

No. 8 of 2020

RODRIGUES
FOURTH REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

Debate No. 8 of 2020

Sitting of Tuesday 15 September 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

RODRIGUES REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY 04 AUGUST 2020

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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

PRINCIPAL OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS

Madam Chairperson - Spéville, Mrs Marie Pricie Anjela

Clerk - Legentil, Miss Marie Lyndia Yannick

Serjeant-at-Arms - Constant Perrine, Mr Stenio

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Madam Chairperson: Minority Leader.

COVID-19 RELIEF SUPPORT SCHEME

(No. B/87) The Minority Leader (Mr F. A. Grandcourt) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the budget item 28212034 COVID-19 Relief Support Scheme for the current financial year, he will state and table the: -

- (a) different projects implemented thereunder to date indicating the beneficiaries;
- (b) amount of money disbursed per project to date providing their respective implementation plan, if any?

The Chief Commissioner: Madam Chairperson, the House would recall that during my budget speech for the financial year 2020/2021, I announced a provision of Rs 50M under the COVID-19 Relief Support Scheme to support those sectors deeply impacted following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, namely Tourism, SMEs and Health.

Madam Chairperson, the different projects being implemented under the COVID-19 Relief Support Scheme include:

Tourism Support Scheme

1. Tourism Alternative Livelihood Scheme

Madam Chairperson, the Tourism Alternative Livelihood Scheme was developed to promote job retention in the tourism sector through alternative works related to agro ecology, protection and embellishment of the environment and social work.

The ongoing projects which are being undertaken under Tourism Alternative Livelihood Scheme are:

- i. Coral Plantation in the SEMPA Region and in the north near Jean Tac;
- ii. Manual dredging of passes to facilitate movement of boats in the north and south region;

- iii. Restoration of Grande Montagne Reserve and Anse Quitor Reserve with endemic and indigenous plants, namely;
- iv. Cleaning of 5 hiking paths all around Rodrigues;
- v. Restoration of Jean Tac site for Tortoise project;
- vi. Restoration of surrounding islets of Ile aux Cocos and Iles du Sud namely Ile Hermitage and Ile aux Chats;
- vii. Deployment of 15 Aggregating Devices (FADs) by Big Game Fishing Operators

389 employees are involved in the Tourism Alternative Livelihood Scheme due to last until December 2020.

2. Senior Citizen Scheme

The Senior Citizen Scheme was developed with a view to promote local tourism amongst the senior citizens aged 60 and above. An amount of Rs 2,000 or Rs 1,500 per elderly is granted for a three or two nights stay in a registered tourism establishment. 43 establishments have registered themselves to benefit from the scheme.

More than 470 seniors have stayed in some 10 establishments from June 2020 to date.

3. Training and Capacity Building of Tourism Operators

Further to the COVID-19 outbreak, the Foundation Course in Tourism launched in 2019 by the Commission for Tourism through the Sustainable Island Mauritius - Island Project funded by the European Union under the Switch Africa Green will be provided free of charge to tourism operators by the *Pole Formation Tourisme Rodrigues* on a 50-50 cost sharing basis between the Commission for Tourism and the Sustainable Island Mauritius -Island project.

As at date, some 381 persons working in the tourism sector have already followed the course. It is expected that a total of 1000 persons would follow the course until December 2020.

4. Wage Assistance Scheme (WAS)

The Government of Mauritius introduced the Wage Assistance Scheme in March 2020 to provide a wage subsidy to employers as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure that employees received their salary. Same scheme was extended to Rodrigues until 15 April 2020 when the curfew order lapsed.

Madam Chairperson, in order to alleviate the burden and maintain employment in the tourism enterprises that were also closed during the second half of April 2020, the Rodrigues Regional Assembly has subsidised the payment of the employees in the tourism sector for the period 16 to 30 April 2020.

I am further informed that 38 tourism enterprises have benefitted from the above scheme.

5. Transport Service Providers Scheme

The Transport Service Providers Scheme has been designed to support Car Rental, Contract Cars and Buses and Taxi Operators during this critical period. Their services are being contracted regularly by the different Commissions of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly to provide transport facilities.

44 operators have applied under the Scheme. Payment is being effected under relevant Transport Items of the different Commissions.

Support to SMEs

1. Marché Solidaire

Madam Chairperson, the '*Marché Solidaire*' has been set up to provide a local platform for SMEs in handicraft and agro-processing sectors which have been heavily impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic to sell their products.

The '*Marché Solidaire*' will be run on a monthly basis until the economic situation in the Tourism Sector returns to normal. Four editions have been held to date entailing the participation of 150 entrepreneurs from agro-processing, handicraft, horticulture, and food sectors. Local artists are also allocated a corner to sell and market their artworks.

2. Entrepreneurship Training Programme

I am informed that the Commission for Industrial Development has developed a tailor made training programme for entrepreneurs in the agro-processing and handicraft to develop their skills to be better equipped to face the current and forthcoming economic downturn following the COVID-19 outbreak.

The programme which is run over a period of three months focuses on innovation, customer service, marketing and sales, financial management and embracing e-commerce:

A total of 300 entrepreneurs in the pastry, agro-processing and handicraft sectors will follow the training course until December 2020.

Support to Health Sector

Funds have been earmarked under the COVID-19 Relief Support Scheme for the Commission for Health to procure additional equipment to reinforce the Health Services in Rodrigues, strengthen Biosecurity measures and to meet the running cost of quarantine centres.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I wish to inform the House that as at 11 September 2020, a total amount of Rs 17 M has been disbursed under the COVID-19 Relief Support Scheme under the following items:

•	Tourism Alternative Livelihood Scheme	-	Rs 11.3 M
•	Foundation Course in Tourism	-	Rs 1.5 M
•	Wage Assistant Scheme	-	Rs 1.1 M
•	Quarantine	-	Rs 1.3 M
•	Senior Citizen Scheme	-	Rs 0.7 M
•	Entrepreneurship Training Programme	-	Rs 0.6 M
•	Biosecurity measures	-	Rs 0.4 M
•	Transport Service Providers Scheme	-	Rs 0.1 M

Madam Chairperson, I am tabling existing commitments as well as the breakdown of expenditure under the COVID-19 Relief Support Scheme and wish to reassure the House that

the full amount will be judiciously issued... Excuse me... Support Scheme and wish to reassure the House that the full amount will be judiciously used. Thank you, Madam.

Mr Grandcourt: Est-ce qu'on peut savoir du Chef commissaire concernant le *Alternative Livelihood Scheme*, donc, est-ce que ça concerne seulement ceux qui sont employés dans l'établissement ou ceux qui sont on a *part-time basis* ?

The Chief Commissioner: Monsieur *Minority* parle on a *part-time basis* dans le tourisme? Mais tout le monde. Tout le monde qui sont dans un établissement hôtelier et aussi ils sont dedans. Même s'ils sont en *part-time*, il englobe tout le monde.

Mr Grandcourt: Alors, Madame la présidente, est-ce qu'il est au courant que certaines personnes qui travaillent dans certains établissements ont perdu leur emploi? Si oui, est-ce qu'il a les chiffres concernant ces cas?

The Chief Commissioner: Non. Non, non, non, non. On n'a jamais entendu cela. Rien ne nous a été communiqué qu'il y a des personnes qui travaillent dans le...

(Interruptions)

The Chief Commissioner: Qui sont ? Qui étaient employés, oui, oui, dans les établissements, on les a mis à la porte. Non, nous n'avons pas eu ces nouvelles-là. Nous allons essayer quand même à la suite de la question du *Minority Leader*, faire des recherches pour vraiment savoir s'il y a des personnes qui travaillaient dans certains établissements ont été mis à la porte.

Mr Grandcourt: Donc, concernant les équipements qui ont été achetés, est-ce que pour le service de la santé, est-ce que le Chef commissaire peut nous dire en gros quels sont les équipements qui ont été achetés et si nous sommes déjà prêts à n'importe quelle éventualité?

The Chief Commissioner: Je m'excuse, Madame la présidente, je n'ai pas la liste des équipements. Peut-être plus tard, le Commissaire de la santé pourrait justement donner une explication dessus. Et en principe, je dois dire ce sont des équipements absolument nécessaires par rapport au Coronavirus ailleurs et qui peut arriver à Rodrigues aussi.

Madam Chairperson: Respected Member Augustin.

Mr Augustin: Yes. Can I know from the Chief Commissioner with regard to Relief Support Scheme in the Health Sector whether, the frontliners have been paid the sum that has been earmarked for them?

The Chief Commissioner: I have no information about that, Madam. Perhaps I say my colleague Commissioner of Health can give the information. Frontliners.

Mr Grandcourt: Madame la présidente, *in the same line*, nous avons l'autonomie et nous avons aussi des gens qui ont travaillé comme *frontliners*. A Maurice, eux, ils ont dit pour certaines catégories. Qu'en est-il de ceux qui ont travaillé à Rodrigues dans des situations particulières? Comme par exemple, nous avons, je pense à des gens sur le *filling station*, RodClean entre autres. Et est-ce que ces gens-là, est-ce qu'ils ne pensent pas qu'il faut quand même considérer ces personnes-là aussi? Nous avons notre autonomie. Nous pouvons décider. Pourquoi pas ces gens?

The Chief Commissioner: Madame la présidente, je sais qu'à Maurice, on a rémunéré les *frontliners*. Il faut qu'on face des recherches, nous, pour savoir vraiment si... lorsqu'on paye les *frontliners* de Maurice, Rodrigues aussi doit jouir de ce projet. Alors, là tout ça, nous avons peut-être des recherches à faire.

Mr Von-Mally: Madam Chairperson, can I have some explanation from the Chief Commissioner being given that we are in the same country, if in Mauritius, all the frontliners have been paid the allocation and being given that the health sector is managed by Mauritius, does he not believe that all the frontliners, especially in the health sector, should have been paid as their counterparts in Mauritius?

The Chief Commissioner: Yes, I agree with him but I know the... I do not have the information. What I say, my colleague can make a statement during the Assembly.

Mr Von-Mally: Last question. I would like to ask the respected Chief Commissioner whether, he will arrange with the Minister for Finance in Mauritius in order sort this out so that we do not have a politic *de deux poids deux mesures* because these frontliners in Rodrigues have been working very, very hard.

The Chief Commissioner: Yes, yes, we are doing.... We are looking for information whether... Yes, as my colleague says, he will make a statement.

Madam Chairperson: Respected Member Perrine.

Mr Perrine: Yes, Madam Chairperson, thank you. Yes, can I ask the Chief Commissioner with regard to dredging of passes around Rodrigues, can he inform the House whether, this dredging has been done in accordance with regulations and laws in force with regards to especially EIA?

The Chief Commissioner: *Madam Chairperson, everything which has been done in Rodrigues is according to regulations or any specifications but what I say, this... Comment on appelle ça? Fouiller les... Manual. Fouiller les passes. Justement, ces personnes-là, on les a pris compte de justement dans leur projet justement de livelihood. Ils étaient dedans comme j'ai cité tout ça. Même l'entretien de nos îles, de nos îlots tout cela.*

Mr Volbert: Yes, Madam Chairperson. Est-ce qu'on peut savoir du Chef commissaire le montant exact payé sous le *Transport Service Scheme* aux taximen et autres ?

The Chief Commissioner: Rs 0.1 M.

Mr Grandcourt: Madame la présidente, ce projet *Alternative Livelihood Scheme*, ce projet a été proposé par l'ATR pour justement... Ça a été proposé par l'ATR, une recommandation de l'ATR. Donc, j'aimerais demander au Chef commissaire s'il est satisfait de tous ces projets-là et quelles sont les difficultés qu'ils ont rencontrées en implémentant ces projets.

The Chief Commissioner: Madame la présidente, c'est la Commission du tourisme qui a lancé ce projet. Nous sommes aussi dans une mesure budgétaire. Non, non, non, non, c'est dans le budget.

(Interruptions)

The Chief Commissioner: Non, non, non, non, excusez-moi ! Excusez-moi, s'il vous plaît. Excusez-moi. Non, non, non, non. Nous sommes responsables de notre pays et nous faisons ce que nous avons... les responsables....

(Interruptions)

Madam Chairperson: Order ! Order ! Order.

(Interruptions)

Madam Chairperson: Respected Member Félicité. Order, respected Members from a sitting position, please!

Mr Félicité: So, the Chief Commissioner mentioned training and capacity building for Tourism Operator. So, can I know from the Chief Commissioner who will provide these courses to our Tourism Operator?

The Chief Commissioner: As you know, Madam Chairperson, nous travaillons beaucoup avec VATEL et toutes les formations qu'on donne au niveau du tourisme, c'est à travers VATEL et ça, justement, ce n'est pas juste ceux qui travaillent dans le tourisme mais aussi, il y a des personnes et aussi des jeunes qui suivent des cours chez VATEL pour avoir cette connaissance du tourisme à Rodrigues.

Mr Perrine: Madame la présidente, est-ce que je peux demander au Chef commissaire puisqu'il a mentionné le nom de VATEL, est-ce qu'il y a eu un lancement, un appel d'offre concernant ce projet de formation ou ça a été donné directement et pour quelle raison?

The Chief Commissioner: Oui, oui, oui, oui. Oui. Nous avons aussi une coopération avec VATEL, oui depuis avant, et que nous avons partie financière aussi. Nous payons nous aussi. Par exemple, un jeune qui veut aller... qui reçoit une formation au VATEL, ces jeunes-là, nous payons 75% et nos jeunes payent 25%. C'est bien ça que j'ai appris. Oui, oui.

Mr Perrine: Madame la présidente, c'est la raison de plus pour que ces cours-là soient donnés gratuitement à VATEL parce que nous sommes 51% actionnaire dans le VATEL. Pourquoi payer?

The Chief Commissioner: Madame, nous voulons que ceux qui participent apportent eux aussi, leur contribution. Nous ne voulons pas être dans un pays complètement où il n'y a que des assistés. Nous ne voulons pas développer cette mentalité d'assistée à Rodrigues. Nous demandons toujours aux gens justement de participer et même s'il y a des personnes qui ne peuvent pas participer, qui n'arrivent pas vu le niveau de leurs parents, le niveau... et à ce moment-là, nous, au niveau de Rodrigues, nous participons. Nous écoutons beaucoup les gens. Il y a des gens qui viennent nous voir. La dernière fois, il y a un jeune homme qui veut suivre des cours chez VATEL et je lui ai dit que ça, ça, ça, ça. Alors, la personne m'a dit que non, il ne peut pas payer ces 25% mais je lui ai dit que nous allons au niveau de l'Assemblée régionale, voir comment on peut l'aider.

Madam Chairperson: Next question.

Mr Grandcourt: Madam Chairperson, B/88.

BENEFICIARIES OF SOCIAL AID – RODRIGUES

(No. B/88) The Minority Leader (Mr F. A. Grandcourt) asked the Commissioner for Commissioner for Social Security and Others whether, in regard to the beneficiaries of Social Aid in Rodrigues, he will state and table the: -

- (a) number thereof per category for the last three years including the total amount paid yearly thereto;
- (b) criteria applied by his Commission to benefit therefrom; and
- (c) measures being undertaken by his Commission to help claimants from depending less thereon?

Mr Baptiste: Madam Chairperson, with regard to part (a), I have to inform the House that the number of social aid recipients varies from month to month. The figures do not remain constant. In fact, there are 16 categories of social aid paid by my Commission to eligible beneficiaries during the last three financial years ending 30 June 2020 namely, medical cases, examination fees, fire allowance, Unemployment Hardship Relief, abandoned women, unmarried mother, imprisonment allowance, abandoned child, BRP rental, multiple births, funeral grant, discharged prisoners allowance, partner disappeared, allowance for dentures, fire rental allowance and sudden lost of employment. Madam Chairperson, in order not to abuse on the time of the House, I will at the end of my reply, table the details on the number of beneficiaries of social aid in Rodrigues per category as at 30 June of each of the last three financial years including the total amount. It is worth noting that per number of beneficiaries and amount paid as social aid were as follows:

Sn	Month/Year	Number of beneficiaries	Total Amount Paid (Rs)
1.	June 2018	2,995	85,674,813
2.	June 2019	2,268	78,984,327
3.	June 2020	2,166	84,389,700

With regard to part (b) of the question, Madam Chairperson, I have to inform the House that the criteria to determine eligibility for social aid is laid down in the Social Aid Act 1983 as amended in 2012 and the Social Aid Act Regulations 1984 and the Unemployment Hardship Relief (UHR) Act and Regulations 1983. Madam Chairperson, the officers of the Social Security Division of my Commission ensure that all applicants meet the criteria established in the national law before recommending the cases for grant of social aid. And, I will table a summary of the eligibility requirements for each category of social aid.

As regards to part (c), Madam Chairperson, I wish to put on record that since 1976, our party has been encouraging Rodriguans to develop *une culture de débrouillardise* and to stand upon their own feet. In this context, my Commission has come up with the Employment Relief Programme (ERP) and the *Plan de Prestation Transitoire (PPT)*. The ERP is a social programme which aims at providing short-term employment opportunities, training to registered unemployed jobseekers who are recipients of social aid and Unemployment Hardship Relief. Under this programme, 1,226 unemployed persons have been offered placement. The PPT has for objective to offer financial assistance and entrepreneurial support to ex-ERP trainees in view of enabling them to earn a living independently by channelling them in an income-generating activity. Some 136 persons have been placed under the PPT as at date. The employment office also acts as a facilitator in terms of creating the link between employers and jobseekers so as to capitalise on opportunities available in the labour market.

Madam Chairperson, my Commission has entered into an agreement with the EU for the implementation of a project worth more than Rs 40 M. The project consists of the setting up of an integrated chilly farm at Montagne du Sable and a lime and honey farm at Anse Ali. Various contracts have already been awarded. The project targets beneficiaries of social aid so as to make them more economically independent by implementing climate's smart agriculture practices in sustainable ways to earn a living. Some 40 beneficiaries are expected to enrol in this project. In addition, Madam Chairperson, in addition to these measures, there are other actions being undertaken by other Commissions of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly in view of making these people more economically independent.

