens ont déjà commencés à choisir leurs parcelles, et en même temps les facilités, ça a été dit dans le Budget... le Chef Commissaire la dit clairement – on va emmener toutes aides possible à tous les gens, pas seulement de la boucherie, tous les gens qui font des projets par rapport à la sécurité alimentaire, souverainement alimentaire.

Mr. J. N. Volbert: Etant donné qu'avec l'arrivée des familles du village de Ste. Marie, il y aura un surplus d'animaux et on a actuellement le problème d'eau pour approvisionner les animaux. Est-ce qu'on a des sources d'eau qui sont à l'abandon à la boucherie ? Est-ce que le Commissaire peut nous dire s'il compte venir nettoyer, donner les facilités aux éleveurs pour nettoyer ces points d'eaux ?

Mr. J. R. Payendee: Pas seulement nettoyer, Madam Chairperson. Il y aura même des endroits comme on a fait un peu ailleurs où on va faire des bassins pour donner des facilités à ces gens pour avoir de l'eau pour leurs animaux.

Madam Chairperson: Next question.

Mr. J.L.R. Perrine: Yes, Madam Chairperson, B/37.

MAINTENANCE – TOURISM SITES

(No. B/37) **Mr. J. L.R. Perrine (Second Island Region Member)** asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the maintenance of all tourism sites around Rodrigues, he will state and table:

- (a) if there is a team therefor and, in the affirmative, to detail the composition thereof indicating the date same was established and the tasks attributed thereto;
- (b) if the sites of Trou D 'Argent, Caverne Patate and Ile aux Cocos are fully equipped in terms of equipment and infrastructures for the safety of the visitors; and

- (c) the number of visitors per site from January 2017 to December 2019?

Madam Chairperson, with regard to part (a) of the question, I wish to inform the House that the maintenance of tourism sites around Rodrigues is being carried out by the Commission for Public Infrastructure upon request of my Commission, whereas Rod Clean Company Ltd is responsible for the regular cleaning of the sites. However, the maintenance of the two main tourism sites, that is, Ile aux Cocos and Caverne Patate, rests under the responsibility of Discovery Rodrigues Company Ltd.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I wish to point out that the site of Trou D'Argent being a natural beauty, needs to be preserved from infrastructural development. This site is a well-known cove valued for its remoteness and its sandy beach. It is mostly visited by nature lovers and hikers and is accessible either from Graviers, Saint Francois or Montagne Cabris Est. It is one of the sites which depicts the authenticity of the island. Thus, in view of protecting and preserving its natural status while improving its access, my commission is working in close collaboration with a well-known French expert in "*Randonnée Pédestre*" and the "*Association Guides Randonnées Rodrigues*" for the marking of five hiking paths around Rodrigues as per international hiking norms. Trou D'Argent falls under one of the five hiking trails identified for this project.

I am informed, Madam Chairperson, that an Expression of Interest will be launched for the manufacture and installation of signboards for the five hiking paths according to international hiking standards. Therefore, the features that my commission is planning for this site are mainly proper marking with appropriate signage such as; the name of the different bays located in the region, directions, code of conduct of visitors with regard to waste and security distance from the cliff to prevent accidents.

Madam Chairperson, with regard to the sites of Caverne Patate and Ile aux Cocos, both tourism sites are actually being managed by Discovery Rodrigues Co. Ltd. There are basic infrastructures on both sites namely a small office for the selling of tickets, storage of equipment and toilet facility at Caverne Patate. Whereas Ile aux Cocos has one main building as storage and shelter for the visitors and tourism operators, a watchman quarters and toilet facilities.

As announced in the last budget, my commission is undertaking major upgrading works at both sites. The development at Caverne Patate will be in

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two folds, that is, the interior and exterior part of the site. The scope of works for the interior is as follows:

- (a) Construction and installation of pathway as per international norms for the safety and security of the visitors and to reduce the footprints impact of visitors on the site.
- (b) Appropriate electrical and lighting installation which in the long term will be more sustainable compared to the torches being used.
- (c) It is to be noted that same has been designed by an International Cave Expert and will be carried out under his supervision, in view of protecting the natural status of the site.

The exterior part of Caverne Patate will have the following features:

- a) Appropriate toilets block for visitors and staff;
- b) A ticket counter;
- c) A souvenir shop with appropriate space for the local entrepreneurs to display and sell their products; and
- d) Appropriate access and parking space.

I am informed that the tender for the development of the exterior of Caverne Patate was launched on the 31st January 2020 and closed on the 11th March 2020. I am further informed that since no bids were received, the design is being reworked out by the consultant.

With regard to the Interior of Caverne Patate, I am informed that the bidding document is being finalised and expected to be launched in July 2020.

Madam Chairperson, with regard to Ile aux Cocos, the project will be implemented in two phases, that is, the embarkation point at Pointe Diable and the facilities at Ile aux Cocos itself.

The works at Pointe Diable will comprise of the following amenities: -

- a) Shelter for the visitors;
- b) Locker rooms for staff;
- c) Toilets; and
- d) Landscaping of driveway and parking.

The development at Ile aux Cocos will include the following:

- a) Individual kiosks;
- b) Upgrading of watchman quarters; and
- c) Toilet block

Being a natural reserve, this development is being worked out in close consultation with all partners, such as, the Commission for Environment, the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation, boat operators amongst others.

Madam Chairperson, I am informed that the tenders for both Pointe Diable and Ile aux Cocos were to be closed on the 30th of March 2020. No bid was received for Ile aux Cocos project. The closing for Pointe Diable was extended to 19th June 2020.

I am informed that one bid was received and same is being evaluated. However, with respect to Ile aux Cocos, I am informed that the design is actually being reworked out by the consultant prior to the launching of a fresh tender.

Madam Chairperson, I wish to inform the House that in the context of the Tourism Alternative Livelihood Scheme, employees of the Tourism Sector are involved in the cleaning of hiking paths and restoration of islets and other reserves including the Ile aux Cocos and Trou D'Argent sites. The site of Caverne Patate has been cleaned by the guides of Discovery Rodrigues and its reopening is scheduled for the 1st of July 2020.

With reference to part (c) of the question, I wish to inform the House that the number of visitors recorded for Caverne Patate and Ile aux Cocos for the period January 2017 to December 2019 are 22,747 and 13,047 respectively. However, Trou D'Argent, being an open public site and beach, no record is available with respect to the number of visitors thereat.

Mr. J.L.R. Perrine: Yes, I have asked for the tabling of these documents. Can I have a copy of it? *J'ai demandé que les documents sont table, est-ce que je peux avoir une copie du document ? Pardon?* Madam Chairperson, may I have a copy of these documents tabled? I request for it, please.

Madam Chairperson: Your question is mentioned state and table?

Mr. J.L.R. Perrine: Yes.

[Interruption]

Mr. J.L.R. Perrine: This is not correct. Can I ask the Chief Commissioner why he do not want to table these documents?

[Interruption]

Madam Chairperson: Respected Members, yes, an answer cannot be insisted upon. So, if the Chief Commissioner does not give the answer so, you cannot insist on it.

Mr. J.L.R. Perrine: I am not insisting, Madam. My question was clear. Right at the beginning, the question...

Madam Chairperson: Respected Member, the question has been put and answered. So, if you have...

Mr. J.L.R. Perrine: I need documents to compare.

Madam Chairperson: I am sorry; we cannot entertain your request.

Mr. J.L.R. Perrine: Okay, okay. Thank you.

Madam Chairperson: So, put your question.

Mr. J.L.R. Perrine: May I ask the Chief Commissioner when these beautiful projects that he mentioned will be implemented especially at Caverne Patate and Ile aux Cocos?

The Chief Commissioner: Well, I have mentioned this in my reply, Madam. My reply is clear. It is very clear. May I read my answer again? *Mais nou koze ban tender, ine koze ban tender.*

Madam Chairperson: Respected Member, you cannot put a question from a sitting position, please.

Mr. J.L.R. Perrine: Madam Chairperson, I understand that the Chief Commissioner do not want to answer any of my question. Fair enough. But I will continue to put again question for people here to know and also the press...

Madam Chairperson: Come with your question now.

Mr. J.L.R. Perrine: I am coming, Madam Chairperson, because this is not correct. Can I ask the Chief Commissioner where is the project for lighting of the Caverne Patate proposed in the Budget of 2016-2017?

The Chief Commissioner: I have given the answer in my reply. The scope of works for interior is as follows:

- (a) Construction and installation of pathway as per international norms for the safety and security of the visitors and to reduce the footprints impact of visitors on the site.
- (b) Appropriate electrical and lighting installation which in the long term will be more sustainable compared to the torches being used.
- (c) It is to be noted that same has been designed by an International Cave Expert and will be carried out under his supervision, in view of protecting the natural status of the site.

The exterior part of Caverne Patate will have the following features:

- (a) Appropriate toilets block for visitors and staff;
- (b) A ticket counter;
- (c) A souvenir shop with appropriate space for the local entrepreneurs to display and sell their products; and
- (d) Appropriate access to parking.

Madam Chairperson: I will invite the Respected Member, to be more attentive next time.

[Interruption]

The Chief Commissioner: I continue. I am informed that the tender for the development of the exterior of Caverne Patate was launched on the 31st January 2020 and closed in March 2020. I am further informed that since no bids were received, the design is being reworked out by the consultant.

With regard to the Interior of Caverne Patate, I am informed that the bidding document is being finalised and expected to be launched in July 2020.

Mr. J.L.R. Perrine: Can I ask the Chief Commissioner to inform the House about the *équipement de protection individuel* for workers working at Caverne Patate and other sites of Rodrigues under the aegis of Discovery of Rodrigues and whether there is equipment for group? Can he inform us about these equipment, whether they are in good condition?

The Chief Commissioner: I need notice of the question.

Madam Chairperson: Respected Members, I suspend the House for one hour for lunch.

At 12.38 p.m., the sitting was suspended for one hour.

On resuming at 1.46 p.m. with the Chairperson in the Chair.

Madam Chairperson: Next question.

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: Yes, Madam Chairperson, B/38.

DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS – WATER SECTOR – RODRIGUES

(No. B/38) The Second Island Region Member (Mr. J. L. R. Perrine) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner in regard to the development projects in the water sector in Rodrigues, he will state and table on:

- (a) the total sum disbursed for water production from desalination plants, surface water and borehole from January 2014 to end 2019;
- (b) if there is any agreement signed with another stakeholder for the running of any desalination plant in Rodrigues;
- (c) the status of the desalination plant of Songes as at date indicating the daily production capacity, daily cost of operations highlighting the cost for rejection of brine in the lagoon, respectively; and
- (d) the status of the desalination plant of Anse Goeland/Baie Malgache as at date?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Madam Chairperson,

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- (a) the total amount disbursed from January 2014 to end of 2019 for desalination plants, surface water production and boreholes are Rs 297,599,867, Rs 3,942,056 and Rs 11,168,358 respectively.

I would like to add that these investments have allowed and increase in daily production of about 3959 m³ excluding an outstanding volume of 1000 m³ for Anse Goeland Desalination Plant.

The details thereof are being tabled.

- (b) As regard to part (b), there is no signed agreement with any stakeholder for running of any desalination plant in Rodrigues. The desalination plants at Pointe Venus, Caverne Bouteille and Songes are operated by the staffs of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly. The desalination plant at Pointe Coton is in the Defects Notification Period and as per the contract, the plant is operated by the RRA staffs under the supervision of the Contractor's personnel during that period.
- (c) For part (c), the project for the desalination plant at Songes has been completed and was taken over on 01 October 2019. Before confinement, the plant was operational with a daily production capacity of 500 m³ treated water. The daily cost of operations for the plant is Rs 13,500.

However, since the month of May, the plant is on standby mode as inspection and servicing of the high pressure pump by supplier from Mauritius is being delayed due to flight restriction in this COVID 19 context.

It shall be noted that the diluted brine from the plant is rejected in an absorption borehole. There is no specific operation cost as such for the brine rejection, which only uses the infrastructure built as part of the desalination project.

- (d) The works for Baie Malgache desalination plant consisted of the supply, installation, testing and commissioning of a desalination plant with two reverse osmosis trains each of capacity 500m³/day with associated mechanical, electrical and plumbing works. As at date, the supply and installation of equipment have been practically completed.

However, during cyclone Gelena in February 2019, the jetty of 30m constructed to support the pumping main for water intake under the civil works contract was destroyed. Since much delays had accrued during the execution of the project, mainly due to the contractor's slow rate of progress and other issue, the project has been taken over.

The Commission is implementing the construction of an infrastructure for water intake with in-house resources.

The intake pumps and associated cables will be installed by the contractor upon completion of the intake infrastructure for commissioning and subsequent operation of the desalination plant. The said activity will depend on resumption of flights to Rodrigues & deployment of the contractors' personnel to Rodrigues and also on the resumption of international flights since the manufacture of the desalination plant is from Greece. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: Yes, thank you. Madam Chairperson, can I ask the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether he has completely 'make' use of all money allocated to his Commission from 2014... 2017 to 2019 with regards to estimates in the budget?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Madam Chairperson, I think that it is quite difficult for me to have the data from financial year 2017 up to now but as per information given, the respected Member could have an idea of the value that has been injected in the water sector so far. But to give details as regard to each and every financial year as such, I do not have the information at hand right now.

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: Can the Deputy Chief Commissioner inform us where does matter stand with regards to a recommendation made by the Ministry of Finance with regards to setting up of a structure to review and implement water pricing in Rodrigues? Can he inform the House where does matter stand?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Madam Chairperson, it could be a recommendation of the Ministry of Finance and I think it has appeared also in the Audit Report of last time. Yet, it remains the policy of this Government to decide on it. It remains the policy of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and the Regional Government, the Executive Council to decide or not whether to introduce a tariff for water in Rodrigues. We will come to the question when the matter arises.

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: Yes, does the Commissioner find it normal that actually, households are paying about Rs 22 for the tariff of water for one year... Rs 122 for the distribution of water. And whereas the hotels also are paying the same amount. Can the Commissioner inform the House why?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Madam Chairperson, this has been the policy of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly since its inception that the household, each price is paid only at the cost of Rs20. And, I should add also that... Rs 22. Rs 22 per day. Rs 22 per price per year. Yes. And, I should also add that many of the consumers are not paying either this price. I am sure even many of the Members of this House may not have their price paid up to now if I am going to check it at my office.

[Interruptions]

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Yes, there is the possibility. Nevertheless, as the respected Member has mentioned, it is true that consumers as well as commercial activities are paying the same price. In any country that you go, there is a difference in tariff as regard to this, as regard to the price per metre cube of water that is paid, it is not paid normally in other countries with respect to the price, the prices but it is paid with respect to the metre cube, the amount of metre cube of water that one 'consume'. For this tariff to be introduced, there should be the basic structural...structure that should be put in place. First... Yes, there should be the structure. It can be done also by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, yes. Not necessarily a company but there should be the necessary Finance Department. There should be a department that is going to collect the data as it is done for the CEB and of course, there should be a department that is going to issue the amount to be paid to each and every consumer.

So, there is a whole structure that has to be set but for first and foremost, I believe that we will come to that point when we will be able to give water on a constant regular basis to the consumers. Because I consider that as at now, there are many investments that has been made by each and every consumer as regard to reserve and stock capacity that are made at their particular place. So, when we are going to provide as we have decided during this mandate to bring up water once a week, that we have already in fact and, that was said in the budget speech of 2020/2021. In fact, we targeted seven reservoirs. We have already started with the setting up of what was said in the budget speech. Once we have been able to give the guarantee to the people that they are going to have water on a regular basis, then, we will think of the introduction of a tariff.

The Minority Leader: Allow me to put one supplementary question. So, what about the... Where does matter stand regarding the running of Reverse Osmosis Plants by a private partner? He did mention this last time in his speech. So, I would like to ask the Commissioner where does matter stand.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Madam Chairperson, in fact, it was stated in financial budget speech of 2019/2020 that we are going to look a strategic partner for the operationalisation as such for the desalination plant to run it more efficient. Actually, we have a consultancy which is being helped... which are being provided by the help of the AFD and in this strategic plan that is going to be worked out by the Consultant, there is the term of reference of how we are going to proceed ahead with that working partnership under a PPP partnership.

The Minority Leader: Mrs. Chairperson, Madam, since there is another Commissioner who is responsible for water, so, why not the revival of the water company?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: It is already closed down and I believe that it has already been wound up by the... It has already been wound up. The company no longer exists. As such, I believe that each and every Government that comes in the Rodrigues Regional Assembly has its own policy with respect to different sectors that is under the fourth schedule of the RRA, this Government opts... opted rather in 2012 to get away with the Rodrigues Water Company and I do not think it is fit right now in 2020 *pou ale relev les morts*, Madam Chairperson.

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: Madam Chairperson, in your strategy of increasing water production in Rodrigues, you mentioned in your budget speech that desilting of dams will be one component in this battle. Can you inform the House how many have your office desilt, where and give the capacity of each in terms of storage and distribution daily?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: The desilting process is ongoing. In fact, it is ongoing. I have already given you the information as regard to the amount that has been spent since as per the question, the amount of money that has been spent for the desilting. But desilting is an ongoing process. For example, after each and every heavy rainfall, there is desilting of Pavé La Bonté Dam, all reservoirs even Rivière Cocos, even Mourouk, these are the reservoirs that are continuously being desilted and that needs to be continuously desilted. Now, if you are referring to other reservoirs that need to be desilted, I think that it was clearly mentioned in the budget speech of 2020/2021. We are going to

focus together with the Commission for Agriculture to go along the desilting of all those reservoirs/dam which is along Rivière Pistache.

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: Yes, I think this does not concern only Rivière Pistache. At English Bay, you have one reservoir which needs to be desilt. since these inhabitants of this region is using this water for irrigation and for other things. Yes, can I ask the Deputy Chief Commissioner since 2017, can you state and table in report to the House that what framework has your Commission put in place for the regulation, management and development in the water sector to match demand and supply in the long term?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: You are... You mean that as regard to the framework, you will see and you will note that as far as possible, we are consolidating the organigram of the Water Unit Sector of my Commission. We are improving. There has been I think, since 2017, the introduction in the trade of an... Operating Manager in the Water Unit. And, of course, there have been other grade which is not in my mind that has been recruited along the years. This is why I stated it in my answer the investment that has been brought about by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly so far. It has caused an increase in daily production of 3959 m³ per day. This is why I am going to spend some time on it, Madam Chairperson. And the total amount that has been spent if you add it up, it amounts to about Rs 312 m. This includes desalination plant, boreholes and surface water, causing an increase in daily capacity of 3959. Imagine yourself which I consider will have to come of course with respect to the investment of a big reservoir in Rodrigues, if we are to go for a big reservoir, say like Anse Baleine or Pavé La Bonté, it is going to cost us no less than Rs 600 m. and not... Yes, Rs 600 m. to provide a daily production of some 300-400 m³ of water per day. Because if we see the case of Anse Raffin, with...