The Commission for Women Affairs and Others, for example, provides training in various skills and has a number of women empowerment initiatives to help people in setting up small scales projects and it mainly concerns women with earning social aid, benefitting from social aid. In addition, the Commission for Agriculture has implemented a number of

agricultural incentives scheme projects in crop and livestock so as to enable beneficiaries who are essentially recipient of social aid to earn their living professionally. And, we should also note that several social aid beneficiaries, ex-social aid beneficiaries have been able to secure a permanent job in the private and public sector as well as RRA owned companies during the past three years, thus making them economically autonomous.

Madam Chairperson, I am tabling the requested information.

Mr Grandcourt: Entre-temps, Madame la présidente, j'aimerais demander au Commissaire qu'en est-il du projet ERP ? Est-ce qu'il y a eu des suivis ? Comment est-ce qu'ils évaluent la performance en termes de productivité de ces personnes qui ont bénéficié de ces projets sous le ERP ?

Mr Baptiste: *Donc, l'évaluation* is being done by officers of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly if obviously they are working under the different Commissions but as since the last financial year, we are targeting mainly beneficiaries who are placed in the private sector. Therefore, there are follow-up made by the concerned person from the private sector in collaboration with officers of the Employment Office of my Commission. And, we have a monthly report, they should submit a monthly report so as to ensure that they really improving their performance.

Mr Grandcourt: Ça veut dire, Madame la présidente, que les personnes qui ont bénéficié du projet ERP, autres qui sont pris en charge par les établissements privés, ils sont laissés pour contre parce que lorsqu'on passe, on voit les projets débattre, les projets agricoles, on voit des bassins qui ont été donnés aux gens, *fencing* etc. mais ils ne produisent absolument rien ! Donc, que fait le Commissaire pour ces gens qui n'ont malheureusement pas réussi dans ces projets-là ?

Mr Baptiste: *Donc, dans ce cas*, you are making reference to PPT, not ERP. It is true some beneficiaries have some difficulties to complete, to implement their project. That is why we have for example, for those who were involved in livestock and particularly, those who have not been able to complete their structure, their shed, we have...

Donc, on a dépêché une équipe de la Commission du logement, des maçons pour donner un coup de main à ces gens-là et bien sûr, nous travaillons également en étroite collaboration avec la Commission de l'agriculture pour s'assurer que ces gens-là puissent vraiment *complete*,

implement their project correctly. Il y a quelques cas. Ce n'est pas généralisé mais il y a quelques cas, c'est vrai, qui sont toujours quand même un petit peu en retard.

Madam Chairperson: Respected Member Agathe.

Mrs Agathe: Madame la présidente, je voudrais demander au Commissaire s'il est au courant que il y a des personnes qui ont travaillé sur le ERP qui attendent toujours un bail pour monter leur projet. Ça fait plus de cinq ans et ces personnes-là, ils font ce qu'ils peuvent pour se débrouiller mais jusqu'à l'heure, rien n'est fait. Qu'est-ce qu'ils comptent faire de ça ?

Mr Baptiste: Donc, normalement, il y a un suivi au niveau de la Commission mais s'il y a quelques cas, peut-être s'ils n'ont pas fait remonté le cas au niveau de la Commission, mais en général, normalement, nous suivons les dossiers avec les différentes Commissions concernées, que ce soit au niveau de l'agriculture ou au niveau du cadastre. Mais s'il y a des cas spécifiques, à ce moment-là, il faudra peut-être faire parvenir les noms au niveau de la Commission.

Mr Volbert: Le *social aid* qui tombe sous le *Social Register of Mauritius (SRM)*, est-ce qu'on peut savoir si c'est pour les enfants ou pour la maman ? Parce que des fois quand les officiers font des site visites, dès qu'ils aperçoivent un jean à la corde au linge, l'argent est coupé automatiquement.

Mr Baptiste: Ça, c'est totalement faux parce que le SRM, donc, quoi que ça ne tombent pas directement sous la Commission de la sécurité sociale par rapport au management, pour le SRM, ça, je suis sûr c'est complètement faux parce que c'est un système complètement différent de *social aid* qui est géré par la Commission de sécurité sociale. Donc, c'est pour la famille, les papas, mamans et les enfants. Donc, ce n'est pas pareil comme *social aid*. SRM, donc, c'est complètement faux.

Mr Volbert: Ce que je comprends là, dans la réponse du Commissaire, Madame la présidente, il se peut qu'il y a un autre *scheme*, un autre *social aid*, pardon, où la pension est coupée dès qu'on voit le pantalon jean accroché à la corde au linge.

Mr Baptiste: *Ça, ce sont certaines personnes qui font croire parce que j'ai bien dit dans ma réponse.* The Social Aid Act is regulated... pardon ...is under... This is the national law and the officers of the Social Security Division will ensure that according to existing rules

and regulation, laws, these people will be paid accordingly. *Mais pour dire pour voir des jeans, donc, dans le règlement, ça n'existe pas. Mais ces gens-là, ils savent pourquoi parfois their social aids are being disallowed but not for the reasons that I have been given by...*

Mr Grandcourt: Alors, toujours est-il que... J'aimerais poser la question au Commissaire, revenant sur le ERP, pourquoi est-ce qu'il a arrêté ce projet ERP ? Pourquoi bouger vers le PPT ? Pourquoi ? Pourquoi est-ce que... Est-ce qu'il a vu que le projet ne marchait pas ? Pourquoi cette transition ?

Mr Baptiste: *Donc, c'est parce que comme j'ai bien dit, le projet targeted mainly recipients of social aid and UHR and most of the people who were eligible under this programme have been able to be enrolled under this project. Donc, on a maintenant changé un petit peu la formule and we are targeting less people and they are being placed mainly in the private sector in a field of interest where it will be easier for them to become... to... comment dire... dans un projet qu'ils ont déjà quand même des capacités pour trouver un emploi, so that they can become more employable in the specific field where they are being placed. It is mainly according to what they have as basic skills. That is why we have changed the formula but it is still on.*

Mr Grandcourt: C'est vrai, Madame la présidente, il y a un cas qui concerne la Commission de la sécurité sociale, une personne qui gagne Rs1500 *social aid* et cette même personne doit payer Rs1100 pour payer la maison qui a été donnée par la Commission. Donc, est-ce que le Commissaire ne peut pas voir au sein de l'Assemblée régionale, je ne dis pas que ce n'est pas bon, mais de voir comment aider ces gens-là ? Une personne qui gagne Rs1500 *social aid* et doit payer Rs1100 pour la maison que cette personne-là vient de recevoir.

Mr Baptiste: *We have to be careful about figures when people give their information* parce que ces derniers temps, nous avons remarqué qu'il y a beaucoup d'informations erronées, que ce soit malheureusement à la radio ou publiées sur Internet à travers certains journaux complètement faux, des vidéos tout ça, ça, j'ai beaucoup d'informations là-dessus. Mais pour revenir à ce que vous avez dit, Madame la présidente, *these people, their contribution, they obtained their contribution through the banks and the bank will first of all, assess the capacity of the person to refund the loan and it is not based on social aid. And, it is also important to note that social aid is not a wage; it is a social aid, a financial help. So, very often, these people, they perform other economic activities and it is...* c'est permis contrairement à ce que

certaines personnes pensent. Oui, oui, c'est permis. Quelqu'un peut faire quelque chose et en même temps, toucher le *social aid* mais il y a bien sûr des critères. Tout ça, c'est bien écrit dans la loi. Donc, ces gens-là, *their assessment by the bank has not been based on the amount of social aid paid but on the other amount of money which are generally versé* sur leur compte en banque. Oui.

Mr Perrine: *Yes, Madam Chairperson*, puisque le Commissaire vient d'annoncer qu'il y a des vidéos, des presses, des informations dans la presse qui sont fausses, j'aimerais venir directement au cas de Madame. Cette dame de Montagne Charlot, là, Montagne Fanal, qu'on a été visitée juste après du dernier parlement, est-ce que le Commissaire peut nous dire qu'est-ce qui s'est passé avec cette personne-là et pourquoi cette personne qui vit dans une maison délabrée est dans un tel état jusqu'aujourd'hui ? Puisque nous n'avons pas les informations et les informations que nous avons données sur la presse sont erronées, est-ce que le Commissaire peut éclairer cette Chambre concernant ce cas spécifique ?

Mr Baptiste: I think that the Member is referring not to a case of social aid but housing. But if you want the information, I just want to inform you that that same person has benefitted from construction materials but unfortunately, she never constructed the house but on a humanitarian ground, well before you visited that person, we had already decided due to the vulnerability of that person to grant her the additional construction materials so that she can live in a better condition but she obtained construction materials to build her house well before some four/five years back, Madam Chairperson.

Mr Perrine: Madam Chairperson, this case, this issue of giving construction materials to beneficiaries, this is not new. It does not work and the Commissioner has the responsibility to put people to monitor whatever funds is being given to people for construction of whatever houses or water tanks etc. This is his duty to put people to monitor. Can the Commissioner ensure to this House that this new facility that he is going to give to that person will be closely monitored and will have a final good result for these people?

Mr Baptiste: So, if we know this case, it is because we are monitoring all these things now. Because I realised that when I came in 2012, so many cases were pending like that. *Nous pouvons prendre les cas de toutes ces maisons où on avait acheté les matériaux bien avant* before you took power. That is why through monitoring, we realised that there are some cases, unfortunately, people were not using their materials for the purpose it was given to them.

Mr Perrine: Can I know from the Commissioner a timeframe for the... solve. Pour résoudre ce problème, ça va prendre combien de temps? Est-ce que ce sera en 2020 ou ce sera après?

Mr Baptiste: As a Commissioner, I am responsible for all those people who have reported their cases at our Commission and so, she is among a list of a certain number of people obviously. She will not be considered as a specific one but among the batch which is now being processed and we expect that by the end of this year, all the persons involved will be taken on board.

Madam Chairperson: Last question. Yes?

Mr Von-Mally: Yes, thank you, Madam Chairperson. Can I ask the respected Commissioner whether he is contemplating the possibility of giving special attention to cancer patient? Because these people are facing dire situation and I am thinking of this case of Soupir. I would like to know from the respected Commissioner whether he has been there to see and whether he will give a special attention to these people.

Mr Baptiste: Case of Soupir or case of L'Union? Just obviously as I have said, social aid is... We have to consider all these cases obviously but according to what is there in the law. But yes, unfortunately, even for cancer cases, it is not necessary that they have more than 60% of disability unfortunately, because it depends on the stage. For the case... Yes. For the case of L'Union, that person was benefitting from a basic invalidity pension but then, unfortunately for reasons that the board; not the Commissioner, by the board chaired by two medical officers...

(Interruptions)

Madam Chairperson: Order! Respected Members, please!

Mr Baptiste: Yes, the basic invalidity pension was disallowed but unfortunately, there is the appeal, tribunal appeal but she did not apply for same. *Mais ce qui est aussi... malheureusement ce que la personne n'a pas dit*, she was awarded, she was recommended for a social aid and she is being paid a social aid. *Et pas comme elle avait dit qu'elle n'a rien. Donc*, yes.

(Interruptions)

Madam Chairperson: Order ! Order !

Mr Baptiste: Yes. She is being paid a monthly social aid of Rs 2,727, Madam Chairperson. But I must once again, ensure the House that all is done as per existing Laws, Rules and Regulations.

Et, je dois même dire que même quand l'autre parti était au pouvoir, on a eu beaucoup de ces cas-là. Donc, malheureusement, on ne peut pas aller à l'encontre des recommandations des médecins sur le *Board*, qui travaillent selon les guidelines de la loi. Mais par contre, nous au niveau de l'Assemblée Régionale de Rodrigues, là où nous avons les *policies*, nous avons des projets et nous aidons ces personnes-là. Par exemple, à travers le *Basic Sanitary Schemes*, qui n'existe pas à Maurice, nous aidons les gens qui souffrent d'une certaine maladie et nous contribuons à la hauteur de Rs90,000 pour permettre à ces gens-là d'avoir une toilette et salle de bain en bon et due forme et ça, nous aidons ces gens-là. Il y a le *Family in Distress*, mais ce qui est strictement concernant les lois as per the *National Pensions Act*, ça c'est au niveau du Ministre de la sécurité sociale et du Gouvernement nationale. Nous ne pouvons pas aller à l'encontre de ça. Mais moi je suis fier de dire, vous pouvez demander aux personnes handicapées à Rodrigues que nous avons beaucoup apporté contrairement à ce qu'il y avait avant 2012.

Madam Chairperson: Next question !

Mr Augustin: B/89.

SLAUGHTER HOUSE – BAIE DIAMANT

(No. B/89) The Fourth Island Region Member (Mr J. R. Augustin) asked the Commissioner for Industrial Development and Others whether, in regard to the Slaughter House at Baie Diamant, she will state, for the benefit of the House, if it is now operational, indicating: -

- (a) the company selected therefor as well as its track record/experience in the sector, and the conditions attached thereto;
- (b) if an open tender exercise was launched therefor, tabling, in the affirmative, the list of tenderers as well as the tender document; and

- (c) how far will her Commission be involved in its operationalisation?

Mrs Gaspard Pierre Louis: Madam Chairperson, with a view to operationalise the Slaughter House at Baie Diamant, my Commission launched an Expression of Interest among local and foreign firms on 28 March 2018 to obtain a short list of eligible and qualified firms to operate the Slaughter House on a Public Private Partnership (PPP) model as the Rodrigues Regional Assembly does not have the expertise and knowhow to manage a slaughter house.

However, no firm responded to the invitation at the closing date set for 30 April 2018.

Subsequently, an Expression of Interest among local and national firms was launched anew on 19 November 2019 and at the closing date set for 11 December 2019, one firm and two micro enterprises have expressed their interest to operate the Slaughter House at Baie Diamant.

Thereafter, the Evaluation Committee, comprising of Representatives of the Commission for Industrial Development, Public Health and Agriculture which was set up to evaluate the three applications received has recommended that only the firm namely Fine Foods Marketing Ltd is by far the most qualified for the sustainable operation of the Slaughter House.

- (a) With respect to part (a) of the question, the application from Fine Foods Ltd was retained on the basis that the Company is financially strong, has the experience in meat processing and has a global networking for the sales of a wide array of products. The Company is a well-established purveyor of chilled and frozen foodstuffs in Mauritius. Its core business activity consists of sourcing, producing, distributing and marketing quality products with focus on chilled and frozen food. The Company also operates a processing facility adding value to meat and sea food. In addition, the Company has proposed a viable development plan for the sustainable operation of the Slaughter House and Processing Unit.
- (b) With regards part (b), Madam Chairperson, as mentioned earlier, in accordance with Section 24(2) of the Public Procurement Act 2006, Expression of Interest was launched in order to shortlist interested firms to operate the Slaughter House.

Being given that only the company was shortlisted, there was no need to undertake further procurement proceedings.

- (c) With respect to part (c), my Commission will not be involved directly in the operationalisation of the Slaughter House as it is the responsibility of the selected firm to equip the facility with the appropriate equipment in view to operate the slaughtering and processing unit in line with existing norms and standards and ensure the proper management and operations of same.

However, my Commission will ensure in collaboration with the Commission for Agriculture that necessary action is taken to boost the livestock sector and improve the pig value chain in Rodrigues with a view to guarantee that the Company is supplied with the required live pigs on a monthly basis.

Mr Von-Mally: Can I know from the respected Commissioner whether, the Slaughter House is operating as it should be actually?

Madam Chairperson: Actuellement, non, Madame la présidente. Mais cependant, je dois vous dire que dans un souci de donner un cadre plus correcte, un cadre sanitaire conforme à ce que la santé publique demande, il y a eu récemment la délocalisation de deux personnes qui travaillaient, qui faisaient la tuerie des bœufs, qui se faisait à l'ancienne tuerie de Port Mathurin. Ils ont été relocalisés à Baie Diamant. Donc, il y a une partie de ce bâtiment, de ce complexe qui est en opération.

Mr Von-Mally: The respected Commissioner has been saying that this company Fine Foods Marketing Ltd. has got wide experience in meat processing. I wonder whether she has got the right information because according to my information from the Corporate and Business Registration Department, there is a certificate that these companies have got. It has only got the... as nature of business, merchant and wholesale dealer distributor of general merchandise. I wonder whether due diligence has been made while looking at this company to see whether this company can really operate this Slaughter House. Can I know whether this had been done at the level of the Commission?

Mrs Mrs Gaspard Pierre-Louis: Effectivement, Madame la présidente, comme je l'ai dit dans ma réponse au départ, il y a eu une évaluation et, surtout on a pris des informations. Donc, par rapport aussi au document, au portfolio soumis par la compagnie, le Comité

D'évaluation a pris en compte tout ça. Et, juste pour vous dire, que cette compagnie a été incorporé en 2003. *The company generate an average net income of Rs 33 m. per year and have a net asset of Rs 186 m. in 2018. The company operates a processing facility for meat and sea food.* Effectivement, *and its port-folio of product comprises chill and frozen meat*, comme je l'ai dit, *frozen sea food and a wide array of other products.* Oui, cette compagnie est effectivement engagé dans ces activités mentionnées.

Mr Von-Mally: I think this is a good case for ICAC to inquire in. Can I know from the respected Commissioner whether, this company has started operating? She has said it has not started but other people are operating the slaughter house. Is she aware that actually we have sanitary problems at this place where hides, we have wastes products are being scattered here and there? *L'odeur pestilentiel qu'il y a là-bas. Est-ce qu'elle est au courant de cela ?*

Mrs Gaspard Pierre-Louis: Madame la présidente, je ne suis pas au courant qu'il y a une odeur pestilentiel comme le dit le respecté Membre Von-Mally. Ce que je sais, c'est qu'il y a une équipe, il y a l'équipe des sanitaires, de temps en temps mes officiers aussi passent pour voir comment ce site est maintenu, surtout par rapport à la propreté, à l'hygiène. S'il y a une odeur, mon attention n'a pas été attiré en ce sens. Et, bien sûr, je vais m'assurer que ce n'est pas le cas et s'il y a besoin de prendre des décisions par rapport à ça, si vraiment il y a ces soucis-là, on va le faire.

Madam Chairperson: Respected Member, Volbert.