Yeah, it is not in terms of opportunity cost. This is why I have been explaining this House in terms of opportunity cost and investment that is made with respect to desalination plant, the opportunity cost in the desalination plant is more because we have invested Rs 297 m. and we are getting almost 3000 m³ of water per day. But if we are to invest Rs 600 m. for a capacity, a dam capacity of 100000 m³, we will be able to exploit that water at a rate of only 300 to 400 m³ per day. Yes. So, the matter was so urgent that we have to put the money where it is most needed, Madam Chairperson. Besides, why? At the first instance, we have focused where we should have result to reduce the suffering in the Water Sector.

The Minority Leader: Madame la présidente, à long terme, il faut calculer aussi le nombre de patients qu'il y aura par rapport aux gens qui boivent de l'eau dessalée. Ça, c'est une chose. Il parle de 300-600 millions

mais après, combien ça va nous coûter à l'hôpital en terme de médicaments ? Bon, il faut aussi penser là-dessus parce que les gens ne veulent surtout pas boire cette eau. Donc, concernant le *Osmosun Desalination Plant*, j'aimerais demander au Commissaire qui est plus avantageux, *Osmosun* ou bien le *Reverse Osmosis* normal en terme de production et de coût de production ?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Yes. The Member has stated about the question of health. It is important, very important issue that we have to focus because what we may be investing today which we consider as right may have effects afterward and we have to look into it. But even though, Madam Chairperson, whenever we are exploiting surface water, is it not true that we also use flocculent like in the desalination plant? Yes, we use flocculent. We use chemicals, exploiting surface water. Exploiting surface water also includes, Madam Chairperson, the use of chemicals. Yes, Aluminum Sulfate and the other chemicals which are also used in the desalination plant. I forgot your question. What was it? Osmosun, yes. The Osmosun Project, it was a project, a pilot project to see how efficient it is for the running of a desalination plant by using solar energy. I consider that the result has been conclusive because based on the model, we are producing some 80m³ of water per day but then, we can somehow *bascule* the plant on 'a' electricity grid at night which gives us a total of 240 m³ of water per day. So, those '*sera*' in our policy and based on the result that has been obtained from Osmosun, this is why in line with the first question that was asked by the respected Member regarding the collaboration that we want to have with the partnership, private partnership, we want the private partnership to help us in converting the existing water desalination plant to be run by solar energy or other renewable energy that is available here in Rodrigues. This is our vision.

Mr. J. N. Volbert: *Can we know whether the RRA, si on peut savoir si le RRA a eu des difficultés en ce qui concerne the setting up of the new desalination plant at Songes où le Central Procurement Board a demandé de ne pas aller de l'avant avec ce projet-là ?*

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: The project, Madam Chairperson, of the Songes Desalination Plant was under the aegis of the Commission for Agriculture under special fund that was provided by the *l'Union Européenne*. As far as I have read from the Audit Report, I think that there was a sum if I remember well. The value was quite... was above but I do not have the required information but the contract was awarded by the Commission for Agriculture.

Madam Chairperson: Respected Members, the table has been advised that PQ B/54 has been withdrawn. Next question.

Mr. J. R. Augustin: B/39, Madam Chair.

**MANAGEMENT OF OUTER LAGOON BOATS & “LA MAISON
DES PÊCHEURS” - PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP (PPP)**

(No. B/39) The Fourth Island Region Member (Mr. J. R. Augustin) asked the Commissioner for Fisheries and Others whether, in regard to the measures stated in Budget Speech 2020/2021 regarding the management of the five outer lagoon boats as well as “La Maison des Pêcheurs” by a public private partnership (PPP), he will, for the benefit of the House, state and table the number of solicited and/or interested potential collaborators detailing on:

- (a) their respective background including relevant area of professional activity and experience thereof; and
- (b) if any Memorandum of Understanding has been signed by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and any other party specifying the dates and content thereof; and
- (c) the number of Rodriguan fishers that will be involved/recruited in connection therewith, if any?

The Commissioner for Fisheries and Others (Mr. J. R. Payendee): Madam Chairperson, I wish to draw the attention of the Honourable Member, that this particular measure announced in the budget speech 2020/2021 by the Chief Commissioner will be initiated at the beginning of the corresponding financial year which starts on the 1st of July, of next July.

Mr. J. R. Augustin: Yes, can we know from the Commissioner before the application of this PPP, if the Commission has already made an advisory at *La Maison des Pêcheurs* and the five boats concerned?

Mr. J. R. Payendee: As I said, Madam Chairperson, this measure will be... will start... Procedures for this measure will start next month.

Madam Chairperson: Next question.

Mr. J. R. Augustin: B/40.

**VEHICLES ATTACHED – HEALTH DEPARTMENT
– RODRIGUES**

(No. B/40) The Fourth Island Region Member (Mr. J. R. Augustin) asked the Commissioner for Health and Others whether, in regard to all vehicles attached to the Health Department in Rodrigues and the manning thereof, he will, for the benefit of the House, state and table the:

- (a) complete list thereof, including rented vehicles, indicating the number thereof attached to the different area health centres, Queen Elizabeth Hospital and Plaine Corail Airport, respectively, together with their different scope of work;
- (b) number of ambulances which are currently broken down;
- (c) amount of money disbursed for rental of vehicles since 2017 to date; and
- (d) total amount of money paid for overtime for the operation thereof for the year 2019/2020?

The Commissioner for Health and Others (Mr. S. P. Roussety): Madam Chairperson, I am tabling the information requested at part (a).

At part (b), there are four ambulances which are currently in a state of breakdown, awaiting repairs at the Mechanical Workshop.

As regards to part (c) of the question, I must inform the House that since 2017 to date, my Commission has paid a total sum of Rs 6,832,128 in terms of rental of vehicles to enable the smooth running of the Health Services. This amount includes the rental of lorry services for transportation of medical wastes from Health Centres throughout Rodrigues to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital for incineration and the service of a water lorry to supply water for dialysis.

I am also tabling the details of expenditure incurred. It is already in the envelope that I just submitted.

As regard to part (d), the total amount of overtime paid to Drivers for the operation of the two 4 x 4 vehicles is Rs 289,903.37 for period July 2019 to May 2020.

Mr. J. R. Augustin: Yes, Madam Chair, can we know from the Commissioner when did the Commission purchase a new ‘ambulances’?

Mr. S. P. Roussety: Madam Chairperson, no new ambulance has been purchased but we have awarded a contract but the supplier has not been able to furnish, to provide all the ambulance and, we are relaunching the tender.

Mr. L. J. Von-Mally: Madam Chair, can I know from the respected Commissioner whether among these ambulances, there is any SAMU vehicle available for the public?

Mr. S. P. Roussety: No, Madam Chairperson.

Mr. L. J. Von-Mally: Can I know from the respected Commissioner, this is amazing, in a country, in an island like Rodrigues, we do not have a SAMU and this is very dangerous for the health of this population. Can we know whether he will, very soon, he will urgently purchase one SAMU for this population?

Mr. S. P. Roussety: Yes, Madam Chairperson, it is in the programme of the Chief Commissioner 2017/2022. We will purchase the SAMU ambulance.

Mr. L. J. Von-Mally: Well, this is vague, Madam Chairperson. Can I know from the respected Commissioner what is the timeframe? When can we tell the public when we will be having a SAMU at their disposal in Rodrigues?

Mr. S. P. Roussety: I have already answered the question, Madam Chairperson. It will be before the end of our mandate 2022.

Mr. J. R. Augustin: Yes, Madam. The Commissioner just gave the answer for part (d), amount overtime paid only for rental vehicles but for the Ambulance Drivers and Assistant Ambulance Drivers, how much has been paid as overtime for the year 19/20?

Mr. S. P. Roussety: Madam Chairperson, I need notice of the question. I have no figures with me.

Madam Chairperson: Next question.

Mr. J. R. Augustin: B/41.

**ACQUISITION OF MEDICAL EQUIPMENT
– MAURITIUS/ABROAD – MARCH/APRIL 2020
– COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

(No. B/41) The Fourth Island Region Member (Mr. J. R. Augustin) asked the Commissioner for Health and Others whether, he will, in regard to the acquisition of medical equipment from Mauritius or abroad in March/April 2020 in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, state and table, for the benefit of the House, the: -

- (a) total amount of money paid therefor;
- (b) detailed list thereof as transported to Rodrigues by the different trips of the Dornier and MCGS Barracuda, respectively; and
- (c) different types of medical equipment handed to the different stakeholders involved, including in the health sector, in the related disease prevention process?

The Commissioner for Health and Others (Mr. J. R. Payendee): Madam Chairperson, with your permission, I would like to answer B/41 and B/57 as it relates... make the same subject matters.

Madam Chairperson: Yes, please, proceed.

The Commissioner for Health and Others (Mr. J. R. Payendee): Madam Chairperson, as I have explained earlier in my speech during budget debate, my Commission took several measures since January 2020 with the view to strengthen our preparedness against infectious diseases, particularly Covid-19, which unfortunately remains a threat for us.

One of the several aspects which we have considered is the availability of appropriate medical equipment.

My Commission has purchased a total of Rs 4,832,613.00 in terms of medical equipment. These include the Gene Xpert for PCR – Covid19 test. Most of them have already reached Rodrigues through different trips of the Dornier and on board of the MCGS Barracuda vessel.

Madam Chairperson, however, there are six equipment which the suppliers have not yet been able to deliver due to the prevailing of lockdown context in several countries. These equipment comprise of one Blood Gas Analyzer, two Handheld Pulse Oximeter, two Defibrillators, two B-pap Machines, one Portable Ventilator and one Ventilator. These equipment amounts to an additional sum of Rs 2,703,800. They are expected to be delivered shortly, most probably during July 2020. I am informed that the Defibrillator, the B-pap machines and the Ventilators have already reached

Mauritius and will be delivered once commercial flight of Air Mauritius to Rodrigues resumes, to enable the suppliers' representative to travel to Rodrigues for their installation and commissioning.

I am tabling the requested information for part (b) and (c) of B/41 and B/57 in two copies for the information of the respected Members, authors of the two questions.

Mr. J. R. Augustin: Yes, Madam Chair, can we know from the Commissioner whether a cardiac monitor has been purchased also in these medical equipments?

Mr. S. P. Roussety: Yes, Madam Chairperson, there are four units of cardiac monitor amounting to Rs 483,000 for the ICU and the Male Ward. Received by the Dornier on the 25 March 2020.

Mr. J. R. Augustin: Concerning the ventilator, can we know from the Commissioner how many we have at now in the hospital?

Mr. S. P. Roussety: At now, in the hospital and the area health centres, we have five ventilators.

Mr. J. R. Augustin: Yes, concerning the isolation centre at Mont Lubin, can we know the list of equipment available at this isolation centre?

Mr. S. P. Roussety: Yes, Madam Chairperson. There are medical equipments at Mont Lubin. Oxygen regulator, Video laryngoscope and... Yes.

Mr. L. J. Von-Mally: Yes, Madam Chair, thank you. I would like to ask the respected Commissioner well, if ever the Covid-19 Pandemic reach the offshore, I would like to ask the Commissioner what about the number of mask that we have here actually? Whether you have sufficient stock to deal with this pandemic if ever it reaches our shore.

Mr. S. P. Roussety: Madam Chairperson, we have masks for our staff at the hospital but there are private pharmacies who have masks at their disposal for selling to public.

Mr. J. R. Augustin: Yes, Madam Chair. From this medical equipment purchased, there is no perfusor in this list of equipment. Can we know from the Commissioner whether there is not a need to purchase a perfusor?

Mr. S. P. Roussety: Madam Chairperson, the list that I have tabled, it was from the Specialist of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital which has recommended that list of equipment. So, I do not see a perfusor, what it is, and I will look into it.

Madam Chairperson: Next question!

Mr. Z. Félicité: Madame la présidente, B/42.

**CYCLONES GELENA & JOANINHA 2019
– GREENHOUSES DAMAGED AND/OR DESTROYED**

(No. B/42) The Fifth Island Region Member (Mr. Z. Félicité) asked the Commissioner for Agriculture and Others whether, in regard to the passage of cyclones Gelena and Joaninha in 2019, he will, for the benefit of the House, state the number of greenhouses damaged and/or destroyed thereby together with their respective location, if any, and the sum disbursed to compensate these victims, if any?

The Commissioner for Agriculture and Others (Mr. J. R. Payendee): I wish to inform the House, Madam Chairperson, that following the passage of the Cyclones Gelena and Joaninha in February 2019, a survey was carried out by Officers of my Commission to assess damages declared by farmers.

The number of planters who reported damage or destruction of their green or shade houses during the two cyclones which hit Rodrigues last year were 16 for Gelena and eight for Joaninha respectively.

No. of Green houses reported damage	No. of Planters	No. of eligible Planters	No. of Greenhouses for eligible planters
<u>GELENA</u>			
16	10	8	13
<u>JOANINHA</u>			
8	6	6	8

The locations of these greenhouses are as detailed hereunder:

(i) Cyclone Gelena

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S.n	Locality	No. of Greenhouses Damaged
1	Oyster Bay	1
2	Camp du Roi	2
3	Rivière Banane	3
4	Nouvelle Découverte	3
5	La Ferme	3
6	G.L.F. Corail	1
7	Camp Pintade	2
8	Petit Gabriel	1

(ii) Cyclone Joaninha

S.n	Locality	No. of Greenhouses Damaged
1	Graviers	2
2	Mont Plaisir	1
3	Pompée	1
4	Grand Baie	2
5	Mt. Cherie	1
6	Montagne Goyave	1

Mrs. Chairperson, let me inform the House that all eligible planters were granted compensation for rehabilitation of their greenhouses as per set criteria. However as at date, only 12 planters have completed the repair of their greenhouses out of which, only six have already submitted claims to my Commission for payment to their respective suppliers. Procedures for settlement of claims have already been completed for three planters and a sum of Rs 333,826 have been disbursed accordingly. Procedures are ongoing for payments of claims for the other concerned planters.

I also wish to inform the House that assistance for rehabilitation purposes was approved by the Executive Council to farmers who suffered lost or damage of their greenhouse as follows:-

- (i) The refund of 50% of the cost of cladding materials up to a maximum of Rs 30,000 for one shade house;
- (ii) The refund of 50% of cost of one greenhouse frame up to a maximum of Rs 75,000.

Mr. Z. Félicité: Yes. So, can I know from the respected Commissioner whether these planters have received cash in hand or whether they have to pay before their equipment, material and then, claim later?

Mr. J. R. Payendee: Madam Chairperson, from experience, we have found that paying cash before doing the work was not appropriate. It was not appropriate because lots of work has not been done in the past. That is why the procedure for allocation of compensation was such that the person was supposed to come with this document... it goes to the *quincaillerie* and come back with whatever things that they need and the Commission was supposed to pay after that. That is why lots of them has not been properly done because the people did not want that sort of procedure; they wanted the money cash in hand.

Mr. Z. Félicité: In the same line, so, what happen to those farmers that do not have the money to pay as we say the contrary, what happen to them?

Mr. J. R. Payendee: They did not have to pay anything. They only had to go and bring the quotation to the Commission and it is the Commission that pays. They did not need to have the money.

Mr. L. J. Von-Mally: Madam Chair, if my calculations are right, there were about Rs 37.7 m. available for the victims of these two cyclones. Can I know how much have been disbursed up to now, how much have been utilised up to now?

Mr. J. R. Payendee: Madam Chairperson, this is a question I need to be put to the Chief Commissioner because of the Chief Commissioner's Relief Fund. I cannot answer this one because this money was not only for agriculture.

Mr. L. J. Von-Mally: Well, I have been made to understand that there were about Rs 10 m. for agriculture. Out of these Rs 10 m. can I know how much are being disbursed?

Mr. J. R. Payendee: Madam Chairperson, I think the question is not related to this one because this one is talking about greenhouses and I have already said the money spent on greenhouses. The Member has to come with another question in the future.

The Minority Leader: Mrs. Chairperson, I have one question. So, can the Commissioner explain to us, he has been talking about planters and eligible planters. So, can he give more precision on these two? Because I think all planters, they have to be considered equal. So, why is there eligible planters?

Mr. J. R. Payendee: You know, there was a set of criteria. One of the... Some of the planters who were not eligible are public officers.

Madam Chairperson: Respected Members, the table has been advised that PQ B/44, B/47, B/48, B/52 and B/53 have been withdrawn by their respective Members. Thank you. Next question.

Mr. Z. Félicité: Madame la présidente, B/43.

NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) OUTBREAK

(No. B/43) Mr. Z. Félicité (Fifth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner for Trade, Commerce and Licensing and Others **whether, in** regard to the Novel Coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak around the world, she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information from the relevant authorities to state and table on the: -

- (a) list of the most imported products in terms of basic necessities and raw materials from affected Asian countries, if any; and
- (b) measures her Commission has taken to avoid shortage of these products, if any?

Mrs. M.R.F. Gaspard Pierre-Louis, CSK: Madam Chairperson, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am tabling the list of the most imported products in terms of basic necessities and raw materials from Asian countries as per information obtained from the MRA (Mauritius Revenue Authority) in addition according to the information obtained from the Commission for Consumer Protection that field work has revealed that canned food, that is, fish, meat, poultry, sausages and vegetables and tinned bottled sausages as well as adult diapers are the basic necessities of Asian origin that are mostly imported from Malaysia.

As regards, to part (b) of the question, I am informed that the stock of these commodities and raw materials from Asian countries depend heavily on the stock available in Mauritius as Rodrigues does not import these commodities directly from these foreign countries but via Mauritius.

I am also informed that since alternatives for these products from other countries of origin are available on the market, the risk of shortage is limited. Nonetheless, with a view to ensure that there was no shortage of basic commodities following the outbreak of COVID-19 and subsequent lockdown as from 19th March 2020 in Mauritius as well as in Rodrigues, the following measures were taken:-

- Meetings were held with the STC (State Trading Corporation) and owners of supermarkets of Rodrigues to take stock of the availability of basic necessities, such as, rice, flour, sugar, milk and oil amongst others on the local market. Subsequently, all parties present at the meeting have assured that there was no shortage of these products. The management of STC and owners of supermarkets were requested to ensure that proper rationing of products is made in the eventual case of shortage of same on the local market.
- The Commission for Consumer Protection was mandated to be more vigilant in the role and responsibilities to ensure the protection of consumers and finally necessary actions were taken to ensure that the ship vessel Black Rhino was allowed to transport basic commodities and raw materials from Mauritius during the lockdown period and up to the date.