Mr Volbert: *Thank you, Madam Chairperson.* J'aurais aimé demandé à la Commissaire, étant donné qu'il y a plusieurs personnes qui ont été envoyés à La Réunion pour suivre des cours de formation dans le *meat processing*. Est-ce que ces personne-là seront considérés pour travailler dans ce *slaughter house*, étant donné que beaucoup d'argent ont été dépensé pour leurs formations ?

Mrs Gaspard Pierre-Louis: Certainement, Madame la présidente, ces jeunes qu'on a envoyé en formation, aujourd'hui je suis contente qu'il y a certains qui continuent à pratiquer ce métier de charcutier. Il y en a qui ont pris de l'emploi ailleurs mais qui continuent même à temps partiel. En effet, nous sommes en ce moment à élaborer le MOU avec les conditions claires par rapport aux employés pour l'abattoir. Donc, nous avons prévu de faire en sorte que dans les *manpower* qui seront recrutés, que les jeunes de Rodrigues, bien sûr avec l'expérience, avec la bonne volonté, la bonne attitude, si ces jeunes sont intéressés à travailler à l'abattoir, s'ils se présentent et que c'est la compagnie qui recrute, si la compagnie trouve en ces jeunes

des potentiels ressources pour la compagnie, bien sûr ils vont les prendre. Je ne peux pas vous aujourd'hui que je vais exiger cette compagnie de prendre ces personnes. Parce que je pense que c'est clair que quand on recrute quelqu'un, la compétence est important, la bonne attitude, il y a toute un ensemble de condition. Et ça, c'est à la compagnie de prendre en compte. Par contre, on va s'assurer que le *manpower*, soit majoritairement Rodriguais.

Madam Chairperson: Minority Leader, yes?

Mr Grandcourt: Merci, Madame la présidente. On nous a tout le temps reproché qu'on ne pourrait pas ouvrir l'abattoir parce qu'il n'y avait pas de *feasibility study*. Mais là soudainement, avec l'arrivée de Fine Food, on trouve que c'est bon d'ouvrir l'abattoir. Est-ce que le Commissaire peut nous expliquer comment se fait-il que soudainement maintenant, il trouve que s'est approprié d'ouvrir l'abattoir de Baie Diamant ?

Mrs Gaspard Pierre-Louis: Madame la présidente, je ne vais pas aller répondre à cette polémique. C'est clair que quand l'abattoir avait été conçu, rien n'avait été fait pour voir quel est la capacité en terme de production de porc. Aujourd'hui, je suis contente qu'on a eu, grâce au support de LFL, ils ont fait une étude qui s'appelle, 'l'Approche Filière', en concertation avec le Commissaire de l'agriculture. Aujourd'hui, on a le rapport de LFL, qui nous donne une indication claire quelle est la situation aujourd'hui en terme de production de porc, qui nous donne aujourd'hui une indication claire dans quelle direction aller pour assurer la soutenabilité de l'abattoir, qui nous donne aujourd'hui une indication claire de qu'est-ce qu'on doit faire aujourd'hui pour assurer qu'il y a plus de production de porc. Donc, oui aujourd'hui on a une étude de faisabilité et on sait comment faire et qu'est-ce qu'il faut faire pour assurer que l'abattoir fonctionne. Et, bien sûr aussi, que les éleveurs puissent vivre davantage de leurs métiers.

Madam Chairperson: Respected Member. Von-Mally?

Mr Von-Mally: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Well, after almost ten years of the eatalaying, we are going to this slaughter house. Can I know from the respected Commissioner whether, this slaughter house that is being to open soon, can we know what is the time frame? How long it will take for it to be opened? Whether, you have a time limit that has been set up for this to be opened?

Mrs Gaspard Pierre-Louis: En effet, Madame la présidente, on aurait dû aller beaucoup plus vite avec l'opérationnalisation de l'abattoir. Malheureusement, avec la situation de COVID, ces équipements que la compagnie doit commander d'ailleurs a mis plus de

temps. Et, nous espérons dans quelques jours que les représentants de la compagnie vont arriver, on va finaliser la signature du MOU. Et, en même temps aussi, on va finaliser ensemble le *implementation schedule*, pour l'opérationnalisation de l'abattoir, sachant comme j'ai dit aussi que le cadre de l'étude, l'approche filière qui a été fait par LFL, nous avons aussi un travail à faire au niveau des éleveurs.

Madam Chairperson: Respected Member, Perrine.

Mr Perrine: *Yes, Madam Chairperson.* Le Chef commissaire a souvent dit dans cette Chambre et partout ailleurs : « *Rodriguais capable, pas capable ?* ». Ce *slaughter house* a été construit pour faciliter l'abattage des animaux à Rodrigues. Nous avons dépensé plus de Rs 7 million pour envoyer des jeunes à La Réunion, pour les formations, ainsi que nous avons fait déplacer des formateurs de St. Joseph, à La Réunion, pour venir encadrer nos jeunes ici avec l'espoir que ces jeunes vont prendre le relais pour faire démarrer cette abattoir comme la ci-bien dit le Commissaire en question à plusieurs reprises dans cette Chambre. Aujourd'hui, elle vient nous dire qu'elle a lancé un *tender*, un *open bid* pour qu'il y est des compétences pour qu'on puisse rouler cette abattoir. Madame la présidente, est-ce que les Rodriguais n'ont pas cette possibilité de faire tourner cette abattoir ? Le rôle de l'Assemblée Régionale, c'est d'accompagner. Pourquoi le Commissaire en question n'a pas vu juste de faire un PPP avec ces 20 étudiants qui ont étudiés dans la charcuterie pour démarrer ce *business* à Rodrigues ?

Mrs Gaspard Pierre-Louis: Madame la présidente, je suis une fervente croyante dans la capacité de Rodrigues et des Rodriguais. Cependant, Madame la présidente, ces jeunes ont été envoyés pour trois mois de formation à La Réunion, même pas pour sept million, c'est un chiffre exagérer. C'est environ quatre million quelque chose. Trois mois ! Madame la présidente, est-ce qu'en trois mois un jeune peut gérer un abattoir ? Ce n'est pas une petite boucherie du coin, Madame la présidente. Trois mois, on ne devient pas boucher ou charcutier, on devient un ouvrier, peut-être même pas. C'est avec le temps qu'on devient un ouvrier. Bien sûr, nous on veut, d'ailleurs on va faire encore venir des gens, pour former d'autres personnes, pour former davantage ces jeunes, pour qu'un jour ils puissent gérer cette abattoir. Mais aujourd'hui, confier un abattoir qui a couté près de Rs 100 millions, d'ailleurs, c'était commencé, un moment on disait 7 millions, s'est arrivé à 100 millions, confier à ces jeunes avec trois mois de formation pour gérer un abattoir, Madame la présidente, là c'est vraiment exagéré. Au contraire, nous on veut que ces jeunes demain, quand ils seront recrutés, qu'ils apprennent, qu'ils accompagnent, qu'ils ont continué à apprendre avec ces personnes qui vont gérer, qui ont une grande expérience. Et, faut dire aussi, qu'on a continué à investir dans ces

jeunes. Aujourd'hui, on a ces jeunes qui opèrent au niveau du '*bazaar*', du marché de Port Mathurin, ils vendent leurs produits, on continu à les accompagner. Mais on a vu que trois mois de formation, on ne devient pas un professionnel qui peut gérer un abattoir de cette envergure parce que ce n'est pas une petite boucherie. Au contraire, il faudra révolutionner ce secteur. On va devoir encore, beaucoup d'années encore, nécessité de l'accompagnement, de la formation du *hand holding* pour rassurer que ce secteur fonctionne comme il se doit.

Madam Chairperson: One last question, respected Member, Félicité, yes.

Mr Félicité: Can I know from the Commissioner; which animal will be processed there? And, the target market for the number of animals per month, at least?

Mrs Gaspard Pierre-Louis: En effet, Madame la présidente. Je parlais récemment justement là, juste de l'étude qui a été faite par rapport à cette abattoir, au risque d'usurper les prérogatives de mon collègue le Commissaire de l'agriculture, je souhaiterais informer la Chambre qu'actuellement à Rodrigues, l'étude faite par LFL a démontré qu'il y a environ 10,000 porcs qui sont produit chaque année et 100% de cette production actuelle est transformé et consommer sur place. C'est-à-dire, que tous projets pour exporter des carcasses de viande va nécessiter un renforcement dans la production de porc. Et là, c'est ça le travail que mon collègue le Commissaire de l'agriculture et mon bureau nous allons faire ensemble avec des associations d'éleveurs et les coopératives, pour produire davantage pour l'abattage, pour l'abattoir et pour la transformation et l'exportation. Bien sûr, il faudra être juste aussi dans cette demande *Fine Foods* demande au moins 110 porcs toute de suite par mois dans un cadre correct d'élevage avec un cahier des charges clair, question sanitaire et autres. Donc, nous on va travailler à cela et l'idée c'est qu'on va avec l'opérationnalisation, on ne peut pas aujourd'hui demander aux gens de produire davantage parce que le marché n'est pas là. Le marché sera là quand l'abattoir sera opérationnel. Ça a nécessité, environ 110 par 12, au plus vite 1,500 pors en plus, toute de suite. Donc, ce travail va se faire et quand je dis 1,500, c'est environ le nombre qu'on a besoin par an. On va travailler, d'ailleurs le Commissaire de l'agriculture a déjà commencé à donner des projets pour la production porcine. Donc, ce projet, je suis sûre va aller de l'avant dans les meilleurs délais et comme il se doit.

Madam Chairperson: Next question. Order!

ECOLE MATERNELLES DE RODRIGUES

(No. B/90) **Mr J.R. Augustin (Fourth Island Region Member)** asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the *Association des Ecoles Maternelles de Rodrigues*, he will obtain information therefrom or from any relevant authority to state, for the benefit of the House: -

- (a) if the association is duly registered with the Registrar of Association and the Early Childhood Care and Education Authority and, if so, since when;
- (b) if all employees appointed thereby have been given a contract on such terms and conditions including remuneration in line with prescribed guidelines and scales; and
- (c) the composition of the board of directors thereof and when did they take office?

The Chief Commissioner: Madam Chairperson, as regards to part (a) of the question, I am informed that the Association des Ecoles Maternelles de Rodrigues is duly registered with the Registrar of Association since 19 October 1981 under the provision of the Registration of Associations Act, 1978. For the time being, the Association is not registered with the Early Childhood Care and Education Authority (ECCEA). However, I am informed that procedures have already been initiated for registration with the Early Childhood Care and Education Authority (ECCEA).

Madam Chairperson, it is worth mentioning that the primary schools in Rodrigues have been functioning in a different context from those in Mauritius. To better support the Association des Ecoles Maternelles and to improve the Pre-primary Sector in Rodrigues, my Commission is working in close collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology; the Mauritius Institute of Education and the Early Childhood Care and Education Authority.

Madam Chairperson, as regards to part (b), I wish to inform the House that in line with the policy decision of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly to provide free education to all pre-primary pupils, my Commission has been providing all necessary support to the Association des Ecoles Maternelles de Rodrigues. For instance, a financial grant is provided to the Association des Ecoles Maternelles de Rodrigues since 2014 for payment of salaries in favour of all pre-primary teachers.

Madam Chairperson, I wish to further inform the House that under my government the conditions of service of the pre-primary teachers, who were struggling for fixed salary for years, have improved. Accordingly, all pre-primary teachers have a duly signed Contract of Employment with the Association des Ecoles Maternelles de Rodrigues and salaries are in line with the Pre-primary School Employees (Remuneration) Regulations. All benefits including annual leave, maternity leave and death grant are also being paid.

Moreover, the House will recall that the elaboration of a human resource management plan and consolidation of the administrative and pedagogical support to the Association des Ecoles Maternelles de Rodrigues was announced in my Budget Speech 2018/2019.

My Commission has therefore decided to provide an additional financial grant to the Association des Ecoles Maternelles de Rodrigues for the recruitment of one Administrative Support Officer and two Coordinators, pre-primary sector to provide administrative and pedagogical support to the association.

Madam Chairperson, the Association des Ecoles Maternelles de Rodrigues has already recruited one Administrative Support Officer and one Coordinator Pre-primary since January 2020. They are being paid salaries as per qualifications requirements for the posts and same is in line with the Workers' Right Act 2019 – Act of No.20 of 2019 and Government Notice No. 219 of 2019.

Madam Chairperson, the Helpers working in pre-primary schools have been offered part time employment of two hours daily with effect from 01 July 2020 against a monthly payment of Rs 2,845 and according to the Association des Ecoles Maternelles, all Helpers of the 30 existing private pre-primary school have accepted the offers as well as the four Helpers posted in government pre-primary schools. I am informed that previously, they were being paid an allowance of Rs 2,000 by the PTA of their respective schools. Seven additional Helpers have been recruited by the Association des Ecoles Maternelles in August 2020 to provide one additional Helper to those schools of more than 60 pupils.

Madam Chairperson, the Association des Ecoles Maternelles de Rodrigues has also requested a review of the salary of the teachers. Due consideration will be given to their proposal in the light of the tight imposed budget restrictions following the COVID-19 outbreak.

As regards to part (c), there is a Managing Committee as per the rules of the Association and no board of Directors. The Association des Ecoles Maternelles de Rodrigues has informed

that their Managing Committee was elected at a general meeting held on 01 July 2017 and is composed of: -

- A President;
- An Assistant President;
- A Secretary;
- An Assistant Secretary;
- A Treasury;
- An Assistant Treasury; and
- Five Members.

I am also informed that due to COVID-19 pandemic, the election for a new Managing Committee was scheduled on Saturday 12 September 2020.

Mr Augustin: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Concerning the answer for part (a), l'Association des Ecoles Maternelles de Rodrigues is not registered with the Early Childhood Care and Education Authority. Can I know from the Commissioner, if I am referring to the Early Childhood Care and Education Authority, it is stated that section 19 – Offences: “*No educational institutions shall operate without being registered with the authority.*” And second, “*No person shall deliver early childhood care and education in an educational institution unless he is an educator registered with the authority.*” Can I know from the Commissioner whether, l'Association des Ecoles Maternelles is not doing offences regarding to the Early Childhood Care and Education Authority?

The Chief Commissioner: As I have said, Madam Chairperson, I am informed that the Association des Ecole Maternelles de Rodrigues is duly registered with a Registrar of Associations as an association since 19 October 1981 under the provision of the Registration of Association Act. But for the time being, the association is not registered with the Early Childhood Care and Education Authority. However, I am informed that procedures have already been initiated for registration with the Early Childhood Care and Education Authority (ECCA).

Mr Augustin: Yes, but they are illegal. They registered since 1981 with the Registrar of Associations and it is now that the association will register (I do not know when) with the Early Childhood Care and Education Authority. It is for that reason that I said that with regard

to the ECCA Act the *association* has been doing offences. It is for that reason. They are operating illegally according to this Act.

The Chief Commissioner: No, Madam Chairperson, they are not operating illegally. They have registered themselves to the Registrar of Associations Act. It is legal. The Associations Act just like any NGOs associated to the Registrar of Associations Act. It is legal. But formerly, the teachers and so on, helpers were paid by the PTAs (Parents Teachers Association) of each pre-primary schools. But they had some problems with the PTAs and they could not pay the teachers or the helpers. That is why, we at the level of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly recognising that they are registered to the Registrar of Associations, *nous considérons que c'est illégal et nous au niveau de l'Assemblée Régionale on peut leur donner a grant, c'est-à-dire, une aide pour qu'ils puissent continuer à exercer leurs travaux du pré-primaire.*

Mr Augustin: Est-ce qu'on peut savoir du Commissaire, est-ce qu'il a eu un avis légal concernant ce paiement ? Parce que là, ce n'est pas clair du tout. Parce que l'association, il devrait être enregistrer avec le Registrar of Associations et aussi avec le Early Childhood Care and Education Authority. C'est ça, est-ce qu'il a eu l'avis légal pour donner des *grant* a l'Association des Ecoles Maternelles pour pouvoir faire les paiements ?

The Chief Commissioner: Madame la présidente, l'Association des Ecoles Maternelles quand elle a été créé, elle avait un but de faire un beau travail pour les enfants pré-primaires. Et nous, dans notre vision d'autonomie, nous avons pensé justement, nous avons décidé au niveau du Conseil Exécutif de les aider, pas eux mais les enfants. Ça c'est bien important, les enfants. Alors, maintenant pour entrer dans le primaire, il faut que ces enfants puissent avoir une formation, pré-primaire. Mais là ils ont demandé et ils ont commencés. Mais là aussi, le ministère de l'Education savait, mais le ministère de l'Education n'a rien dit par rapport au fait qu'ils ne sont pas enregistrés au ECCEA. Et là, ils ont demandé/initié ce projet de se faire enregistrer pour ECCEA. Et, s'est déjà pas mal, s'est déjà pas mal. Mais ce que nous ici à Rodrigues nous avons eu cette joie d'aider les pré-primaires et ces enfants. C'est pourquoi on a vu dans le cas, comme on donne des *grants* aux autres associations, et on sait on peut leurs donner aussi des *grants* pour faire rouler les écoles maternelles en faveur de nos petits-enfants. Jésus Christ a dit : « *Laissez venir à moi les petits-enfants* ».

Mr Von-Mally: I have listened carefully to what the Chief Commissioner has said and I conquer that “*Jésus a dit laissez venir à mois les petits-enfants*”. Mais Jésus Christ aussi a

dit, il faut faire les choses d'après la loi. J'aurais aimé demander au Chef Commissaire s'il n'a pas enfreint les lois en ne venant pas devant l'Assemblée avec des Règlements. Because according to the RRA Act, we can have Regulations that applied for Rodrigues, that are in addition to existing law but not in the rogation to the existing law. Therefore, in this case should the Chief Commissioner not have come with the proper Regulation so that we can go according to the law. Because here, they are operating illegally.

The Chief Commissioner: Madame la présidente, attendons quand ils seront enregistrer pour ECCEA. On verra ce qu'on peut faire après. Mais l'Honorable Membre n'a pas compris c'est que l'école maternelle c'est une ONG (Organisation Non Gouvernemental). Vous comprenez ? Et comme nous, au niveau de l'Assemblée Régionale, nous donnons de l'aide aux organisations non gouvernemental. *(Alors, on va faire après on verra, après on verra).* Mais il faut savoir, Madame, que nous aidons beaucoup d'ONGs. Beaucoup d'ONGs que nous aidons, que ce soit pour aller à Maurice, pour aller en tel mission et ainsi de suite, nous les aidons. Quel est notre devoir, nous les responsables de cette Assemblée ? Quel est notre devoir ? De bloquer les Rodriguais, de les empêcher de continuer leur travail social ? *Trouvé là !* Mais c'est justement, ça existe notre l'Assemblée Régionale d'aider les personnes. Dans le budget il existe de l'aide aux organisations non-gouvernemental et, nous le faisons. Nous avons compris que l'écoles maternelle qui est enregistré au *Registrar of Associations* comme une organisation non-gouvernemental. Et, nous avons fait notre devoir. D'accord pas d'accord ?

Madam Chairperson: Next question.

Mr Von-Mally: Madame la présidente, une dernière...

Madam Chairperson: Next question, Respected Member. Time is...

Mr Von-Mally: Il doit aller d'après la loi sinon...

[Interruption]

HOUSEHOLD BIOGAS PROJECT

- PRODUCTION OF ENERGY FROM HOUSEHOLD ORGANIC WASTES

(No. B/91) **Mr J.R. Augustin (Fourth Island Region Member)** asked the Commissioner for Agriculture and Others whether, he will, in regard to the household biogas project co-financed by the Indian Ocean Commission and the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, inform the House on where matters stand as at date indicating the: -

- (a) starting and completion date thereof and the successful bidder;
- (b) total number of bio digesters implemented under this project and the villages concerned; and
- (c) total cost of the project and the amount of money disbursed therefor as to date?

Mr Payendee: Madam Chairperson, with regard to part (a) of the question, the project for the *'Production of Energy from Household Organic Wastes'* officially started on 07 November 2017 following the signature of the Contract Agreement with the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) and the Rodrigues Regional Assembly (RRA). The project was completed on 31 May 2020.

Madam Chairperson, I wish to stress that this project was based on the concept of transfer of technology and sustainability. The aim was to acquire the required knowhow by local constructors for the construction of bio digesters and for the future replication.

In addition, Madam Chairperson, I would like to inform the House that this project is quite a revolutionary one and is in line with the vision of this government to make Rodrigues an ecological island. Nevertheless, the production of biogas digesters from organic waste at household level is not widely available in the region, whereby, the services of a consultant with wide experience was recruited in designing the most adaptable prototype for Rodrigues.

The transfer of technology and sustainability was ensured through the training of Mauritius Institute of Training and Development (MITD) students by the consultant. Initially 16 persons were trained for the project.

Madam Chairperson, I wish to inform the House that several contractors were contacted for training but only one responded positively to the call or was available for training. Therefore, on-the-job training was conducted by the international and local trainers (initially trained by the Consultant). As at date, the MITD is fully capable of running training on the biogas technology specific for household digesters. Trained persons were involved in construction under direct supervision of trainers from MITD.

Madam Chairperson, regarding to part (b) of the question, I have been informed that 141 digesters have been completed and 60 of these digesters are actively producing gas. In addition, closure activities are being carried out and including backfilling and connection to

the households as well as minor works on the digesters. The closure activities have not started for Gravières and Ile Michel and is expected to be completed soon.

The following villagers were designated to implement the project, namely Gravières, Ile Michel; Le Chou; L'Union and Remir. The main criterion includes the lack of basic sanitary facilities of the household in these villages.

Concerning part (c) of the question, Madam Chairperson, I wish to inform the House that the project of the Production of Energy from Household Organic Wastes is a co-funded project by the European Union, IOC and RRA with an approved budget of Rs 20 m. from the European Union. And, as at date an amount of Rs 8.7 m. has been disbursed by EU and Rs 10 m. by the RRA.

Madam Chairperson, even if there was no option of tabling any material in this question I have found it right and it is with great pleasure that I table some of the pictures of the bio digesters for records.

Mr Von-Mally: I thank the respected Commissioner. Madam Chairperson, being given that this project started in November 2017 and was due to be completed in November 2019. The respected Commissioner said that the project has been completed in May 2020 and after that he said that there have been 141 bio digesters that have been completed. Well, which is which? Have these been completed or only 141 that have been completed?

Mr Payendee: Madam Chairperson, I said that the project is not fully completed. The reason being there have been some modifications while doing the project. One of the reason was when we were constructing the bio digesters, originally it was supposed to go to a simple household. But unfortunately, when the consultant from Africa came, he said it is a waste of time to have it connected to only household without enough wastes, which means that, we had to modify the project completely. Because it has to go to household with not only connected to the house but also connected to sort of... we need animal wastes as well to make it works. Otherwise, it will not work. That is why it has been fully modified. So, we have wasted quite a lot of time in getting it right, Madam Chairperson.

Mr Von-Mally: Being given that I have been to certain places where the bio-digesters have been... they have started building it and they are left idle. And, I am glad that the respected Commissioner is tabling a few photographs of these. Well, I would ask him to go further. Will you please table a list of all these bio digesters and their places, table a list of all these that are working really, so that we can check. Thank you.

Mr Payendee: Madam Chairperson, should the Member has asked the question, I would have been pleased to table the list. But unfortunately, it was not in the question.

Madam Chairperson: Next question.

PRODUCTION AND SALE OF ONIONS IN RODRIGUES

(No. B/92) Mr F. A. Grandcourt (Minority Leader) asked the Commissioner for Agriculture and Others whether, in regard to the production and sale of onions in Rodrigues, he will, for the benefit of the House, state and table:-

- (a) the production thereof to date per region indicating the quality of same produced; and
- (b) the measures taken by his Commission to help planters sell their products?

Mr Payendee: Madam Chairperson, with regard to part (a) of the question, the answer is as follows:-

- The harvest of onion is not over yet at the particular point in time to be able to answer this question completely. But our estimation is such that the yield this year will play around 315 tons. But at this stage, I cannot give the production per region as asked again because the harvest is not over. The respected Member is, I think, too much in a hurry. He should have waited for the next session to ask this question.

[Interruption]

Madam Chairperson: Order!

Mr Payendee: Madam Chairperson, with regard to the quality of onion produced, I must point out that it depends on the timing of a harvest. The farmers who harvested too early in the season, of course, did not produce good quality onions. But those professionals who were not too interested in easy money produced good quality onions.

Madam Chairperson, with regard to part (b), the measures taken by my Commission to help onion planters to sell their products are as follows:-

- (i) My Commission offers onion seeds to farmers at a subsidised price to decrease their cost of production and therefore maximise profit;
- (ii) Extension officers of the Commission accompany the farmers to help them produce good quality onions which in turns will have a better market value;

- (iii) The Commission help farmers to overcome problems which may affect their production, like pest control, provision of irrigation facilities when necessary and so on and so forth;
- (iv) We hire the service of RTMC to purchase the onion in the field, provide transport facilities and assure a fixed price of Rs 33 per kg.

Mr Grandcourt: Madame la présidente, en entendant le Commissaire parlait, comme-ci, il est en train de catégoriser les planteurs d'oignons. Ceux qui sont *good quality*, *bad quality*. Mais quel est le rôle de la Commission ? C'est le rôle de la Commission de veiller à ce que les gens produisent des oignons de bonnes qualités. Venir ici dire qu'il y a des bons planteurs, des planteurs qui ne produisent pas accès. Donc, je trouve ça aberrant de la part du commissaire. Alors, est-ce qu'il peut nous expliquer quel est le rôle de la Commission, des techniciens de la Commission pour accompagner ces planteurs, justement pour produire des oignons de bonne qualité ?

Mr Payendee: Madame la présidente, ce que dit aberrant par le membre, je pense qu'il ne sait pas trop ce qui se passe sur le terrain. Au fait, quand je parle de deux catégories de planteur, ce n'est pas trop les planteurs qui sont devenus comme ça, c'est plus les acheteurs. En fait, il y a eu des acheteurs qui ont influencés.

[Interruption]

Madam Chairperson: Order ! Order ! Minority Leader, please.

Mr Payendee: ...des acheteurs qui ont influencés (*bé réponde li to mem question-là. Mo assisé*).

Madam Chairperson: Commissioner please address the Chair.

Mr Payendee: *Yes, what has happened*, qu'est-ce qui s'est passé là récemment, Madame la présidente. C'est intéressant pour moi d'expliquer parce que ça devient un peu grave. En fait, avant les planteurs laissaient les oignons séchaient sur le terrain même. Mais là tout dernièrement, il y a eu des acheteurs qui sont venus d'ici et de Maurice, qui ont voulu acheté avant. Donner un prix apparemment un peu plus, c'est-à-dire, au lieu de Rs 33, il voulait donner Rs 40 à ces planteurs. Mais il ne savait pas que l'oignons à Maurice était fixé à Rs 40 le kilo. C'est déjà fixé à Maurice par AMB à Rs 40 le kilo. Donc, du coup, ils ont induit ces planteurs en erreur et les planteurs ont récoltés avant que ça ne soit vraiment prêt pour exporter vers Maurice. Et malheureusement, les oignons qui ne sont pas prêt ne sont pas de bonne qualité

bien sûr, et n'ont pas été accepté. Et finalement, ils n'ont pas pu vendre ces oignons. C'est ça que je disais quand il y a eu des planteurs qui étaient intéressé par...- *that is what I said in my answer. Easy money.* C'était l'argent qui les intéressaient, ce n'était pas vraiment cette esprit de la qualité de l'oignon. Mais c'est pour ça que j'ai dit que nous au niveau de RTMC, RTMC n'achète pas ce type d'oignon qui n'est pas vraiment prêt. Qu'est-ce que fait ma Commission ? On accompagne mais ce n'est pas nous qui prenons les décisions. L'oignons appartient à ce planteur. S'il veut vendre avant, s'il veut récolter avant. Ce n'est pas aujourd'hui que ces planteurs sont des planteurs d'oignons. Ce sont des planteurs qui sont là depuis des années et des années. Mais ils se sont laissés *couyonner* (comme on dit, je ne sais pas c'est un mot qui est – it is unparliamentary) où ils ont été emporter. Si c'est mauvais, je retire. Je retire le mot, je retire. (*Et ou là, mone fini retire li !*)

Mr Perrine: On a point of order.

Madam Chairperson: The Commissioner has already withdrawn the ...

Mr Payendee: I have already withdrawn, man!

Madam Chairperson: Respected Member, please.

[Interruption]

Mr Payendee: Oui, et finalement, ces oignons n'ont pas pu être vendu et il y a aussi ce qu'on appelle les oignons '*fan*' tout ça. Ils ont produit des oignons qui ne sont pas vraiment de bonne qualité et c'est pour ça que je dis je ne suis pas d'accord que le membre dit que ma Commission n'est pas en train d'encadrer. On a une section spécifique qui travaille avec les planteurs, dans l'éthique d'officier d'extension, qui travaillent conjointement. C'est pour ça on a ces infos par rapport à ce qui s'est passé cette année. J'espère que ça ne va pas se reproduire et que ces planteurs ont eu une bonne leçon et que la prochaine fois ils ne vont plus produire des oignons '*fan*', ils vont produire des...

Madam Chairperson: Yes, Minority Leader.

Mr Grandcourt: Madame la présidente, on a été sur le terrain pour voir et rencontrer ces gens-là, c'est la raison pour laquelle il y a cette question. Alors, l'oignon, le commissaire dit que ces gens-là, ils vendent l'oignons à Rs 40 kilo. Il a dit !

[Interruption]

Rs 40 kilo, il a parlé de Rs 40 kilo.

Madam Chairperson: AMB has set the price at Rs 40 per kilo.

Mr Grandcourt: Non, non, non! Il a dit, j'ai bien écouté. Avant qu'il ne dise que ça a été fixé là-bas, il a dit que c'est des marchands qui sont venus proposer à Rs 40, Rs 20. C'est là le problème, l'Assemblée Régionale à travers RTMC propose Rs 33, les autres personnes eux ils viennent ils proposent Rs 40. Et, c'est là le problème. Qui s'est qui met le désordre ? C'est RTMC. Parce qu'il n'arrive pas à monter leur prix. Parce que ces gens-là, ils disent qu'à Rs 16.50, ils perdent de l'argent. Donc, pourquoi est-ce que la Commission ne veut pas acheter l'oignon à Rs 20 la livre, Rs 40 le kilo, comme les marchands ?

Mr Payendee: J'ai bien dit dans ma réponse, Madame la présidente, qu'il y a eu un genre de malhonnêteté qui s'est passé. Ils ont proposé 20, mais après quand ils ont vu, ils pensaient pouvoir faire ce qu'ils veulent avec ces oignons. Peut-être aller vendre à Rs 50 à Maurice, je ne sais pas. Mais quand ils ont vu que AMB a fixé pour 20, parce que nous on achète pour 33 et on vend pour 33. C'est extraordinaire comme... Est-ce que la Commission, Maurice achète pour Rs 33 ? AMB achète les oignons de Rodrigues à Rs 33 et qu'est-ce que ma Commission est en train de faire pour ces planteurs ? AMB achète pour Rs 33, c'est le prix. Ils viennent voir, Rs 33 ils achètent. Et, nous au niveau de RTMC, au niveau de la Commission, on aurait dû acheter pour 20 ou 25 ou 30. Mais non, on achète au même prix qu'on vend à AMB, c'est-à-dire, la Commission à travers RTMC achète à Rs 33 et on vend ça à AMB. Sans penser à tous le *loss* qu'il y a. Parce que les oignons, comme c'est une commodité qui est périssable, c'est normal que des fois il y a pas mal de la pression et tout, on perd un peu. Donc, non seulement on vend tout ce qu'on a acheté à Rs 33 mais des fois il y a une grosse perte parce que les oignons qui ne sont pas en bonne état sont quand même vendus et on perd de ce côté-là. Mais la Commission donne une commission à RTMC, *a management fee* pour pouvoir couvrir tous ces frais. On donne le transport mais il y a qu'à Rodrigues que ça se passe, Madame la présidente. Il n'y a pas ça ailleurs. Ça n'existe pas, *acheté 33, van 33. C'est quoi ce business ?*

Madam Chairperson: Yes, Respected Member, Volbert.

Mr Volbert: Yes, merci Madame. Etant donner...

Madam Chairperson: No-cross talking, please.

Mr Volbert: Etant donner avec la récolte, il y aura beaucoup d'oignons et nos produits sont des produits de bonne qualité. Pourquoi laisser partir tous les oignons ailleurs et en plus importer les oignons lisses, qui ne sont pas de bonne qualité. Est-ce que le commissaire pense

ou on voulait savoir qu'est-ce qu'il fait pour pouvoir stocker au moins un peu de nos produits et ensuite revendre aux habitants ?

Mr Payendee: Madame la présidente, c'est une très bonne question. Je pense que le membre a dû lire les rapports, les budgets précédents où on a parlé de ça. Oui, je suis d'accord et peut-être il m'a entendu parler aussi dans des discours. Moi-même j'ai dit ça. Il est en train d'utiliser des trucs que j'ai dit. C'est vrai, je suis d'accord, on produit beaucoup d'oignons, on aurait pu être autonome en oignons, c'est-à-dire, on pourrait dans l'avenir ne pas importer d'oignons du tout. La quantité qu'on export est suffisant pour le marché, même plus. Mais pour le moment, on n'a pas les moyens pour stocker autant d'oignons. On est allé avec, Mme Franchette Gaspard Pierre-Louis, on a visité AMB à Maurice. On est parti voir les chambres froides. Pour vous dire que ce n'est pas donné, ce n'est pas un projet - c'est un peu comme l'abattoir-là, je pense. C'est un truc qui n'est pas donné. Il y a des consultants qui travaillent sur un projet pour justement trouver quelle taille, faire des études pour voir quelle taille de chambre froide. Mais je pense que c'est une très bonne question et que dans l'avenir, je pense que ce problème sera résolu. Et j'espère, parce que c'est en ligne avec notre vision, avec l'autonomie tout ça on devait pouvoir consommer les oignons de Rodrigues. Mais, Madame la présidente, mais, mais, mais, mais il y a une autre question. Comment faisait nos grands-parents, c'est ça, très important ça. Les stockages des oignons. Nous on pense, oui okay, pour stocker une certaine quantité, je parle de par tonne, là on a besoin des facilités comme des chambres froides. Mais nos grands-parents qu'est-ce qu'ils faisaient ? Ils gardaient les oignons chez chacun. C'est comme la conservation de l'eau. Si tout le monde avait des réservoirs de 10 m³, si on met tout ça ensemble ça fait beaucoup de mètres cubes d'eau d'un seul coup quand il pleut. C'est pareil pour les oignons, si chaque Rodriguais, chaque famille retourner un petit peu à la base et conserver ces oignons pour l'année. Et là, je prends l'exemple d'un commerçant à Port Mathurin qui est extraordinaire, un commerçant, quelqu'un qui vend, je vous dirai le nom, vous pouvez aller voir – le type il conserve ces oignons déjà couper, confit, pour toute une année. Donc, on n'a pas besoin. Donc, il y a toute une réflexion à faire, c'est vrai, se serait important d'avoir une chambre froide pour conserver tous ces oignons pour l'avenir mais aussi au niveau de chaque individu, chaque Rodriguais, je pense que le membre Von-Mally connaît bien ça. Parce qu'il m'a appris ça à l'école. Et, je pense que si tout le monde faisait ça, on pourrait conserver nos oignons pour l'avenir sans en avoir besoin même d'une chambre froide.

Madam Chairperson: Respected Member, Perrine.

Mr Perrine: Madame la présidente, encore une fois, on constate d'année en année la lenteur et l'incompétence, des fois accoupler avec des mensonges, de la part de certains membres du gouvernement. Combien d'argent on a dépensé pour rénover Citronelle ? Rs 7 million. Ça fait combien d'année qu'on a fait ça ? Plus de trois ans, quatre ans. Le commissaire vient nous dire qu'il n'y a pas les moyens. Alors, qu'il a eu tellement de facilité avec les différents bailleurs de fond de la part du monde entier qui sont venus nous donner de l'argent pour justement encadrer ces planteurs et stocker nos oignons. Et aujourd'hui, il vienne nous dire qu'il n'y a pas de moyen. Donc, je pense que, c'est une question de mauvaise volonté. Est-ce que le commissaire peut nous dire dans combien de temps il pense pouvoir régler ce problème de stockage d'oignons pour les planteurs Rodriguais ? Et, une fois pour toute régler ce problème de marché, de prix etc., etc.