Madam Chairperson, being given that Mauritius has lifted the lockdown period as from the 31st of May 2020, it is expected that commercial activities will resume normally between Mauritius and Rodrigues.

Mr. Z. Félicité: So, it seems that we do not have any shortage of special rice, so can we know actually, right there how many reserve of rice do we have at the STC?

Mrs. M.R.F. Gaspard Pierre-Louis, CSK: So, we have for more than one-month stock.

Mr. Z. Félicité: So, since you mentioned that there is no shortage, so can I know from the Commissioner why the State Trading Corporation still impose a quota on the selling of rice? *Surtout riz ration.*

Mrs. M.R.F. Gaspard Pierre-Louis, CSK: Donc, Mme. la présidente, on n'est pas au courant que la STC continue à imposer un quota, par contre, on sait qu'il continue à approvisionner les boutiques en terme de nombre de sac de

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riz qu'ils ont l'habitude de prendre. Donc, mais il n'y a pas de quota imposer pour dire que...

Mrs. M.T. Agathe, PMSM: Mme. la présidente, je voudrais apporter un éclaircissement parce que moi-même moi j'ai été témoin. On a dû, les gens du voisinage ont dû donner du riz aux voisins. Parce que dans certains commerces où on a acheté 50 balles de riz, ils n'ont eu que 10 et le commerçant ne savait pas quoi faire. Il y a des personnes qui ont vécu deux ou trois semaines sans riz.

Mrs. M.R.F. Gaspard Pierre-Louis, CSK: We will look into the matter, Madam Chairperson.

Mr. J.L.R. Perrine: Can the Respected Commissioner inform the House whether there has been a change in the price of *l'ail* and onions on the market?

Mrs. M.R.F. Gaspard Pierre-Louis, CSK: Of course, Madam Chairperson just as the Chief Commissioner announced in the recent budget.

Mr. J.L.R. Perrine: Can we know exactly the amount of price per kilo, per half kilo? Onion and...

Mrs. M.R.F. Gaspard Pierre-Louis, CSK: Madam Chairperson, I will prefer that the Respected Member set a question to the Consumer Protection next time.

Mr. J.L.R. Perrine: Is the Commissioner aware that the price of garlic and onion actually in supermarket is less than the fixed price by the RTMC under...?

Mrs. M.R.F. Gaspard Pierre-Louis, CSK: Madam Chairperson, I would like just to inform the House that the fixed price has been defined by the Commission for Consumer Protection in line with the discussion with stakeholders. And, if on the market, competition is making that the public are benefitting for better prices but this is better off.

Madam Chairperson: Respected Members, the table has been advised that PQ B/50 and B/51 have been withdrawn. Thank you. Next question.

CADASTRAL UNIT

(No. B/44) Mr. J.N. Volbert (Second Local Region Member for La Ferme) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the operation of

the Cadastral Unit of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, he will, for the benefit of the House, state and table:

- (a) the organigram thereof;
- (b) the number of Officers from the Civil Establishment of Mauritius posted thereat from January 2012 to date, indicating their respective grades and duties; and
- (c) if any request for transfer to the Civil Establishment of Rodrigues was received in regard thereto, providing, in the affirmative, the outcome thereof in each case?

[Withdrawn]

Mr. J.L.R. Perrine: B/45.

IMPORT OF MOTOR VEHICLES – FROM JANUARY 2018 TO DATE

(No. B/45) Mr. J. L.R. Perrine (Second Island Region Member) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the import of motor vehicles in Rodrigues from January 2018 to date, he will state and table to the House on the number thereof for which the original registration date was above 7 years, detailing in each case:

- (a) the category and year of original registration;
- (b) if same was by an officer on tour of duty in Rodrigues, to indicate if the vehicle has been shipped back to Mauritius on the completion thereof and, if not, to give reasons therefor?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Madam Chairperson, the information is being compiled and will be tabled as soon as it is completed.

Mr. J.L.R. Perrine: Yes, Madam Chairperson, I do not agree that these information are being compiled and will be tabled in this Assembly because I do have at my disposal questions that have been put to members of the government, the reply that they will put the information in the library and we do not have any information since yet. May I ask the Commissioner, one direct question? I will go directly to that point of question. We have a vehicle in Rodrigues, I will give you one example, a vehicle in Rodrigues bearing the Registration Number 6530, the year is 07. This vehicle was under the propriety of one public officer from Mauritius and unfortunately, the public officer has

already gone to Mauritius but this vehicle is running on the road with the same registration number. Can the Commissioner enlighten the House with regard to this particular case?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: I am not in possession of information about the matter but I will investigate, Madam Chairperson, and see what can be done about it.

Mr. J.L.R. Perrine: Yes, can I know from the Deputy Chief Commissioner when these information will be made available in the library?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Once it is completed, Madam Chairperson.

Madam Chairperson: Next question.

Mr. L. J. Von-Mally: B/46, Madam.

MAURITIUS & RODRIGUES SUBMARINE (MARS)

(No. B/46) Mr. L. J. Von-Mally, GOSK (First Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner for Information Technology and Telecommunication and Other whether, in regard to the Mauritius and Rodrigues Submarine (MARS) Cable, she will state:

- (a) where matter stands concerning its future connection to individual houses indicating the time frame;
- (b) how the funds earmarked in the 2020/2021 budget therefor will be spent, giving details, including the number of years for which this process will recur, if any; and
- (c) if it will ultimately become the property of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and, if not, why?

The Commissioner for Information Technology and Telecommunication and Other (Mrs. M.R.F. Gaspard Pierre-Louis, CSK): Madam Chairperson, with respect to part (a) of the question, I am informed that the FTTH, the Fibre To The Home connection in Rodrigues is a project undertaken by Mauritius Telecom Ltd to offer high-speed internet connectivity to its customer following the operationalisation of the Undersea Fibre Optic Cable from Mauritius to Rodrigues Island in February 2019.

The Company has already undertaken the necessary infrastructural works to bring connectivity to its customers. However, due to “*Force Majeure*” following the two cyclones which hit Rodrigues in February and March 2019 and the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the project has been delayed. Nevertheless, it is expected that a team from Mauritius Telecom will field a mission to Rodrigues to finalise the deployment of the fibre to the home connection upon resumption of commercial flights to Rodrigues.

As regards to part (b), Madam Chairperson, the contract involves the provision of an initial bandwidth capacity of 100 Gbps with the possibility to be increased in steps in multiples of 50 Gbps to a maximum of 32 wavelengths over a period of 20 years. As such an amount of Rs 85 m. has been budgeted for the financial year 2020/2021 for payment of quarterly service fee for provision of bandwidth on the MARS cable. Payment will be made over the period of 20 years.

However, I am further informed that with the finalisation of a price mechanism for the bandwidth on MARS cable and approval of the application of tariffs for bandwidth (the National Leased Circuit) Service on MARS Cable by the ICTA (Information and Communication Technologies Authority), Mauritius Telecom Ltd has been instructed to make available bandwidth capacity on MARS cable on wholesale basis exclusively to only duly licensed operators as from 11 May 2020.

Subsequently, the total amount of payment received from operators from allocation of bandwidth will be deducted from the total amount of annuity payable to the successful bidder, that is, Mauritius Telecom Ltd. An estimated revenue of Rs 25 m. will be received through the selling of bandwidth during the next financial year. It is expected that same will increase as the number of operators availing bandwidth services will thrive.

In addition, according to the report of the consultancy firm that has been appointed to advise and assist the RRA in managing bandwidth capacity on the MARS cable, it is expected after cash flow assumptions and analysis that the project will break even after the fifth year and thereafter will start generating a positive net cash flow. Subsequently, the RRA will no longer require to bridge funds and the project will start generating profit to pay back for the amount that has been used in the previous years to bridge the deficit.

Regarding to part (c), I am informed that the contract involves only the procurement of bandwidth services through the fibre optic cable and not procurement of the cable itself. As such, Mauritius Telecom Ltd will remain the sole owner of the cable system assets the more so, that neither the Government

of Mauritius nor the Rodrigues Regional Assembly has the capacity to operate a fibre optic cable. Moreover, since the typical service life of a fibre optic cable is between 20 and 25 years, same will no longer be serviceable.

Mr. L. J. Von-Mally: So, I thank the Respected Commissioner. Well, being given that since last year we are being paying Rs 85 m. in our budget for this cable, can I know from the Respected Commissioner for how long, if we have well calculated, for how long we are going to pay this Rs 85 m.?

Mrs. M.R.F. Gaspard Pierre-Louis, CSK: I have said in the answer, Madam Chairperson, it is for the 20 years. But however, as from the fifth year, we will break even and as from the fifth year onwards we will be profitable. So, let say that we will be paying for the first five years.

Mr. L. J. Von-Mally: So, Madam Chair, I am given to understand that out of the 44 m., about US\$ 44 m. that are being paid, it is being paid by the RRA not Mauritius Telecom then how can we reconcile the fact that this cable will not become the... the RRA will not become the owner of this cable afterwards?

Mrs. M.R.F. Gaspard Pierre-Louis, CSK: C'est ce que j'ai expliqué dans la réponse. En effet, le contrat c'est le RRA achète toutes la *bandwith*, les 100 Giga bytes. Bien sûre, si on a besoin de prendre plus comme j'ai dit dans la réponse, on va prendre par 50 Giga bytes. Donc, c'est clair aussi que le life time du câble et de 20 à 25 ans. Donc, c'est-à-dire, arriver à 25 ans on va devoir remplacer avoir un autre câble. Donc, c'est bête qu'on est le propriétaire quand on aura payé de quelque chose qui doit être remplacé.

Mr. J. R. Augustin: The Commissioner last time said that the company has been set up here in Rodrigues to manage, can we know where matter stands to that?

Mrs. M.R.F. Gaspard Pierre-Louis, CSK: Bien sûre, Mme. la présidente, la compagnie est toujours là mais elle sera opérationnelle quand on va pouvoir commercer à vendre le *bandwidth* avec les opérateurs.

Mr. Z. Félicité: Yes, you just mentioned that after 20 to 25 years, the cable will be replaced, will no longer in use. So, who will replace it, the RRA or Mighty/Mauritius Telecom?

Mrs. M.R.F. Gaspard Pierre-Louis, CSK: Madam Chairperson, I would prefer that we work for the first 25 years and then in the meantime we

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will see what is the model. It is a field where there is change constantly. So, we cannot today foresee what will happen in 25 years in this field.

DUST PROBLEM – STONE CRUSHER/GRAND LA FOUCHE CORAIL

(No. B/47) Mr. L. J. Von-Mally, GOSK (First Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner for Environment and Others whether, in regard to the severe dust problem experienced by the inhabitants of Citadelle/Grand La Fouche Corail and the surroundings, due to the activities of the stone crusher situated thereat, he will inform the House on where matters stand in regard thereto?

[Withdrawn]

TECHNO PARK - BALADIROU

(No. B/48) Mr. J. L.R. Perrine (Second Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner for Information Technology and Telecommunication and Others whether, in regard to the implementation of a techno park at Baladirou, she will, for the benefit of the House, state and table on: -

- (a) any feasibility study or concept plan or other report made therefor including the costing thereof; and
- (b) the expected modus operandi of the park indicating if any local organisation will be involved in the running thereof?

[Withdrawn]

ACCESS ROADS/TRACK ROADS – GRANDE MONTAGNE

(No. B/50) Mrs. M. T. Agathe, PMSM (Third Island Region) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to access roads, including track roads, in the electoral region of Grande Montagne, he will state and table, for the benefit of the House on where matters stand as at to date?

[Withdrawn]

STATE LAND LEASES – ELEVATION OF INFRASTRUCTURES

(No. B/51) Mrs. M. T. Agathe, PMSM (Third Island Region) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to State land leases, he will inform the

House on conditions and facilities being associated with the right of elevation on existing infrastructures thereon?

[Withdrawn]

DRAINAGE SYSTEM – PORT MATHURIN

(No. B/52) Mr. L. J. Von-Mally, GOSK (First Island Region Member) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the drainage system actually being set up in Port Mathurin, he will state to the House:

- (a) the total cost of the whole project, the funds that have been disbursed up to now, indicating if it will be extended to other areas of Rodrigues;
- (b) if tender procedures were strictly followed, giving the names of the different tenderers as well as the successful one;
- (c) if the network will be interconnected so as to allow for the waste water to be eventually treated; and
- (d) if the inhabitants concerned were consulted prior to excavation works being effected?

[Withdrawn]

FOND LA BONTE DAM

(No. B/53) Mr. L. J. Von-Mally, GOSK (First Island Region Member) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the Fond La Bonté dam, he will state: -

- (a) when it was last desilted and indicating if this process will be done soon;
- (b) its actual water retaining capacity, indicating if there is any plan for his Commission to increase this capacity together with the time frame;
- (c) the number of families connected thereto and the frequency with which they receive tap water therefrom indicating if this will be improved?

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[Withdrawn]

**TOURISM ALTERNATIVE LIVELIHOOD SCHEME
– BUDGET SPEECH 2020/2021**

(No. 54) Mr. J. R. Ramdally (Second Local Region Member for St. Gabriel) asked the Chief Commissioner whether he will, in regard to the Tourism Alternative Livelihood Scheme as announced in the Budget Speech 2020/2021, enlighten the House as to where matters stand as at to date?

[Withdrawn]

**ACQUISITION OF MEDICAL EQUIPMENT
– MAURITIUS/ABROAD – MARCH/APRIL 2020
– COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

(No. 57) Mr. J. R. Ramdally (Second Local Region Member for St. Gabriel) asked the Commissioner for Health and Others whether, in regard to the acquisition of medical and protective equipment to be used and actions taken to fight against and/or to prevent the spreading of Covid-19 in Rodrigues, he will enlighten the House as to where matters stand, giving details about the equipment available and/or awaited and any action taken/to be taken as at to date together with relevant time frame if any?

(Vide Reply PQ B/41)

Madam Chairperson: Question time is over.

STATEMENT BY COMMISSIONERS

Madam Chairperson: Yes, Chief Commissioner.

**WORLDWIDE OUTBREAK COVID-19
– TOURISM/ECONOMIC SECTOR**

The Chief Commissioner: Madam Chairperson, the worldwide outbreak of COVID-19 has brought to the world to a standstill and tourism has been the worst affected of all major economic sectors.

In my Budget Speech 2020-2021, I announced nine measures for the local Tourism Industry, of which, the Tourism Alternative Livelihood Scheme, one of

the bold measures put forward to support those directly affected by the outbreak.

Madam Chairperson, I wish to inform the House that, all the five projects falling under the Tourism Alternative Livelihood scheme have already started. The collaboration with the commissions namely, the Commission for Environment, Forestry, Fisheries and the Labour Office were also roped in so as to be in line with parameters, technical guidelines and the Remuneration Orders in force. The Tourism Alternative Livelihood Scheme is a voluntary scheme, where employers may involve their employees as support to keep employment and to alleviate their salary costs.

I am pleased to announced that all the mentioned projects under the Tourism Alternative Livelihood Scheme have already kick started. Allow me, Madam Chairperson, to briefly give a status of each of the project:

1. Coral Plantation in the north and SEMPA Region. The activity of Coral Plantation was officially launched on the 8th of June 2020 on the occasion of the World Ocean Day. The activity is led by Shoals and SEMPA. There are 17 employees involved in the coral plantation activity mainly the divers, snorkelers and pleasure craft owners.
2. Dredging, that is, cleaning of passes in the north and south, near Ile aux Cocos and near Ile Hermitage respectively, to facilitate the pleasure crafts access. Some 61 employees are involved in the dredging of passes and 281 employees on the other different sites for restoration and cleaning.
3. Restoration of natural reserves at Anse Quitor, Grande Montagne and Marine Tortoise at Jean Tac. 97 employees are actually involved in the restoration of the three reserves namely, at Anse Quitor, Grande Montage and Jean Tac.
4. Restoration and cleaning of surrounding islets, Ile aux Cocos, Ile Hermitage and Ile aux Chats. 56 employees are involved in the restoration of islets.
5. Cleaning of five hiking paths namely;
 - Anse aux Anglais via Mont Limon to Port Sud Est
 - Graviers via Trou D'argent/Anse Bouteille to Saint François

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- Baladirou to Saint François
- Mourouk to Gravières
- Pistaches via Plaine Mapou to Plaine Corail

The Tourist Guides of the Association Guides Randonnées Rodriguais are supervising the cleaning of the five hiking paths and 136 employees are involved in this activity.

I have been informed that the officers are compiling the attendances for the first two working weeks and a first payment is expected by the end of this month. A forecast of works has been worked out for the next three months.

I wish to point out, Madam Chairperson, that all the work being done under the Tourism Alternative Livelihood Scheme will be used as a marketing tool through promotional video clips which will be showcased to the world. The videos will depict how Rodrigues took advantage of the pandemic to restore our environment while maintaining employment in the tourism sector.

In the same vein, Madam Chairperson, allow me to thank all those contributing to make this Tourism Alternative Livelihood Scheme a success for the benefit of the tourism sector and the Rodriguans at large. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

[Applause]

Madam Chairperson: The Commissioner for Agriculture and Others.

**MODEL ECO-VILLAGE PROJECT/RIVIÈRE COCO/
CO-FUNDED BY EUROPEAN UNION**

The Commissioner for Environment and Others (Mr. J. R. Payendee): Thank you for giving me the chance to present these two statements in this Assembly today. The purpose of this statement is to inform the House of the status of the model eco-village project at Rivière Coco co-funded by the European Union.

Mrs. Chairperson, Madam, the project is co-funded by the European Union under the IOC Energy Programme to the tune of 180,000 Euros at the level of 48% and the government is bringing the other percentage.

This project is in line with the vision set by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, that is, to achieve 100% of the island's energy needs through the use of renewable energy sources by the year 2030. The main objective of the model

eco-village project at Rivière Coco is to demonstrate the use of renewable energy sources and comprises the following activities:

- Setting up of a solar charging station on the CLAC building;
- Procurement of an electric car;
- Construction of six bio-digesters for bio-gas production;
- Installation of 40 solar street panels lightings; and
- Setting up of a PV farm of capacity of 100 kw power.

Madam Chairperson, the project has been kick started in January 2018 with the villagers during which I took the opportunity to explain the vision of commission towards the conversion of Rivière Coco into the status of an eco-village. Various sectors have been elaborated namely, the achievement of an eco-school, control of invasive species, embellishment, agro-forestry, rain water harvesting, waste segregation, use of solar power, solar powered boat, use of energy saving lamps, improvement of Sports Act amenities, use of force stroke and jeans for fishers, drainage work, improvement of existing community health infrastructure among others.