Mr Payendee: Madame la présidente, je pense qu'il y a une mauvaise volonté d'écoute. Mauvaise volonté d'écoute de l'autre côté. Parce que je n'ai jamais dit qu'on n'a pas d'argent pour faire ce projet. Non, non, non, non ! je n'ai jamais dit ça.

[Interruption]

Madam Chairperson: Order ! Order, order.

Mr Payendee: Je ne me souviens pas avoir annoncer qu'il n'y a pas d'argent.

[Interruption]

Madam Chairperson: Respected Member! Commissioner, please. Commissioner, please. Respected Members, from a sitting position, I should be able to hear the answer of the Commissioner without any interruption. Order, please. Yes, Commissioner.

[Interruption]

Madam Chairperson: Respected Member, Perrine! Yes, Commissioner you may proceed.

Mr Payendee: J'ai dit et je me suis caler sur ce qui a été dit dans le budget, le discours du budget. On fait une étude pour voir quelle taille, quel type. On ne peut pas aller à dire on ne fait pas d'étude comme ça, comme l'abattoir. Ça a été mal calculé, c'est pour ça que ça a pris du temps. On ne peut venir et faire une chambre froide comme ça. *Alé nou fer ene lasam froide sa grandeur là. Bé non !* Il faut faire des études. Il faut calculer. Il faut tout ça. Ce qui a été dit dans le budget, pas le Chef commissaire, c'était il y aura un consultant qui travaille sur le projet pour finalement nous donner un projet. Pour le moment on n'a pas le projet bien ficeler pour

dire que pour Rodrigues on a besoin de ça et après le Chef commissaire dirait : Bien, qu'est-ce qui va arriver à Rodrigues dans cinq ans, 10 ans, 20 ans, 50 ans ? Tout ça il faut calculer. On ne peut pas faire un truc et puis ça ne va pas dans la ligner, en ligne avec la vision de l'Assemblée Régionale. Donc, je suis désolé, il y a un grand problème d'écoute de l'autre côté, il y a un gros travail à faire là-bas.

Madam Chairperson: Order! Next question.

EXPORT – LIVE ANIMALS FROM RODRIGUES/PROTOCOL OBSERVED

(No. B/93) Mr F. A. Grandcourt (Minority Leader) asked the Commissioner for Agriculture and Others whether, in regard to the export of live animals from Rodrigues, he will state the protocol observed by his Commission regarding sanitary measures prior to their embarkation?

Mr Payendee: *Madame la présidente*, the protocol applicable for the export of live animals from Rodrigues is detailed below:-

- (i) All importers/registered butchers of livestock in Mauritius should be pre-registered with the livestock and Veterinary Division of the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security.
- (ii) An import permit should be obtained from the division of Veterinary Services.
- (iii) Breeders in Rodrigues should be pre-registered with the Rodrigues Agricultural Services for export of animals (to specify the number of the breeder following vaccination; counter verification is necessary).
- (iv) The database should be available to verify that animals come from a herd where vaccination against FMD is up to date.
- (v) After selection, animals are examined by Officers from ARES for health and body condition, individual tagging, and also according to the criteria of buyer on the spot based on weight, age, sex etc. Buyers are not allowed to visit farms for biosecurity reasons unless they abide to biosecurity measures in place (personal protective equipment, cover-boots, head cover in each farm which are destroyed on the spot after each visit).
- (vi) Random blood sampling is done on all livestock intended for export.

- (vii) An animal movement certificate for one or more animals from each farm is issued to the breeders.
- (viii) All animals are to be kept for 48 hours in a pre-export quarantine situated in an isolated place under watchmanship.
- (ix) Random sampling of Rapid Antigen test for Avian Flu should be done on all poultry meant for export.
- (x) All livestock carrying containers should be disinfected with a virucide solution (Potassium Peroxomonosulphate) once livestock are disembarked in Port Mathurin, Rodrigues.
- (xi) Animals are examined and weighed before embarkation.
- (xii) A veterinary health certificate from Rodrigues Veterinary Services should accompany the animals in Mauritius.

Mr Grandcourt: I would like to ask the Commissioner whether, all the protocols stated by the Commissioner whether, it is fully observed in Rodrigues and enforced by his Commission?

Mr Payendee: Yes, Madam Chairperson, the protocol is observed.

Mr Grandcourt: Madame la présidente, si tous les protocoles sont observés pourquoi est-ce qu'on entend maintenant, les animaux qui partent sur Maurice, ils sont mises en quarantaine. Donc, est-ce que le commissaire peut nous éclairer sur ce problème ?

Mr Payendee: Maurice n'est pas Rodrigues, Madame la présidente. A Maurice, il y a des vétérinaires, ça ne veut pas dire le protocole de Rodrigues est respecté, mais quand l'animal arrive à Maurice, il y a des vétérinaires qui viennent vérifier. S'il voit des signes de maladies ou de rhume, par exemple, là c'était le rhume. Si le membre parle de ce qui s'est passé actuellement, d'ailleurs tout-à-l'heure, je vais faire un *statement* là-dessus, ça concerne un peu le rhume. Ils ont vu des animaux avec le rhume et ils ont pensé qu'il faut faire des tests. Quand ça a quitté Rodrigues, nous on n'a pas de contrôle là- dessus. Maintenant, c'est les vétérinaires à Maurice, c'est eux qui décident. L'animal rente à Maurice, ils disent que ça doit partir là-bas. C'est un peu ce qu'on fait à l'aéroport pour le COVID. Les gens arrivent à l'aéroport et ils sont correcte dans Maurice mais quand ils arrivent à Rodrigues, à l'aéroport ils disent : « Hey, une petite température, toi tu dois aller là-bas », c'est comme ça. Donc, c'est pareil, le protocole qui

est appliqué à Rodrigues est respecté. Mais qu'est-ce qui se passe à Maurice, ça on n'a pas le contrôle là-dessus.

Mr Volbert: Est-ce que je peux demander au commissaire, s'il y a des cas suspects par rapport aux animaux qu'on envoie à Maurice sur le dernier voyage de Black Rhino ?

Mr Payendee: Madame la présidente, si le Membre avait écouté tous les protocoles dont j'ai parlé, on n'envoie pas un animal qui est suspecté à Maurice. Ça, c'est la règle générale. Qui peut faire ça ? Donc, si l'animal est suspecté malade, cet animal forcément doit rester à Rodrigues ?

Mr Volbert: Madame la présidente, peut-on savoir du respecté Commissaire, s'il y a un embargo temporaire sur l'exportation ? Si oui, pourquoi ?

Mr Payendee: Je crois qu'il veut tout savoir sur le *statement* que je vais faire tout-à-l'heure. Oui, pas forcément embargo, mais vu qu'il y a eu des animaux qui sont suspectés avoir un rhume et qu'ils ont fait des tests, ces normal qu'ils ont dit : « *pour le moment, until further notice, no live animals should be exported to Mauritius.* » Mais ça aussi, je pars en mission à Maurice demain pour essayer d'éclaircir tout ça et discuter avec Maurice sur des possibilités de voir si, peut-être enlever pour les autres animaux, mais pour le moment il y a effectivement une lettre du PMO qui dit *no live animals to Mauritius until further notice*.

Mr Volbert: Madame la présidente, il y a un communiqué qui a été émis par le Ministry of Agro-Industry et qui dit, le 09 septembre 2020 : « *qu'il n'y a aucun cas suspect, aucune maladie.* » Mais pourquoi, l'embargo alors ?

Mr Payendee: Il n'y a pas de maladie, oui, il n'y a pas de cas suspect. Il n'y a pas de maladie, mais il y a des cas suspects. Ce qui se passe, c'est que, les vétérinaires de Maurice ont remarqué le rhume. Donc, il faut faire des tests. Et ça, malheureusement, il y a des tests qui sont fait à Maurice, mais il y a des tests qui doivent être fait à l'étranger. Maurice, ils sont prudent. C'est normal aussi, la biosécurité. Ça forme partie, nous aussi on aurait fait la même chose. Donc, maintenant, ils ont envoyé les spécimen (je ne sais pas s'ils ont envoyé, parce qu'il y a un gros problème de vol, d'avion et tout ça, s'ils ont pu envoyer, c'est pour ça j'ai dit demain moi je pars à Maurice pour discuter de tout ça). Et, il y a une possibilité que ça peut vite être soulagé ou bien je ne sais pas. Ils doivent attendre les résultats et ils ne vont pas lâcher avant les résultats c'est sûr.

Mr Grandcourt: Madame la présidente, dans tout cela, qui est à blâmé ? Qui est à blâmé ? Mais c'est la Commission. Et, le commissaire, Madame la présidente, évidemment. Donc, si tous les protocoles sont respectés à Rodrigues, comment peut-il nous dire qu'il doit maintenant partir à Maurice pour régler le problème. Peut-être que Maurice et pas Rodrigues. C'est honteux de parler ainsi.

Madam Chairperson: Yes, thank you for your question, Minority Leader. Continue.

Mr Grandcourt: Yes, I am coming with my question.

Madam Chairperson: No, you have already put your question.

[Interruption]

Mr Grandcourt: *I put my question, now. Thank you.* Donc, qu'est-ce qui se passe, Madame la présidente ? Entretemps que fait la commission ? Nous avons un problème accru de nombre de vétérinaire à Rodrigues. Seulement deux. Annonçait cinq depuis 10 ans, qu'il y aura cinq vétérinaires. Que fait la Commission ? Quelle mesure est-ce que le commissaire et en train de prendre pour régler ce problème parce qu'on ne peut pas vivre l'épisode de la fièvre aphteuse encore. Donc, qu'est-ce qu'il fait ?

Mr Payendee: Que fait le commissaire ? Le commissaire travaille, Madame la présidente. Mais là on parle de négociation, il y a des cas. Moi, en tant que commissaire responsable - en passant, je dois dire que pour enlever l'embargo la dernière fois, c'était mon intervention auprès de Maurice, pour expliquer, pour discuter. *Si bizin allé mo bizin allé ! A moins to envi ale dan mo place ?*

Madam Chairperson: Order !

Mr Payendee: Madame la présidente, qui est à blâmé ? Personne n'est à blâmé ! Il n'y a pas de maladie à Rodrigues. Les vétérinaires qui sont là, ils sont fatigués, oui, je sais. Ils sont fatigués mais ils font leurs travaux. Mais pour dire que tout de suite quand on a eu ce problème, les vétérinaires de Rodrigues ont été épaulés. Tout ça, je vais dire. Je ne sais pas si je vais faire le *statement* parce que j'ai tout dit. Non, je vais le faire quand même, Madame la présidente. *For records*, je vais le faire quand même. On a été épaulé par deux vétérinaires de Maurice qui sont là.

(Interruptions)

Mr Payendee: *Ah be to koné, kifer to pa dir? Kifer to dir?*

Madam Chairperson: Order!

Mr Payendee: Ils sont deux vétérinaires de Maurice qui sont venus nous filer un coup de main et hier, j'ai eu une réunion avec eux et ils ont confirmé: « *Commissioner there is no problem on Rodrigues ; all the animals are fit* ». So, au contraire ! Il faut féliciter ces vétérinaires ! Pour dire qu'on a deux mais ils sont magnifiques, ils sont extraordinaires. Ils font un travail énorme. Il y en a d'autres qui devaient travailler autant que ces deux vétérinaires, je pense. Donc, il n'y a pas de souci de ce côté-là. On se serait plaint de vétérinaire si toutefois, il y avait des épidémies à Rodrigues. Bon, on aurait dit *okay* il n'y a pas de vétérinaire dans ce pays. 'est pour ça. Mais non ! Mais non ! Il y a beaucoup de vétérinaires même des vétérinaires amateurs il y a dans ce pays. es animaux se portent très bien. Je l'ai dit dans une conférence de presse. e répète aujourd'hui il n'y a pas de problèmes, il n'y a pas de maladie à Rodrigues. Donc, pas de problème. Les vétérinaires font du bon travail. Donc, je profite de l'occasion pour féliciter ces deux vétérinaires qui font un travail énorme dans ce pays.

Madam Chairperson: Last question, yes.

Mr Grandcourt: Oui, nous aussi, nous félicitons les vétérinaires mais ils sont très, très fatigués. Alors, qu'est-ce que j'allais dire ? Il y a ce qu'on dit à Rodrigues surtout ça inquiète les éleveurs.

Madam Chairperson: Please, be brief.

Mr Grandcourt: Comme quoi il y a un genre de (excusez-moi l'expression) mafia à Maurice qui essaye de stopper l'exportation des animaux sur Rodrigues. Est-ce que le commissaire peut veiller à ce que ça ne soit pas le cas, parce que sinon l'économie de Rodrigues sera en danger ?

Mr Payendee: Madame la présidente, je ne peux pas venir là et dire qu'il y a un genre de mafia, je pense qu'il y a de mafia. Si je viens là, c'est pour vous parler des choses, des faits avec des trucs à l'appui. Bon, si le Membre, qui est un Minority Leader, je pense dans cette Chambre à une information comme ça, mais qu'est-ce qu'il fait lui ? Mais aller, vas-y, va à l'ICAC, va mettre le truc, s'il y a un truc.

[Interruption]

Madam Chairperson: Order.

Mr Payendee: Mais moi à ma connaissance, *ale met li l'ICAC toi*. Je ne connais pas ce truc de mafia. Ce n'est pas moi qui m'occupe de la mafia, hein. Je suis désolé là-dessus. Qu'il fasse un peu son travail aussi de Minority Leader.

Madam Chairperson: Thank you, Commissioner. I suspend the House for one hour for lunch.

At 12.40 p.m., the sitting was suspended for one hour.

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

Madam Chairperson: The Second Local Region Member of La Ferme.

PRODUCTION OF COMBAVA LIMES & CHILLI PASTE

SWITCH AFRICA GREEN PROGRAMME

(No. B/94) The Second Local Region Member of La Ferme (Mr. J. N. Volbert) asked the Commissioner for Agriculture and Others whether, in regard to projects for the production of combava limes and chilli paste under the Switch Africa Green Programme, he will inform the House on where matters stand as at date, specifying the total funds granted to beneficiaries therefor and indicating the financial status of any association or cooperative having benefited therefrom?

Mr Payendee: Madam Chairperson, the Gombava Project is being implemented by my Commission under the Switch Africa Green Programme. The project is funded jointly by the European Union and the Rodrigues Regional Assembly. The aim of the project is to increase the capacity building of a group of 40 fisherwomen through training in the bio-cultivation of combava lime and the processing of its chilli paste, thus helping to reduce pressure on the lagoon and also in the development of alternative livelihood activities for the beneficiaries. To date, the following activities have been successfully implemented:

1. Practical training for the beneficiaries in:
 - i. Customer care and Eco-Entrepreneurship
 - ii. Bio-agriculture
 - iii. Food processing

- iv. Eco-packaging
 - v. A four-day study tour in Mauritius
2. The production of 200 grafted plants.
 3. The rehabilitation of an identified site at Montagne Goyaves for the establishment of a combava organic orchard.
 4. Plan preparation for the construction of a processing unit.
 5. Soil profile test and the evaluation of the phyto-sanitary status of the combava grafts and existing mother plants.
 6. Recruitment of a Consultant for guide book preparation.
 7. Procedures for procurement of agro-processing equipment

Madam Chairperson, the combava project was jointly funded by European Union and the Rodrigues Regional Assembly through a Grant Support Agreement and the contributions from the two parties are as follows:

BUDGET	USD
European Union	230,500
Rodrigues Regional Assembly	61,000
TOTAL	291,500

As at date, the amount disbursed for the project is Rs 6,085,242.

Mrs Chairperson, it should be pointed out that the project aims at increasing capacity building of the beneficiaries in the bio-cultivation of combava lime and its transformation in derived products. No funds have been given to the beneficiaries. However, a training fee was paid to them while attending the different training sessions, workshops and demonstrations. Moreover, the beneficiaries were paid a stipend during the study tour in Mauritius.

No association or cooperative have benefitted from the funds under the project.

Mr Volbert: *Madam Chairperson*, d'après la copie du *Hansard* suite à une question datant de juillet, 10 juillet 2018, la question B/49, le Commissaire avait répondu que la somme de Rs2 467 795 et Rs2 290 420 déboursés par le UNOPS, le 28.11.2015 et le 23.08.2017,

toujours d'après le *Hansard*, respectivement, peut-on savoir sur quel compte ces montants ont été crédités ?

Mr Payendee: Madame la présidente, j'ai bien dit dans ma réponse. On n'a pas... L'argent a été crédité au niveau de l'Assemblée régionale pour être utilisé comme tous les projets de *Switch Africa Green* d'ailleurs. Donc, pas de bénéficiaires mais *Switch Africa Green*, sous le projet *Switch Africa Green*, après, le déboursement se fait à travers l'Assemblée régionale.

Mr Volbert: Madame la présidente, toujours d'après la copie du *Hansard* de la question B/49 dans sa réponse, le Commissaire avait mentionné que l'Union Européenne devrait déboursier la somme de Rs3 054 066 en deux versements soit juillet 2015 et octobre 2018. Est-ce que le Commissaire peut nous confirmer si c'était le cas ?

Mr Payendee: Oui, Madame la présidente, il y a eu deux déboursements mais là, il restait une somme de Rs1.3 millions qu'on attend toujours. Là, il nous reste Rs1.3 millions qu'on n'a pas eu encore de l'Union Européenne mais le reste a été déboursé, oui, effectivement.

Mr Volbert: Madame la présidente, à une question le 19 août 2019, la question B/129 sur le projet de combava, bien sûr, le Commissaire avait répondu que... d'après la copie du *Hansard* que j'ai en ma possession, le Commissaire avait répondu qu'en trois versements, la somme de Rs6 343 815 ont été déboursés par le UNOPS soit le 28.11.2015, la somme de Rs2 467 795, le 23.08.2017, la somme de Rs2 290 420 et le 03 septembre 2018, 03/09, la somme de Rs1 585 600 et un quatrième versement du UNOPS était attendu de même que la somme de Rs2 133 780 du RRA. Et d'après la réponse du *Hansard*, I quote, «[...] *As at date the amount disbursed for the [present] is Rs 5,204,811.*» Unquote. Est-ce que je peux demander au Commissaire de nous expliquer où est passé la somme de Rs1 139 004, c'est-à-dire, la différence entre la somme déboursée par le UNOPS en trois versements et la somme déboursée pour le projet *as at* 19 août 2018 qui est à Rs5 204 811? La différence.

Mr Payendee: Madame la présidente, je crois que le membre est en train de faire des mathématiques avec moi. Au fait, j'ai bien dit dans ma réponse on a eu une contribution. A ce jour, l'argent dépensé pour ce projet *amount to Rs 6 M.* Et je ne nie pas ce que j'ai dit dans le passé parce que ça fait le suivi. Parce que là, j'ai dit aussi, j'avais dit 23000 USD mais non, je ne l'avais pas dit en roupies. Donc, ça fait... Normalement, l'Union Européenne devait déverser Rs8 166 000 mais tout cet argent, l'Union Européenne ne verse pas cet argent sur le

compte de qui que ce soit. Cet argent va directement sur le compte de l'Assemblée régionale, qui en suite, est déboursé pour le projet. Donc, j'ai bien dit dans ma dernière phrase : « *No association or cooperative have benefitted from the fund [...]* ». *All the money has been disbursed on the account of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly.* Voilà.

Mr Volbert: *Madam Chairperson, le projet...* The project started with the fisherwomen in 2020, 40 fisherwomen and in August 2019, only 29 beneficiaries were actively involved. Can I know why some of the fisherwomen left and the reason thereof?

Mr Payendee: Comme le projet de biogaz, c'est un projet qui a été légèrement modifié parce que quand on fait un projet, on ne sait pas qu'est-ce qui nous attend. Au fait, le projet combava, c'est un projet qui... Il n'y a pas de combava à Rodrigues normalement. C'était le but, l'objectif d'aller chercher ça ailleurs pour emmener à Rodrigues parce qu'on sait que c'est quelque chose... Non, je dis, il n'y a pas de combava comme on a le limon parce que il y a quelques personnes qui ont des plantes. Moi, je connais à Les Filaos, par exemple, mais des combava qui produisent des fruits tout ça, il n'y a pas grand-chose à Rodrigues. Donc, on devait aller chercher l'expertise ailleurs. Donc, du coup, on a fait venir un *horticulturist* de La Réunion pour travailler sur le projet. Mais après, il y a les gens qui ont quitté le projet. C'est plus des gens qui ne sont pas... qui sont un peu impatients. Parce que c'est un projet qui prend du temps parce qu'on ne fait pas une greffe du jour au lendemain. On ne peut pas avoir des combavas... Il y a des personnes qui croyaient que le jour qu'on met les greffes de combava, la semaine prochaine, on a les plantes de combava. Non, ça prend du temps. Il y a eu pas mal de difficultés, il y a eu des *trials*.

C'est pour ça, j'ai bien dit dans ma réponse, il y a toute cette question de formation. Il y a eu beaucoup de formations mais les gens qui ont quitté, malheureusement, c'est des gens qui peut-être ne croyaient pas trop qu'ils auront des combavas un jour mais heureusement, nous, au niveau de la Commission de l'environnement et de l'agriculture, on est rentré dedans aussi, l'agriculture est rentré parce que vu qu'il y a maintenant 200 greffes, il y avait 200 greffes de combava, on avait le choix entre planter les 200 ou se dire qu'on va garder quelques combava dans le *gene bank*, ce qu'on appelle, nous, le *gene bank* à Baie aux Huitres, pour continuer à faire des boutures, des greffes pour qu'on puisse donner à plus de monde.

Voilà, le projet a été modifié un petit peu dans ce sens et du coup, il y a eu quelques personnes, bien sûr, qui croyaient qu'ils allaient avoir tous les combavas chez eux. Il y en a

qui n'avaient même pas le terrain pour planter ça. C'est pour ça l'idée de Montagne Goyaves, ce n'était pas dans le projet ; c'était individuel mais il y a des gens qui n'ont pas les facilités qui ont décliné. A ce moment-là, on a dit : plantons les combavas dans un endroit comme un *gene bank* pour qu'on puisse continuer à faire des greffes. Et là, je salue toutes les personnes de Baie aux Huitres, les *horticulturists* qui ont maîtrisé la technique parce qu'avant, il fallait faire venir quelqu'un de La Réunion. Aujourd'hui, on a la technique. On a la technique, on sait le faire et on va continuer à produire les combavas pour planter, peut-être pour donner à tous les Rodriguais un jour au moins une plante de combava dans leur cour.

Mr Volbert: Madam Chairperson, in both of his replies, the Commissioner's reply in 2018 and 2019, he has mentioned the recruitment of a Consultant for the guidebook. Can I ask the Commissioner whether he will be able... he will table a copy of this guidebook from the Consultant and where is the guidebook kept actually?

Mr Payendee: Madam Chairperson, I need notice of the question because I was not prepared for such a question but yes, the guidebook has been prepared and it is at my Commission.

Mr Volbert: Madam Chairperson, according to the Hansard, the reply from the Hansard given by the Commissioner to PQ 129, the Commission stated, I quote: "[...] Combava lime takes almost four years to produce fruits". Unquote. Can I ask the Commissioner how many kilos of combava, of units of combava as at date being given that the project started in 2015, five years lapse?

Mr Payendee: Madam Chairperson, I must laugh when I listen to question like this, I must laugh because I said in my answer, you know. We did a sort of... Let me put it in French. I think it is better.

On a fait des greffes et des greffes, c'est des yeux. Des yeux, *Madam Chairperson*. S'il y a des gens qui ne savent pas ce que c'est, moi, je vais leur dire. On prend un petit bout de plante comme ça, on enfonce dans un... On appelle ça le scion. Mon professeur m'a montré. Le *scion* et le *stock*. Le *scion*, on le retire, on met sur le *stock*. Et, oui, c'est vrai que le combava prend au moins quatre ans pour commencer à produire des fruits mais on ne peut pas parler de tonnes de fruits. On ne peut pas. Si, on a des fruits. J'ai pleins de photos, sur mon téléphone, il y en a aussi. Si je pouvais donner mon téléphone à l'Hansard pour garder. Il y a des fruits. On a produit des fruits et là, j'invite... J'aimerais bien inviter les membres à

aller sur l'agriculture de Baie aux Huitres, ils vont voir des fruits. Oui, je confirme ici à maintenant, là, dans l'agriculture de Baie aux Huitres, on a les fruits de combava mais on n'a pas des tonnes de fruits. Et l'idée, c'est de continuer à propager parce que c'est une plante, c'est une espèce qu'on n'a pas ici. Donc, il faut. Si on veut garder le côté génétique des combavas, il faut continuer à faire des greffes sur les plantes qui viennent d'ailleurs. Donc, *this is all genetics. This is all conservation management.*

So, la question de combien de fruits il y a ne se pose même pas parce que nous, on parle, moi là, je parle de *gene bank*, quelque chose qui est nouveau dans tout ce système. *Gene bank*, c'est garder des gènes de la plante dans une banque naturelle ; pas la banque MCB mais une banque naturelle : dans un jardin, dans un endroit, on plante les combavas pour après revenir et faire des boutures là-dessus. Donc, quand on a besoin d'argent, on va à la banque mais quand on a besoin des boutures de combavas, on va dans le *gene bank*. Donc, le projet a été légèrement modifié *for the betterment. It is not...* Il n'a pas été modifié. On aurait pu donner ça à tout le monde et puis planter et puis, on a plus de combava et puis on recommence à zéro mais là, quand on le commence, « l'appétit vient en mangeant », comme dit le proverbe. Quand on a commencé le projet, on dit : Wow ! Pourquoi ne pas continuer à produire des semences de combavas pour que finalement, demain, on pourra avoir une pépinière remplie des milliers de combavas et après, bien sûr, des tonnes de fruits dans l'avenir ? Ça prend du temps. C'est comme le limon.

Mr Volbert: Madam Chairperson, j'aurais aimé demander au Commissaire si le projet existe toujours ou s'il n'y a plus de projet, c'est fermé, le *combava orchard*, c'est fermé actuellement ou si le projet *is ongoing*.

Mr Payendee: Le projet est *ongoing* et ça va être *ongoing* tout le temps parce que ce n'est pas un projet qui se termine comme ça. On n'arrête pas un projet comme ça. A Montagne Goyaves, on a planté mais malheureusement, on a eu des soucis. Le *fencing* a été, je ne sais pas si volé ou pris par des personnes qui ont retiré les barrières et c'est pour ça, l'idée de créer le *gene bank* à Baie aux Huitres. Avant, c'était tout devait être planté à Montagne Goyaves pour le *gene bank* mais quand on a vu qu'il y avait des problèmes, les gens mettaient leurs animaux à l'intérieur, le *fencing* a été volé ou pris par quelqu'un ou quelques personnes, donc, finalement, on a vu qu'on ne met pas tous nos œufs dans le même panier. C'est pour ça l'idée de bouger à Baie aux Huitres et si vous allez à Baie aux Huitres, vous allez voir des combavas avec des fruits plantés dans le *gene bank* de Baie aux Huitres.

Mr Volbert: Madam Chairperson, est-ce que le Commissaire maintenait que... maintient qu'il y a des plants de combavas actuellement sur le *orchard* à Montagne Goyaves ?

Mr Payendee: Je maintiens parce que hier même, je suis allé voir. *Madam Chairperson*, vu que j'ai une question, je devais aller vérifier hier même et je peux aller après le truc avec le membre pour lui montrer au moins quelques plantes de combavas dans le truc de Montagne Goyaves.

Madam Chairperson: Next question.

Mr Volbert: Tu es sauvé, mon vieux, mais tu ne seras pas sauvé par le peuple. *Mo faible ? Tone perdi point ta.* La question B/95.

(Interruptions)

Madam Chairperson: Order!

CONSTRUCTION OF ADDITIONAL CLASSROOMS

– LA FERME COLLEGE

(No. B/95) The Second Local Region Member of La Ferme (Mr. J. N. Volbert) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the construction of additional classrooms at La Ferme College, he will, for the benefit of the House, state and table on if: -

- (a) bids were evaluated in accordance with the criteria specified in the bid documentation; and
- (b) there is any litigation regarding the awarded contract?

The Chief Commissioner: Madam Chairperson, I am informed that invitations for bids for the construction of additional classrooms at La Ferme College was launched through the Open Advertised Bidding Method on the 21 October 2019 with closing date fixed for the 21 November 2019.

At opening of bids in the presence of bidder's representatives on the 21 November 2019, four bids were received and same were referred to a Bid Evaluation Committee (BEC) for evaluation. The Bid Evaluation Committee has recommended that the contract be awarded

to the lowest evaluated substantially responsive bidder, name Bolah Jeetun Co. Ltd for the sum of Rs 15,132,080 only exclusive of Value Added Tax.

Subsequently, the Departmental Bid Committee (DBC) endorsed the recommendation of the Bid Evaluation Committee and notification of award was issued to the selected bidder and unsuccessful bidders under section 3 of the Public Procurement Act on the 07 May 2020.

Madam Chairperson, following the notification of award, one unsuccessful bidder made a challenge under section 43 of the Public Procurement Act 2006. Subsequently, on...

(Interruptions)

The Chief Commissioner: 2006. Yes, 2006. Subsequently, on the 14 May 2020, the bidder dissatisfied with the reason put forward by the Public Body for not retaining its bid, decided to seize the Independent Review Panel to review the procurement proceedings under section 45 of the Public Procurement Act 2006.

Madam Chairperson, I am further informed that since no formal correspondence has been received from the Independent Review Panel (IRP) for an application for review, the Departmental Bid Committee proceeded with the award of the contract to Bolah JEETUN Co. Ltd on the 12 June 2020.

Madam Chairperson, consequently, the Independent Review Panel informed my Commission on the 26 June 2020 that the aggrieved bidder has made an application for review on the same day.

Madam Chairperson, I am further informed that the Hearing at the Independent Review Panel (IRP) was held on the 17 July 2020 and the Panel subsequently concluded in its ruling that the application for review be set aside.

Mr Volbert: Madam Chairperson, as stipulated in the condition of contract, Section G (c) (c) 1.1 (y), I quote: the Programme Manager as designated by the public body shall be Lux Consult Ltd. 23 Stevenson Street, Quatre Bornes. So, how can the bidder whose bid has been rejected be asked to provide a Project Manager in the particulars of condition of his contract?

The Chief Commissioner: Madam, my reply is very clear, very, very clear but one who is not satisfied of the reply of the Bid Committee... Well, yes. An additional information,

peut-être this will help you. The House is not the right legal forum to debate on the ruling of the Independent Review Panel, which is an independent statutory body.

Mr Perrine: Yes, Madam Chairperson, we are not asking of the ruling of the House on behalf of the contract! This is not correct! We are asking the Chief Commissioner whether, the conditions, specified conditions in the contract has been fully respected with regards to the objection of the IRP.

The Chief Commissioner: Madam Chairperson, I said everything has been decided by the... What I said... Bid, yes. Bid Evaluation Committee. By the Bid Evaluation Committee. This is the Bid Evaluation Committee forms part of the project.

Mr Perrine: Yes, Madam Chairperson, the Chief Commissioner does not... is not replying to our questions. I would like to put another question. He mentioned in his reply that the Commission award the contract to Bolah on 12 June 2020. And, he was informed by the IRP that on 26.06.2020, there was a grief by another bidder, requesting the IRP to rule. Can I ask the Chief Commissioner whether, there has been no communication prior to the awarding of the contract with the Central Procurement Board or the IRP with regard to this specific contract?

The Chief Commissioner: Madam Chairperson, in every contract which the Regional Government gave to any person, we do it, in what we called, any legal term, you know. This is very important. We do not get aside any legal... it is according to all legal term which is mentioned in the contract, Madam.

Following the notification of award, one unsuccessful bidder made a challenge under section 43 of the Public Procurement Act 2006. Subsequently, on 14 May 2020, the bidder dissatisfied with the reason put forward by the public body for not retaining his bid, decided to seize the IRP (Independent Review Panel) to review the procurement proceedings under section 45 of the Public Procurement Act 2006.

Mr Grandcourt: Madam Chairperson, after the notification of award, so can I ask the Chief Commissioner whether, the one who challenged the decision of the CPB whether, it was too late or it was within the delay for that challenge?

The Chief Commissioner: No, no, it was not in a delay. It was just, the unsuccessful bidder, he just applied to the IRP, very quickly. He did not wait for 10 days or one month. No.

Mr Perrine: Can the Chief Commissioner enlighten the House, what is the principle reason for, that the IRP gave in regard to the contract that has been... the unsuccessful bidder, what was the main reason?

The Chief Commissioner: As I said, Madam Chairperson, the House is not the right legal forum to debate on the ruling of the IRP panel, which is an independent statutory body.

Mr Perrine: Yes, one more question. Anyway, we are here to put question to all of you. Madam Chairperson, what is the time frame after having given.. *après avoir donné le contrat au* successful bidder, what is the time frame for the contractor to mobilise his troop on site?

[Interruption]

Mr Perrine: Vous n'avez pas compris la question? Can I put the question again because the Chief Commissioner has not heard of the question?

Madam Chairperson: Yes, yes.

Mr Perrine: Est-ce que, Monsieur le Chef commissaire, je vous parle, Monsieur le Chef commissaire, est-ce que le contracteur lorsqu'il a été averti qu'il a eu le contrat, combien de temps il a pris pour mobiliser ces troupes sur le site pour commencer le travail ? Is it clear ?

The Chief Commissioner: Il a commencé toute de suite quand il a eu le contrat. Il doit tous mobiliser pour commencer le travail. Ah ben, bien sûr.

Mr Perrine: Yes, can the Chief Commissioner confirm to this House, est-ce que le Chef commissaire peut confirmer dans cette Chambre aujourd'hui à l'heure que nous parlons, est-ce que le contracteur est sur le site ? Est-ce qu'il y a eu mobilisation sur les sites ? Maintenant là, à l'heure qu'on parle ?

The Chief Commissioner: Mais, Madame, quand le contracteur a eu son contrat, il doit toute de suite mettre en pratique ce qu'il a reçu, commencer le travail. Ben, oui.

Mr Perrine: Madame la présidente...

The Chief Commissioner: I just received a note, Madam Chairperson, as per conditions of contract after submission of proper insurance, the contractor has 14 days for mobilisation.

Mr Perrine: 14 days. Madame la présidente, nous sommes en train de faire face avec des contracteurs actuellement qui ne respectent pas les conditions du contrat qui leurs ont été octroyées. Nous avons plusieurs exemples dans le passé. Nous avons encore des exemples. Est-ce que le Chef commissaire peut nous dire pourquoi après 195 jours, le contracteur Bhola n'a toujours pas mobilisé ces troupes sur le site à Pistaches ?

[Interruptions]

The Chief Commissioner: I will find out, Madam Chairperson.

Mr Perrine: Madame la présidente, je maintiens, je redis encore, que *there should be a good monitoring committee with regard to project in Rodrigues. This is not the first case. This is not the last case. There have been several cases in the past and there are still cases in Rodrigues actually* où le contracteur ne respecte pas. Est-ce que le Chef commissaire prend l'engagement formel pour que ces contracteurs qui viennent d'ailleurs puissent respecter les contrats qui leurs ont été octroyés au détriment des petits contracteurs de Rodrigues ? Est-ce qu'il prend l'engagement formel de faire respecter ça toute de suite ?

(Interruptions)

The Chief Commissioner: I will find out.

Madam Chairperson: Next question. Time is running. Next question.

Mr Volbert: B/96, Madam Chairperson.

ALLOCATION OF LAND TO FARMERS –

SITE PLAN & SURVEYS – LA BOUCHERIE/PLAINE CORAIL

(No. B/96) The Second Local Region Member of La Ferme (Mr. J. N. Volbert) asked the Commissioner for Agriculture and Others whether, in regard to the allocation of land to farmers from Ste Marie village, Plaine Corail, Cascade Jean Louis and any other relevant

applicant, he will state and table, for the benefit of the House, on the site plan and surveys carried out therefor in La Boucherie/Plaine Corail?