In regard to the project co-funded by the EU, an elaborated project management structure has been set up as follows:

- A project implementation community under my chairmanship, ensures progress and deals with issues that might hamper the smooth project implementation;
- Three projects management committees are responsible for the planning and implementation of the related different actions. The head environment has been assigned as Project Coordinator to make all necessary follow-up and an office has been set up at Rivière Coco with a permanent staff to ensure better proximity with the villagers and implementation of a different activities.

Madam Chairperson, I shall now comment on the different activities as per the project:

- **Installation of solar street lightings**

40 solar street lightings have already been installed along the main and access roads of the village. The different sites for the installation of these lamps have been decided together with the village committee and all the ... concerned. Streets lamps have

been removed accordingly, and this has definitely reduced electricity consumption from the use of fossil fuel.

The installation of these lamps along the community access roads highly improved conditions of lives of the villagers. Mostly for the elderly and sick people when they need to go out at night.

- **The solar charging station and electric car**

The use of electric vehicle across the world has been growing rapidly over the past ten years. According to national NTA, only 180 electric vehicles have been registered from 2011 to November 2019. For Rodrigues, the first electric car has been registered in 2019 and the electric car uses solar energy to charge his batteries and has an energy capacity to drive an approximate distance of 200 kms.

In view of promotion the use of electric vehicles in Rodrigues, my commission will make the solar charging station at Rivière Coco available to the population and without any payment to charge their vehicles in the future.

- **The bio-gas production**

Regarding the bio-gas production component, my commission has solicited the expertise of a consultant for the installation of six bio-digesters. These bio-digesters have been constructed using local construction material and local people have been trained thereto.

The aim of this activity to replicate the production of bio-gas from animal waste in other villages using local manpower and materials. Before the implementation of this activity, the project beneficiaries have visited the bio-digesters at Centre Frère Remy, Camp du Roi and to better apprise the system and the implication thereto.

Nowadays, the beneficiaries are pleased to welcome the population to visit the bio-digesters that have been set up at Rivière Coco. In addition, there is a pool of trainees who have received expertise in the construction of bio-digesters. So, my commission is willing to replicate the project in other villages and institutions.

- **A solar PV farm**

Madam Chairperson, the setting up of a PV farm of capacity of 100 KW power is in fact the major component of the energy project. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all the related stakeholders regarding the implementation of this activity. I refer here to the IOC, EU Consultant, the CEB of Mauritius and Rodrigues and dedicated staff of my commission.

It should be noted that in the first instance, it was scheduled that individual solar power system of capacity 1 to 1.5 KW power would be installed at the interested household. The households were supposed to fund the PV system on their own which amounts to Rs 1,000 which is quite high when compared to the generally low income of villagers of which there are many fishers, farmers and breeders.

In addition, further to various meetings my commission has with the CEB, it has been noted that technically same is not recommended as it may cause disturbances to the grid and thus affects electricity consumption at households. After various consultative meetings with all the stakeholders concerned in Mauritius and in Rodrigues, it has finally been concluded that a community PV farm of capacity of 100 KW power will be installed. The project was then amended accordingly. In so doing, the approved budget of EU was not sufficient and the CEB has agreed for a financial contribution of Rs 1.5 m. to cater for the extra cost of this component.

Madam Chairperson, Madam, the setting up of a PV farm as well as charging station will highly benefit the village of Rivière Coco despite the high investment cost. In fact, both activities, the PV farm of 100 KW power and the solar charging station of 7 KW have been considered under the Small Scale Distributed Generation, SSDG Scheme of the CEB. The CEB project allows small independent power producers to produce electricity from renewable resources to meet their needs and also to contribute the excess energy in the grid. The excess energy produced is purchased by CEB and the revenue thereto goes to the independent power producers. As per the project at Rivière Coco, the income generated farm excess energy produced will go to the community and manage by the village community themselves. The fund will be used to carry out cultural, social and economic activities across the village. The expected income that will go to the community is

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around Rs 30,000 a month, whereas a small percentage will be charged by CEB for maintenance and management purposes.

Listen to this one, Madam Chairperson. *Hé ban collègues écoute sanala hein!* This one is important.

Madam Chairperson, Madam, I am pleased to inform the House that this community PV farm is the first of the sort in the whole Republic of Mauritius where normally it is owned by privates for the generation of revenue prior to selling of energy generated by the PV. *Ce n'est pas beau ça?*

[Applause]

It is the first community PV Farm ever done in the Republic of Mauritius and I am pleased to inform the House that this done in Rodrigues, Madam Chairperson. The first one.

[Interruption]

An agreement will be signed shortly with the CEB, not just in Mauritius, this does not exist elsewhere. All SSDGs are owned by privates. And, this one all the money Rs 30,000 will go to the community village every month. This is beautiful. An agreement will be signed shortly with the CEB for the management of the PV Farm including the organization of the revenue as per the SSDG Scheme.

Madam Chairperson, a setting up of an eco-village at Rivière Coco is of course not limited to energy sector. An important project financed by NDU under the supervision of my colleague, PPS Francisco François, to the cost of Rs 52,508,840, which has as objective to prevent inundations in Rivière Coco through the construction of drains and to contribute to the beauty of the village contributes largely to the success of the Rivière Coco eco-village.

Let me, Madam Chair, seize the occasion to thank NDU and to thank my colleague Francisco François, PPS for this contribution in the success of the eco-village project.

Under the 2020-2021 Budget provision has been made for the implementation of waste segregation across activity at source at Rivière Coco among the six villages chosen for the implementation of the project. My commission is elaborating on a full-fledged integrated waste management

approach hereby segregating bins will be granted to each and every household in the village. Materials which can be recycled will be collected, an initiative for converting same into other useable products will be promoted in the village itself. My commission will carry out a thorough waste characterisation exercise in order to develop appropriate policies regarding the different types of wastes. A compost bin will also be provided to each household to promote composting activities.

Permettez-moi, Mme. la présidente, de profiter de cette opportunité pour remercier le Chef Commissaire, mes collègues du Conseil Exécutif, l'Union Européenne, le CEB, NDU, le PPS Francisco François, les députés de la région, mon Departmental Head, les officiers de ma commission avec un remerciement spécial pour le Responsable de l'Environnement qui supervise personnellement ce projet et tous ceux que d'une façon ou d'une autre ont contribué et qui contribue toujours pour la réussite de ce projet très révolutionnaire qui sera un model et qui nous permettra de voir comment Rodrigues sera dans cinq ans, 10 ans et 50 ans. Merci, Madame.

[Applause]

I have another short one, another short statement, Madam. I wanted to make four but I decided to do only two. There is a lot of achievement in my commissions.

FAD FISHERY

Madam Chairperson, it is about the FAD Fishery, which is revolutionary as well. It is not the same thing as it used to be. On fait le truc autrement, Madam Chairperson. This is different. It is not the time you were Minister of Fisheries. This is a new thing.

FAD Fishery has been established in Rodrigues in 1987, and my commission foresees at improving the FAD Fishery effectiveness for proper and effectiveness of the FAD Programme. My commission is considering the necessity of a new approach for setting and monitoring of FADs as part of its budgetary measure 2020-2021. The project aims at continuously encouraging more fishers to fish around the established FADs through a modern and innovative FAD Fishery strategy with the support of Mauritius Research Council.

Madam Chairperson, the new established FAD will be equipped with satellite censor which was not the case. It will be equipped with satellite censor which will allow the fishermen to monitor in real time by biomass of fish under

the FADs. The other censor that these people are talking about was just to make sure that we do not lose the FAD. But this one is different. This one makes us aware of what is under the FAD. We can see what type of fish, what species is there and how much, how many this will help the fishermen to better exploit the thing.

[Applause]

This is revolutionary, this is a new revolutionary project, Madam Chairperson. Mrs. Chairperson, Madam, the project has the following objectives:

- To improve scientific understanding of FAD Fishery in Rodrigues;
- To monitor FAD Fishery productivity in Rodrigues;
- To improve management of fishing activities around FADs; and
- To improve fishers in real time about the productivity of the FADs.

Mrs. Chairperson, Madam, to start six new FADs equipped with a satellite censor point will be placed around Rodrigues shortly in the North West, North, East and South of the island to allow all FAD fishers to get access to the new information.

Madam Chairperson, Madam, the project has already started. Five consultative meetings have already been done with off-lagoon fishers in northern region, namely, Baie Malgache, English Bay, Southern region of Graviers, Ile Michel and one at Soupirs. Nine more consultative meetings will be conducted in the other regions around the island.

Madam Chairperson, let me now explain how this project will operate. A censor will be placed on the FAD to detect the biomass of the fish and this information will be transmitted to the satellite. The information received by the satellite is transmitted to a bay station which will analysed, interpret the data and send to cloud internet. This data will be accessed by FRTU and the MRC via a computer software for analysis and interpretation. The results will allow the FRTU to know in real time the quantity of fish around the FAD and this information will be communicated to the fishers.

Madam Chairperson, Madam, this real time data will serve many purposes, such as, reduce the number of hours FAD fishers will spend at sea, thus considerably reduce the cost of fuel, increase the catch of fishers, thus increase their revenue.

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Mrs. Chairperson, Madam, I am happy to announce the implementation of this project as it is in line with the vision of our government for this budget which is *‘L’Urgence de Construire Ensemble Autrement’*. Merci, Madam.