Mr Payendee: Madam Chairperson, I am informed that the land identified for allocation to farmers from Ste Marie village, Plaine Corail and Cascade Jean Louis...

(Interruptions)

Madam Chairperson: No cross-talking, please!

Mr Payendee: ...have already been surveyed and parcelled.

Madam Chairperson: Respected Member Perrine, Commissioner, please!

(Interruptions)

Madam Chairperson: Order!

Mr Payendee: Can I continue?

Madam Chairperson: Yes, you may.

Mr Payendee: These plots have not yet been allocated to these farmers and for ethical/confidential reasons, these survey reports and plans cannot be tabled for the time being, Madam Chairperson.

Mr Volbert: Madam Chairperson, suite à une question B/36 que j'ai posée le 23 juin 2020, personne n'a demandé au Commissaire de nous donner cette réponse. *I quote.* Il a donné cette réponse par lui-même. *I quote, d'après le Hansard:*

«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 [de] *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 [de] la boucherie et ça aussi ça a été pris en compte et le plan a été bien fait et bientôt la distribution sera faite. »

(Applause)

Mr Volbert: *Madam Chairperson*, le respecté Commissaire ne peut pas venir dire quelque chose qui est dans le Hansard et après... Il a voulu déposer le plan. C'est lui-même qui a voulu déposer le plan et aujourd'hui, quand on lui demande de déposer le plan, il nous dit c'est '*for ethical reason*'. I leave it for you, *Madam Chairperson*, to...

(Interruptions)

Madam Chairperson: Order !

Mr Volbert: I leave it for you, *Madam Chairperson*, *pour* rule into this matter *parce qu'on ne peut pas induire la Chambre en erreur*.

Madam Chairperson: Respected Members, I cannot rule on that. This is not a point of order. There is another procedure. If ever you need advice, you can come to the Office of the Clerk so that you can have right procedure for that. I cannot act upon your request right now. Yes, the Commissioner can react on whatever the respected Member has said.

Mr Payende:*To react, Madam Chairperson. It is true that.* On ne vient pas là pour parler de n'importe quoi. On vient là pour dire la vérité.

(Interruptions)

Madam Chairperson: Respected Members, please!

Mr Payende: Respecter le Rodriguais, c'est lui dire la vérité.

Madam Chairperson: Commissioner, please. Indeed, it is right that there is freedom of speech but Members from both sides of the House must be guided by the parameters of the Standing Orders and Rules of this Assembly. So, Members, I issue a word of warning on whatever is being said, whatever you are saying is on record. So, you bear the responsibility. Each and every Member bears the whole responsibility of whatever is being said and whatever is being recorded in the Hansards of the Assembly. And, secondly, Members, you have the responsibility to uphold the dignity and the decorum of this House. You are the representative of the people of Rodrigues and you should be the example for the people and for the future generation. So, thank you. Whatever is being said, it should be within the parameters of the Standing Orders. Thank you.

Mr Payendee: Je n'ai pas fini, *Madam Chairperson*. Avec votre permission, c'est vrai que j'avais dit la dernière fois que si j'avais le plan, j'aurais montré. Je n'ai pas dit je vais *table*. J'ai dit j'aurais montré. C'est ce que je fais aujourd'hui. Je montre mais je ne peux pas *table* parce que c'est un plan qui est confidentiel. Voilà, ça, c'est le *aerial photo* de toute cette région et ça, c'est tout ce qui est les parcelles. Donc, on ne vient pas ici pour dire n'importe quoi. Les parcelles... Le terrain déjà parcellé et qui va être... Même la liste des gens qui vont avoir leur terrain avec leur superficie est dessus. Je ne peux pas *table* ça parce que c'est encore... *This is not...*

(Interruptions)

Mr Payendee: This is confidential for the time being. I do not know why you want this plan. You want to do politics with this? This is confidential for the time being, Madam.

Madam Chairperson: Yes, thank you, Commissioner. Yes, Minority Leader.

Mr Grandcourt: I would like to ask the Commissioner, Mrs Chairperson, Madam, is that whether all the different lots on the piece of paper in the possession of the Commissioner, whether this concerns all the villagers of Sainte Marie and if yes, how many lots are there.

Mr Payendee: Madam Chairperson, the survey has been done concerning all the people who were doing agriculture. It does not mean there have to be all the people of Sainte Marie. Those fishermen, maybe they do not need any piece of land. So, all the people who have asked for land are in this plot, yes.

Mr Grandcourt: Le souci, Madame la présidente, c'est que dans le projet de relocaliser les villageois de Sainte Marie, c'est inclus que tout le monde, tous les villageois auront une portion de terrain pour s'adonner à l'agriculture. Je connais ces gens-là. Ils ont tous un petit lopin de terre où ils cultivent des plantes. Donc, est-ce que ça veut dire qu'il y aura peut-être des gens de Sainte Marie qui n'auront pas de terrain pour s'adonner à l'agriculture?

Mr Payendee: Madam Chairperson, c'est une autre façon de poser la question qui revient au même. Au fait, moi, ce que j'ai dit, c'est que tous ceux... On demande à une personne: est-ce que tu veux un bout de terrain pour planter? Si la personne dit non, on ne peut

pas lui donner un bout de terrain si ce n'est pas un planteur. Donc, tous ceux qui ont fait la demande sont dessus.

Mr Grandcourt:Est-ce qu'on peut savoir combien de lots il y a sur ce bout de papier?

Mr Payendee: This information is still confidential, Madam. This is what I said.

Madam Chairperson: Next question.

GLYPHOSATE – PRACTICE OF AGRICULTURE – RODRIGUES

(No. B/97) The First Island Region Member (Mr. L. J. Von-Mally) asked the Commissioner for Agriculture and Others whether, in regard to the use of glyphosate in the practice of agriculture in Rodrigues, he will state if he is aware of the health hazard it represents, indicating: -

- (a) the measures his Commission undertook or intends to take to protect the population; and
- (b) if he will arrange with any relevant authority to have a study carried out for the determination of its impact on the health of the Rodriguan population?

Mr Payendee: Madam Chairperson,

- (a) Glyphosate is classified as an agricultural chemical by the Dangerous Chemical Control Act 2004. It is an active ingredient of herbicide Round Up and is currently being used in the Republic of Mauritius. Its importation is also controlled by the Dangerous Chemical Control Board.

According to the use of Pesticide Bill Act in 2018, residue of Glyphosate should not be present on agricultural produces.

The following measures are being taken to protect the population of Rodrigues against the potential health hazard of Glyphosate and other chemicals used in agriculture:

- (i) Sensitisation of planters' community on the proper use of the bio pesticide and safety precautions through radio talks and farmers' meetings.

- (ii) Dissemination of cultural practices to reduce reliance on chemicals to control weeds; e.g. mulching, planting of cover crops and crop rotation.

Madam Chairperson, I totally agree with the concern of the Respected Member with regards to the health of farmers in Rodrigues. This is why the regulation on banning the importation of chemical pesticide in Rodrigues is high on the agenda of this Regional Government. Drafting of the Regulations has been finalised and vetting of same is under process.

With regards to part (b) of the question, we do not have to contact any relevant body to do any study to know its impact on the health of the people using it, this information is already available we are taking the necessary action to discourage its use.

Mr Von-Mally: Madam Chairperson, being given that we are talking every now and then of *Rodrigues, île écologique*, can I know from the respected Commissioner whether, he is aware that France has completely banned the use of glyphosate since more than one year?

Mr Payendee: Oui, Madame la présidente, je suis au courant mais on n'est pas en France. Malheureusement, on est dirigé... on est à Maurice et pour le moment, comme j'ai dit, j'ai bien mentionné les *Pesticide Bill Act* ou tout ça dans ma réponse. Pour le moment, Maurice ne l'a pas fait encore mais c'est vrai que c'est important. Il n'y a pas que ça. Il y a beaucoup d'autres engrais chimiques, des pesticides tout ça qui sont bannis dans d'autres pays mais qui sont encore utilisés à Maurice. Mais c'est pour ça, nous, on a pris le devant. On dit aux gens : bientôt, banni ou pas banni ailleurs, nous, on ne va pas l'utiliser même si ce n'est pas banni. Donc, on ne se concentre pas que sur les trucs qui sont bannis ailleurs pour dire il ne faut pas l'utiliser. Nous, on dit les produits chimiques... Mon ami le *Deputy Chairperson* qui est chimiste ne va pas trop être content mais nous, on a dit, *Deputy Chief Commissioner*... Nous, on a dit que chemical pesticides will be banned, whether it is banned in other countries or not, we are going towards bio pesticides.

Mr Von-Mally: Madam Chairperson, you know that actions speak louder than words. When we are talking of Rodrigues, île écologique, well, we must know what we are doing. Can I know from the respected Commissioner whether, he is aware that the reason behind the banning of glyphosate in France is because this chemical causes cancer? It is one of the chemicals that causes cancer in different parts of France and here, in a small island like Rodrigues with the percolation into underground water, this is why I am asking the respected

Commissioner why not go fast to find an alternative to glyphosate. Otherwise, we are playing with the health of our inhabitants.

Mr Payendee: Je crois que j'ai déjà répondu, Madame la présidente. On sait, j'ai dit je respecte la question, ce qu'a dit le membre. Je respecte encore. Je suis d'accord entièrement tout ce qu'il a dit par rapport à pourquoi ne pas aller vite mais malheureusement, il y a des procédures dans tout. J'ai dit que la loi a déjà été travaillée. *Le Legal Advisor has vetted the thing and now, it is with the SLO. So, we have to wait a little bit.* Ce n'est pas... Comme je dis, là, glyphosate, on a vu. Il y a d'autres qu'on n'a pas vu encore. C'est pour ça, nous, *better be on the safe side, we better ban everything which is chemical until we have... if we have something bio to replace it but of course, the regulation is coming soon, Madam Chairperson.*

Mr Von-Mally: Can I know from the respected Commissioner whether, we already have... whether he is already aware that we have other chemicals, alternative bio chemicals that can be used instead of glyphosate and this is the case. Well, *montrons l'exemple. Montrons l'exemple à Rodrigues.*

Mr Payendee: Yes, Madam. Je suis encore d'accord avec... Oui, je sais qu'il y a d'autres bio mais là, c'est comme les oignons ce matin. C'est des choses qu'on ne peut pas imposer parce qu'il n'y a pas de loi actuellement qui dit que glyphosate... Il n'y a pas de loi. Aussi longtemps qu'on n'a pas cette loi pour dire qu'on va bannir ça, si la personne veut l'utiliser, on ne peut pas l'empêcher pour le moment mais on fait beaucoup de travaux. J'ai même emmené un papier au Conseil exécutif il y a au moins deux ou trois semaines de cela où on a tout un programme déjà préparé pour la sensibilisation à la radio et à la télé par les officiers de l'agriculture. Et un des trucs là, c'est travailler toujours dans cette vision de faire de Rodrigues, île écologique... On est en train d'éduquer nos planteurs de ce côté-là mais sachant aussi que il y a un petit truc à ajuster aussi, sachant que les produits bios, les bio pesticides coûtent un petit peu plus chers que... C'est peut-être la raison pour laquelle les gens vont pour là mais le fait qu'on n'a pas de loi pour le moment, on ne peut pas imposer. Mais on les éduque et chacun son choix. Pour le moment, ils ont encore le choix parce que ce n'est pas banni à Maurice. Dans la République de Maurice, ce n'est pas banni mais bientôt à Rodrigues, ce sera banni et à ce moment-là, on pourra mettre plus de pression.

Madam Chairperson: Respected Members, the table has been advised that PQ B/98, B/107, B/110, B/111, B/112 and B/113 have been withdrawn by the respective Members. Thank you. Question time ends at 14:42. Next question.

Mr Félicité: B/99.

FARMER'S CARD – 2016

(No. B/98) The Second Local Region Member of La Ferme (Mr. J. N. Volbert) asked the Commissioner for Agriculture and Others whether, in regard to the issue of farmer's card in 2016, he will, for the benefit of the House, state and table: -

- (a) the allocation process used therefor;
- (b) the number of cards issued per Local Region, indicating if all beneficiaries were full-time farmers;
- (c) any money obtained from beneficiaries in connection thereto and the outcome thereof;
- (d) all facilities attached thereto indicating if same concur with those being provided for in mainland Mauritius; and
- (e) on any application for the renewal thereof specifying if the cards have already been renewed and, if not, why?

[Withdrawn]

DEPLORABLE STATE – MONTAGNE CABRI CORAIL

FOOTBALL PLAYGROUND

(No. B/99) The Fifth Island Region Member (Mr. Z. Félicité) asked the Commissioner for Sports and Others whether, she is aware of the deplorable state of the Montagne Cabri Corail football playground and, if so, to indicate the measures her Commission proposes to take in regard thereto?

Mrs Edouard-Ravina: Madam Chairperson, I wish to inform the House that the Commission for Sports manages about 60 sports infrastructure in Rodrigues. These existing

infrastructure require regular upgrading and renovation on a regular basis. In addition, my Commission has to cater for other new infrastructure with regards to infrastructural plans of my Commission, priority of renovation and upgrading works on football ground and these are based on several criteria which I have listed three only, the:-

- Frequency of use;
- Availability of clubs / association to use the playground;
- Level of competitions in which the clubs/associations are evolving.

Madam Chairperson, with regard to the renovation of the Montagne Cabris Football playground, it is among the list of football grounds to be upgraded before the end of this financial year. I wish to draw the attention of the House that the two members of RRA, Miss Collet and Mr Nemours raised the issue to me previously and which we considered favourably to give due attention to this ground.

Madam Chairperson, it is to be noted that football grounds around Rodrigues have witnessed major damages during the recent cyclones.

Madam Chairperson, a survey of different sports grounds including that of Mt Cabris has already been effected at the beginning of the year. The following renovation works will be effected on the site:-

- (i) upgrading of lighting system and I wish to inform the House that a request has already been made to the CEB to upgrade the lighting network at Mt Cabris;
- (ii) the construction of retaining wall and appropriate drain to control soil erosion;
- (iii) fencing works and;
- (iv) levelling for the playing surface.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Mr Félicité: Yes, you mentioned that your Commission has already taken note for the upgrading of lighting, retaining walls and fencing. Can I know do you have a timeframe to implement these upgrading? Timeframe. When?

Mrs Edouard-Ravina: I have mentioned before the end of this financial year.

Mr Perrine: *Can I ask the Commissioner with regards to Mt Cabris Corail whether any grief...* Est-ce qu'il y a eu des... représentations de la part des joueurs depuis plusieurs années déjà concernant ce terrain?

Mrs Edouard-Ravina: Madam Chairperson, I have been working on this based on the reports made by Members, made by officers and made by people who saw it. So, we are acting on it. So, as at now, we are not considering any grief, any plea, any whatever because it is on the plan.

Mr Félicité: The same line. Do you have a... At your Commission level, do you have a maintenance team who visits sports infrastructure, especially football playground and if yes, how many people do you have in this team?

Mrs Edouard-Ravina: Indeed, Madam Chairperson, we have a skeleton maintenance team but the Commission is coming forward with a *plan de gestion* of the different sports ground and this *plan de gestion* will also involve the community and it is already drafted up and it will be presented very soon to the Executive Council for the implementation of same.

Madam Chairperson: Respected Members, the table has been advised that PQ B/101, B/102, B/103, B/108 and B/109 have been withdrawn. Thank you. Next question.

SME WELFARE FUND – BUDGET SPEECH 2019-2020

(No. B/100) Mr Z. Félicité (Fifth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner for Industrial Development and Others whether, in regard to the SME Welfare Fund announced in the Budget Speech 2019-2020, she will enlighten the House as to where matters stand as at date?

Mrs Gaspard Pierre-Louis: Madam Chairperson, Small and Medium Enterprises worldwide are confronted with a plethora of uncertainties and obstacles. In Rodrigues, with limited market size, there is a thin line between failure and success for micro enterprises or SMEs. Many entrepreneurs concentrate on maintaining their businesses afloat and neglect other vital aspects relating to their businesses such as contracting an insurance for their business, themselves, and their relatives.

With a view to address such situation and to bring some sort of comfort to our SMEs, the Rodrigues Regional Assembly proposed to set-up an SME Welfare Fund as announced in the Budget Speech 2019/2020. Subsequently, necessary action was initiated to set up the SME Welfare Fund.

The initial concept entails to setting up of a new entity that will be responsible to manage and operate the fund whereby the Rodrigues Regional Assembly would inject a one-off seed revolving fund. The capital available will thereafter be increased by payment of a nominal monthly fee by SMEs interested to join the Fund.

Since the procedures to set up the fund are very complex and lengthy, it has been decided after consultation with the Legal Adviser to consider, in the short term, another option to provide financial assistance to SMEs at concessionary rates of interest in the form of loan and leasing facilities.

In the same line, as the “*Plan de Credit Agricole*” which will be set up under the Rodrigues Venture Capital Fund as announced by the Chief Commissioner in his Budget Speech for financial year 2020-2021, it has been decided that the fund will also be made available to SMEs in Rodrigues. The modalities as well as the terms and conditions of the loan to be granted under the Rodrigues Venture Capital and Leasing Fund are under discussion and will be finalized shortly.

Madam Chairperson: Time is over.

STATEMENT BY COMMISSIONER

Madam Chairperson: Commissioner for Health and Others.

Mr Roussety: Madam Chairperson, as the House may be aware, the number of cases of COVID-19 is constantly increasing in several countries throughout the world. As at date, the total number of world cases has reached 29,450,227 against 27 million reported on 08 September 2020. This represents an increase of more than two million cases within one week.

In Mauritius, there are 361 cases out of which 335 have been recovered and 16 are still active. These cases are all imported and are actually in isolation. No locally transmitted cases have been reported in Mauritius since 26 April 2020 to date. Though, there is presently no positive cases reported in Rodrigues, the pandemic remains a serious threat to us, particularly when considering the possible forthcoming reopening of the Mauritian borders coupled with the increasing number of flights between Mauritius and Rodrigues.