[Applause]

MOTION

“This Assembly resolves that the First Report of the Standing Orders Committee in regard to the amendments to the Standing Orders and Rules of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, presently in force, more specifically the addition of a new Standing Order 65A, which was laid on the Table of the Regional Assembly on Tuesday 25 February 2020 be approved, and that the amendments contained therein come into operation forthwith.”

The Chief Commissioner: Madam Chairperson, this Assembly resolves that the First Report of the Standing Orders Committee in regard to the amendments to the Standing Orders and Rules of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, presently in force, more specifically the addition of a new Standing Order 65A, which was laid on the Table of the Regional Assembly on Tuesday 25 February 2020 be approved, and that the amendments contained therein come into operation forthwith. With these words, Madam Chairperson, I command the Motion to the House.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner rose and seconded the motion.

Question put and agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

The Chief Commissioner: Madam Chairperson, I beg to move that this Assembly does now adjourn to Tuesday 4th of August 2020 at 10.30 a.m.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Madam Chairperson: The House stands adjourned.

At 3.08 p.m. the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday 4th August 2020 at 10.30 a.m.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

CONSTRUCTION/TRACK ROADS - QUATRE VENTS

(No. B/49) **Mr. J. R. Augustin (Fourth Island Region Member)** asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the construction of track roads at Quatre Vents, he will, for the benefit of the House, state on where matters stand as to date indicating:

- (a) if tenders therefor have already been launched therefor and if so, to give details; and
- (b) the expected starting date thereof specifying the estimated length, the time frame and the total cost therefor?

Reply: Madam Chairperson, a Contract has already been awarded for an amount of Rs 19,069,863.50 for the construction of track roads and footpaths in Region 2 of the island which include the village of Quatre Vents.

It is expected that about 430 m of track roads and 147 m. of footpaths will be constructed in Quatre Vents for an estimated cost of Rs 2 m. The expected duration of this contract is six months.

‘MARCHÉ SOLIDAIRE’

(No. B/55) **Mr. J. R. Ramdally (Second Local Region Member for St. Gabriel)** asked the Commissioner for Industrial Development and Others whether, in regard to the organisation of a ‘Marché Solidaire’ on a monthly basis in Rodrigues as announced in the Budget Speech 2020/2021, she will inform the House as to where matters stand as at to date, and to state the aims and objective, the target groups, the scope, cost implication and time frame of this project?

Reply: Allow me to make a short statement on the organisation of Marché Solidaire in Rodrigues. Madam Chairperson, as the House is aware, following the outbreak of the pandemic COVID 19, the world is undergoing an upheaval without precedence which has impacted negatively on business activities. Unfortunately, the economic situation in Rodrigues has not been spared though the pandemic has not spread to the island and we are still a COVID free island.

As such, Madam Chairperson, Small and Mediums Enterprises that rely solely on tourism as their target market have been negatively impacted with the

closure of commercial flights to Mauritius and in turn Rodrigues. Entrepreneurs in handicraft and agro-processing sectors have found their revenues reduced to zero.

Even though, the Self-Employed Assistance Scheme (SEAS) that the Government has decided to implement through the Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA) has provided a temporary relief to those self-employed persons for period 16 March to 15 April 2020, most entrepreneurs who operate in the informal sector still suffered loss of revenue due to the lockdown in Mauritius in the fight against COVID-19.

Madam Chairperson, as a caring Regional government, it has been decided in line with the Chief Commissioner's Budget Speech for financial year 2020-2021 to create a platform for SMEs in Rodrigues to sell their produce through the organisation of Marché Solidaire with a view to lessen the adverse economic impacts due to the COVID-19.

Madam, Chairperson, as such, the slogan chosen for the 'Marché Solidaire' is "A Nou Solidaire, A nou acheter local." The Marché Solidaire aims at focussing on Rodriguans as the prime market for local products and at the same time triggering a paradigm shift in the consumption pattern of Rodriguans. Ultimately it is expected that with a change in mind-set, our local people will favour and adhere to the habit of consuming local first.

The 'Marché Solidaire' will be organised on a monthly basis and targets entrepreneurs in the following sectors:

- (i) agro-processing;
- (ii) handicraft;
- (iii) horticulture; and
- (iv) Local food and pastries.

A corner is also allocated to local artists to sell and promote their artworks and music.

The first edition of the 'Marché Solidaire' was organised from 28 to 30 May 2020 and following call for participation, some 170 entrepreneurs participated in the fair.

Madam Chairperson, according to turnovers generated by SMEs after an evaluation exercise of the first edition of the Marché Solidaire, all participants, are unanimous about the fact that the event was a success. Indeed, this event has

reignited the entrepreneurial spirit of our entrepreneurs and boosted up their morale even though they are facing an adverse situation.

In addition, the 'Marché Solidaire' has displayed the social solidarity of our local people towards each other through the number of people who attended the event. Madam, Chairperson, with a view to keep the event attractive, dynamic, and appealing, a particular sector will be put under the limelight for every edition.

I am pleased to announce to the House that the second edition will be organized this week from 25 to 27 June at the Millennium Square and for this second edition, the focus will be laid on the promotion of local 'farine' and pastries.

The cost incurred per event is estimated at Rs 140,000 and represent costs of materials, stationeries, electricity, overtime, communiqué and materials for setting up of infrastructures.

Madam Chairperson, I would like to thank my colleagues for the cooperation of their Commission, SME Mauritius Ltd and other private stakeholders for their support and collaboration in the organisation of the 'Marche Solidaire'.

Madam, Chairperson, I made an appeal to Respected Members of this House and the population as a whole to continue to express their solidarity towards our Entrepreneurs – '*A nou solidaire – A nou acheter local*'.

REDUCTION OF IMPORT OF CHICKEN - RODRIGUES

(No. B/56) Mr. J. R. Ramdally (Second Local Region Member for St. Gabriel) asked the Commissioner for Industrial development and Others whether, in regard to the reduction of the import of chicken in Rodrigues, she will inform the House on if her Commission is contemplating any project in relation thereto, and, in the affirmative, to give details thereon?

Reply: Madam Chairperson, with your permission, I would like to make a short statement with respect to the project of reducing the import of chicken in Rodrigues. Madam Chairperson, the Regional Government aspires to make the poultry industry a strong pillar of the economy with the overarching aim of reducing the import of chicken from Mauritius by 50% in 2022. It is expected through this measure to foster local production and restructure the whole value chain of the local poultry industry which as consequence will create more jobs and generate additional revenue for entrepreneurs involved in the chain.

Madam, Chairperson, during the past decades the consumption of poultry meat has increased worldwide. According to Statistics Mauritius, the annual production of chicken meat in Mauritius turns around 49,000 tons with an annual net increase of 3% every year. Subsequently, in the absence of official data for Rodrigues, a survey on the annual consumption and importation of poultry in Rodrigues was carried out among importers of frozen poultry meat and has revealed that about 300 tons of frozen chicken are imported on an annual basis. It is also estimated based on the yearly consumption of 15 kg per capita that the annual consumption of chicken meat oscillates roughly around 646 tons in Rodrigues.

Madam, Chairperson, with a view to achieve the objective of reducing the importation of frozen chicken in Rodrigues, a Consultant Avia Frik Consulting Ltd was recruited in August 2018 to assist the Rodrigues Regional Assembly in the sustainable development of the poultry industry towards self-sufficiency through the development of a strategic plan and provision of technical expertise in areas of poultry husbandry including breeding, hatching, fattening, health, feeding and marketing as well as training courses in poultry production to poultry farmers among others.

As such, in line with the recommendations of the consultant, my commission is initiating action as follows:

- (1) Identification of remote isolated areas to set up Parent Stock Farm as Rodrigues is heavily dependent on Mauritius for broiler chicks and the weekly demand is roughly about 5000 chicks.

In that respect, the Cadastral Office has been requested to identify isolated areas so as to respect bio security norms. Thereafter, Expression of Interest will be launched to enlist private companies willing to operate such farming activities.

- (2) Upgrading of the hatchery at Citronelle so as to ensure that broiler chicks are readily available in Rodrigues and at the same time solve the problem of high mortality rate of imported chicks.

The upgrading works have been entrusted to the Global Consultancy services for selected development projects for Rodrigues.

- (3) Development of schemes to encourage young entrepreneurs to set up new broiler farms with a view to maintain a constant supply of

broiler meat on the local market. There is the need to set up some 40 new farms with a production capacity of 500 Heads per cycle.

- (4) Organisation of sensitisation campaigns to create a shift in the consumption pattern of the population and to advocate the importance of consuming local poultry meat; and
- (5) Mounting of Training courses so as to empower traditional poultry farmers to adopt a professional approach in the rearing of broilers with a view to modernise their farming activities.

In addition, Madam, Chairperson, my commission is providing necessary support to a new cooperative namely AVIROD Multipurpose Cooperative society comprising in the first instance 20 members which has been set up with a view to reinforce the strategic orientation and bargaining power of poultry breeders. The cooperative is working in close collaboration with the Federation des Associations Cooperatives des Eleveurs de Rodrigues (FACER) and will regroup more breeders in the future.

It is expected that the Cooperative will play a coordinated and pivotal role in the poultry value chain through the purchase of the total production of its members on a planned and roster basis. The cooperative will also be responsible to process and market fresh or frozen chicken on the local market.

Madam Chairperson, since the poultry sector is highly technical and the development of the sector demands a holistic approach to meet the objectives set, a Steering Committee comprising Officers of my commission and Commissions for Agriculture, Environment, Lands and Health is being set up to ensure the smooth implementation of the project. I thank you for your attention.