Madam Chairperson, since the beginning of the outbreak of the pandemic, we have adopted a preventive approach with the aim of keeping Rodrigues a COVID-Free island. This is why we have constantly strengthened and consolidated our preparedness programme to meet this objective. As at date, the following measures have been implemented: -

/UNREVISED/

- (i) Protocol for the arrival of passengers at Plaine Corail Airport in the wake of the repatriation flights. The protocol has been further strengthened with the resumption of commercial flights on 01 July last;
- (ii) Installation of thermal camera at the airport;
- (iii) Acquisition of a PCR machine, additional ventilators, infra-red thermometers, personal protective equipment and other equipment to the tune of Rs 8,445,771.
The equipment are as follows: -

SN.	ITEM	QUANTITY	PRICE (Rs)
1.	A GeneXpert System NSRS Cartridge COVID Test	1 unit	1,397,250
2.	Sharp Oxygen Regulator	7 sets	104,650
3.	Video laryngoscope set	1 unit	86,250
4.	Fowlers beds	9 units	258,750
5.	Patient monitor	4 units	443,000
6.	Defibrillator	3 units	402,500
7.	Defibrillator	3 units	720,000
8.	Bipap machine	2 units	460,000
9.	Ventilator	2 units	1,480,000
10.	Blood Gas Analyser	1 unit	327,000
11.	Hand Pulse Oximeter	2 units	71,800
12.	Ambu Bag	2 units	31,000
13.	Respiratory Face Mask N95	4000 units	952,000
14.	Rapid Test	22,000 units	799,346
15.	Infra-Red Thermometer	150 units	552,000

- (iv) Upgrading of the Isolation Centre at Zita Jean Louis at Mont Lubin;
- (v) Training of Staff at the Health Services, Police officers as well as sensitization of the public at large including educational institutions;
- (vi) Evaluation of Protocol with the collaboration of the Commission for Tourism of the Chief Commissioner's and Tourist Office, Tourist Operators for

quarantine facilities as per new guidelines set by the Ministry of Health and Wellness.

My Commission and all our stakeholders are continuously working together under the guidance of the High Powered Committee on COVID-19 chaired by the Chief Commissioner.

I would like to avail myself of this opportunity today to thank heartily the Chief Commissioner and all members of this Committee for their dedicated contribution and support. I also extend my deep gratitude to our stakeholders, all staff and employees who have been and are still in the frontline in the fight against the entry and propagation of the Coronavirus in Rodrigues.

My Commission is finalizing procedures for the payment of the Rs 15,000 bonus as already decided by government with the Chief Commissioner's Office.

Madam Chairperson, in view of the up growing threat ahead, the battle against COVID-19 is far from being won. More than ever, we need the active contribution of each and every person in Rodrigues to maintain the preventive measures in order to prevent the entry and propagation of the virus and make Rodrigues a COVID-free island. I am confident that we can rely on the collaboration of everybody to win this battle. I thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Madam Chairperson: Commissioner for Women Affairs.

SCHEMES/FACILITIES - POST-SECONDARY STUDENTS

/TERTIARY OR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION - MAURITIUS OR ABROAD

Mrs Gaspard Pierre-Louis: Madam Chairperson, I would like to make a statement regarding the schemes and facilities offered by my Commission to post-secondary students who attend tertiary or vocational education in Mauritius or abroad.

Madam Chairperson, in line with the Rodrigues Regional Assembly's mission to ease access to tertiary education with a view to encourage the development of a high calibre professionals in Rodrigues and adjust mismatch on the labour market, several schemes and facilities have been developed by my Commission under the Training and Student Sponsorship Schemes for post-secondary students attending tertiary or vocational education institutions in mainland Mauritius and abroad.

These schemes and facilities are as follows:-

/UNREVISED/

- (i) Payment of Registration/Tuition Fees up to a maximum of Rs 55,400 for all year one students and as from year two onwards, payment of Registration Fees up to a maximum of Rs 40,000 based on monthly family income;

Following the Central Government policy regarding Free Tertiary Education since 2019, payment of registration fees is done for all first year students attending public post-secondary institutions and payment of Registration Fees up to a maximum of Rs 55,400 for first year students attending private post-secondary institutions.

And, since March 2019, payment of Registration Fees has been extended to Year One students attending the Foundation Course in International Hotel and Tourism Management offered at the Polytechnics Mauritius Ltd though the institution is listed among the providers of free higher Education.

- (ii) A One-off Grant for acquisition of laptop up to a maximum of Rs 20,000;
- (iii) A monthly Financial Assistance of Rs 4,000 for a maximum period of four years for one programme of studies;
- (iv) A grant for lodging of Rs 1,000 depending on family income to students who are not eligible for the monthly Financial Assistance;
- (v) One-off Grant of Rs 2,000 or Rs 5,000 depending on family income to post-secondary/tertiary student for setting up fees at start of studies only;
- (vi) Assistance Scheme for parents having more than one child studying at post-secondary/tertiary level;
- (vii) A grant of Rs 300 monthly for 2 GB internet package to all post-secondary students studying in Mauritius;
- (viii) Accommodation facilities at either the Rodrigues Student House at Vacoas or Government Quarters at Floreal; and
- (ix) A monthly allowance of Rs 5,000 to students ranked among the 10 Best Performing Boys and Girls at the Higher School Examination but who are not beneficiaries of a scholarship.

The family income, Madam Chairperson, is an important criterion to benefit from several of the Training and Student Sponsoring Scheme whereas students whose parents are in receipt of social aid benefit de facto of the monthly stipend.

Madam Chairperson, for all these schemes all applications received are screened by a Screening Committee under the Chairmanship of the Departmental Head of the Commission for Training. In case further information about family income is required, the matter is referred to the Commission for Social Security for social enquiry.

However, since July 2020, applicants or Responsible Parties are now required to swear an affidavit at the Court as Social Enquiries are a time consuming process. The affidavit is a legal document which bound the applicant and his/her responsible party in providing exact information mainly pertaining to the monthly income of the family.

Madam, Chairperson, the payment of financial assistance is usually effected on a monthly basis. However, following meetings with parents and students, assistance is now being provided for two months with a view to ensure timely financial assistance to students.

It is to be noted as informed during the information sessions with the students that a beneficiary of financial assistance has to renew his application for facilities after each academic year by providing a testimonial from his/her university or post-secondary institution. This process sometimes results in delays in the continued payment of financial assistance to students. Madam, Chairperson, each year some 250 students benefitted from the schemes and an amount of about Rs 7 million is disbursed annually.

I would like to inform the House that following requests from laureates for additional financial assistance each year as the amount of Rs 400,000 provided under the scholarship offered by the Central Government annually is not sufficient, my Commission has come up with two additional schemes for laureates recently, namely:

- (i) A top up Grant Scheme not exceeding Rs 600,000 per year; and
- (ii) A one Off grant up to a maximum of Rs 100,000.

These schemes are subject to certain conditions among others namely, student should opt to pursue studies as per the priority field of study for Rodrigues and provided that these fields are not offered by a recognised institution in the Republic of Mauritius.

Madam Chairperson, as a caring government we are leaving no stone unturned to promote the development of human capital in Rodrigues so as to ensure the sustainable development of our island. And, it is hoped that our youth will make the best of all opportunities

being offered to them and after their studies will optimise their acquired knowledge and competencies to serve our island. I thank you for your attention.

[Applause]

Madam Chairperson: Commissioner for Agriculture and Others.

“SUSPECTED CASE OF AFRICAN SWINE FEVER/CLASSICAL SWINE FEVER”

Mr Payendee: Madam Chairperson, I thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak on a case of suspected African Swine Fever/Classical Swine fever which was reported by the Veterinary Officers of my Commission, following a visit in the region of Eau Vannée on 03 September 2020. The pig was showing the following signs:-

- (i) fever;
- (ii) loss of appetite;
- (iii) hemorrhages on skin;
- (iv) swollen eyelids and red eyes; and
- (v) haematuria.

Madam Chairperson, the animals were immediately slaughtered and a post mortem exam to check for internal hemorrhages and enlarged spleen was practiced. Samples of blood were also collected and I gave instructions to send same to Mauritius the next day accompanied by the Agricultural Laboratory Technician of my Commission for further investigation.

Madam Chairperson, the test was carried out on Saturday 05 September in the presence of an Agricultural Laboratory Technician of my Commission and the preliminary results were negative with regard to African Swine Fever. I also wish to inform the House that two Veterinary Officers flew over from Mauritius on Saturday 05 September to assist my Commission in the monitoring exercise.

Madam Chairperson, a strict surveillance, particularly, around the region of Eau Vannée and the whole island has been done and no further care of sick animals, especially pigs have been reported.

Madam Chairperson, I have to inform the House that on Saturday 05 September 2020 a consignment of 35 bulls, 212 caprines, 146 bovines and 6 baskets of fowls landed in Mauritius aboard vessel MV Black Rhino. The consignment was inspected by the division of Veterinary Services in Mauritius and it was found that some caprines were showing clinical signs of

respiratory infection. Two goats have also died and post mortem analysis has been carried out on them and 108 blood samples have been tested. Samples have also been sent for further tests abroad. The caprines and bovines intended for breeding have been maintained in isolation pending confirmation of infection, if any. Bulls/cows and fowls were disinfected and released from isolation on Sunday 06 September 2020. Furthermore, my office has received a mail from the Ministry informing us that no live animals will be authorized from Rodrigues to Mauritius pending the confirmation of the blood tests from abroad.

Madam Chairperson, I chaired a meeting with the Veterinary Officers of my Commission, the two Veterinary Officers from Mauritius, the Manager, Agricultural Research and Extension Service and the Departmental Head on the above issues and it is comforting to mention that the bovines/caprines on the island are not showing signs of respiratory problems nor breeders are reporting such cases. This was also confirmed by the two Veterinary Officers from Mauritius.

Madam Chairperson, I also had a press conference on the above issue on Wednesday 09 September to dispel fears and doubts as rumors started to expand in the breeders' community. Madam Chairperson, and today itself we just got the written confirmation that the test for Swine Fever intake was negative. I thank you for your attention, Madam Chairperson.

Madam Chairperson: Commissioner for Youth and Others.

FOOTBALL REFORMS

Mrs Edouard-Ravina: Madame la présidente, merci de me donner l'occasion de partager avec cette Chambre les développements au niveau du football à Rodrigues, plus spécialement au niveau du football féminin.

Madame la présidente, permettez-moi de rappeler à la Chambre que depuis 2017, le sport d'élite est très haut sur notre agenda sportif. C'est pour cela que nous avons pris la décision qu'à partir de 2017 jusqu'à aujourd'hui d'inclure la sélection U15 au football féminine dans délégation pour participer aux Jeux des Jeunes Elites. Et, cette même équipe est revenue avec une médaille d'Or.

Deuxièmement, nous avons financé entièrement la participation de la sélection U20 football féminine a la compétition UFOI, c'est-à-dire ,l'Union des Fédération de Football de l'Océan Indien a Maurice en 2019.

Troisièmement, nous avons organisé des Inter-collèges du football féminin en 2019. De plus, Madame la présidente, le football féminin a une place très importante dans la réforme déjà entamée par la commission et les autres partenaires.

En même temps, cette année en février, un grant de Rs 785,600 a été alloué par la commission de la Jeunesse et des Sports au Comité Régionale pour l'achat des équipements pour la sélection U20 et aussi pour financer le déplacement des jeunes footballeuses à la compétition UFOI.

Madame la présidente, le vendredi 11 septembre 2020, j'ai reçu à mon bureau les représentants de la MFA (Mauritius Football Association) pour une réunion visant à promouvoir d'avantage le football à Rodrigues. Durant cette réunion, plusieurs secteurs de collaboration ont été explorés et des plateformes de participation et d'échanges ont été au milieu des discussions.

Madame la présidente, il est à noter avec fierté qu'il y a eu une nomination qui marque l'histoire du football à Rodrigues. Je suis fière d'annoncer à cette Chambre que notre Coach Miss Anielle Collet qui chemine avec notre sélection Féminine U17 a été promue *Head Coach* pour toutes les sélections féminines de la République.

(Applause)

Cette nomination vient consolider notre politique de professionnalisation du football qui cadre dans notre grande réforme. Je tiens à féliciter personnellement Mlle Collet qui a su mettre son talent au service du football féminin à Rodrigues et qui a été reconnue sur le plan national. Je lui souhaite bonne chance dans cette grande responsabilité.

Madame la présidente, je suis fière aussi de dire qu'une femme aujourd'hui a pu et a su mettre en avant le football Rodriguais et positionne celui-ci sur le plan national. Rappelons-nous aussi, en 2018 au niveau de l'arbitrage de la nomination de Patrice Milazar qui a été nommé Arbitre International. A l'occasion des 18 ans de l'Autonomie, j'accueille cette nouvelle comme une célébration de la capacité de la femme Rodriguaie, de sa contribution dans le sport d'élite et de la capacité du Rodriguaie en générale.

Madame la présidente, je tiens aussi à rappeler à cette Chambre (parce qu'on la entendu plusieurs fois) que le football à Rodrigues est bel et bien vivant. Lors de cette même réunion, Madame la présidente, il a été porté à notre attention que la MFA donnera un *grant* de Rs 100,000 à la Rodrigues Football Association sous le financement de la Confédération Africaine de Football (CAF) Covid Relief Fund et un autre *grant* de Rs 100,000 sous la FIFA

Covid Fund pour les encourager à pratiquer le sport pendant ces temps difficiles. Il a été aussi porté à mon attention lors de cette même réunion qu'une somme de Rs 10,000 va être allouée à plus d'une vingtaine d'équipes de football affilié à la MFA au niveau de Rodrigues.

Madame la présidente, après la discussion que nous avons eu avec la MFA, je reste confiante qu'une collaboration positive et enrichissante est possible. Nous avons proposé que d'autres cadres Rodriguais soit reconnus au niveau de l'océan indien et sur le plan national. Nous attendons des dénouements positifs en ce sens.

Au niveau du DTN, Madame la présidente, il est venu à Rodrigues. Nous avons proposé à la MFA que celui-ci soit présent plus régulièrement à Rodrigues pour les deux sections. Bien sûr, le Directeur Technique National a été avec nous dans délégation Mauricienne la semaine dernière, pour encadrer nos jeunes footballeurs et pour une détection de talents en vue de la prochaine compétition de la COSAFA pour les catégories U15 et U17. Il a par la même occasion organisé discours de perfectionnement pour les entraîneurs du niveau D.

Madame la présidente, je tiens à remercier, encore une fois, toutes les personnes qui s'engagent activement dans le football à Rodrigues et qui aident à réaliser notre réforme au niveau du football. Je tiens à remercier aussi la MFA pour son implication au niveau de Rodrigues et féliciter surtout notre équipe de football Rising, qui a fait une performance honorable lors du MFA Cup. Mais malheureusement, la compétition a été interrompue à cause du COVID-19.

Madame la présidente, je suis heureuse que la MFA elle aussi reconnait le progrès que cette belle équipe fait et reconnait le progrès que font nos athlètes dans cette discipline.

Madame la présidente, je souhaite bonne chance à Mme. Anielle Collet pour cette belle nomination fort louable et historique. Merc.

(Applause)

ADJOURNMENT

The Chief Commissioner: Madam Chairperson, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourned to Friday 09 October 2020 at 3.00 p.m.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Madam Chairperson: The House stands adjourned.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

PROCUREMENT – PRIVATE SECURITY SERVICES

/PRIMARY SCHOOL COMPOUNDS

(No. B/104) Mr J. N. Nemours (Second Local Region Member for Maréchal) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the procurement of private security services at Primary School compounds, he will, for the benefit of the House, provide information as to if tenders were launched therefor and, if so, to indicate:-

- (a) names of bidders participating in the exercise;
- (b) name of the successful bidder; and
- (c) the date on which the contract was awarded?

Reply: I am informed that actually there are private Security Guards posted in the following Government Primary Schools:-

- (i) Grand La Fouché Corail Government School;
- (ii) Mt. Charlot Community School; and
- (iii) Batatran Government School

As regards to part (a) of the question, I am informed that the invitation for bids for Private Security Services for Grand La Fouché Corail Government School and Mt. Charlot Community School was submitted through restricted bidding to 10 potential bidders on 04 February 2019 and closing date for submission of bids was 28 February 2019.

At opening of Bids, four bids were received from bidders:-

- (i) Rapid Security Services Ltd;
- (ii) Elephant Security Services Ltd;
- (iii) Top Security Service Ltd; and
- (iv) RSL Security Services Ltd

As regards to part (b) and (c) of the question, I am informed that the Contract for Security Services at Grand La Fouché Corail Government School and Mt. Charlot Community

School was awarded to Top Security Service Ltd on 19 April 2019 for a period of 12 months starting from 02 May 2019 up to 01 May 2020. The contract has been extended for an additional period of 12 months starting from 02 May 2020 up to 01 May 2021 as provided in the bidding document.

I am also informed that on the retirement of one Security Guard posted at Batatran Government School and pending completion of procurement procedures for provision of private security services for a period of twelve months at Batatran Government School, a contract has been awarded to Top Security Service Ltd on 01 July 2020 for provision of Security services for a period of one-month renewable thereafter starting from 02 July 2020.

I am also informed that invitation for bids was submitted through restricted bidding method to ten (10) potential Bidders on 13 July 2020 for provision of private security services for a period of twelve months at Batatran Government School and closing date was 30 July 2020. The four bids received are still under evaluation.

ONSTRUCTION

– 1000 M³ CONCETE RESERVOIR/MONTAGNE CABRIS WEST

(No. B/105) Mr J. N. Nemours (Second Local Region Member for Maréchal) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner Whether, in regard to the construction of a 1000 m³ concrete reservoir at Montagne Cabris West, he will:

- (a) state when works are expected to be completed; and
- (b) give a list of villages that will be connected from the new network that will be set up thereat?

Reply: The contract for the construction of the 1000 m³ reinforced concrete reservoir at Montagne Cabris was awarded to Laxmanbhai & Co. (Mauritius) Ltd for the contract price of Rs 19,207,576 (excluding VAT). The start date of the project was 13 February 2020 and the works were intended to be completed in July 2020.

However, delays have accrued on the project due to various factors namely confinement period and delays in procurement of material due to the Covid-19 context. The actual progress is about 57% and works are expected to be completed in November 2020.

The new reservoir will replace the steel reservoir which was damaged by cyclone Joaninha in year 2019. The reservoir outlet will be connected to the existing network which was serviced by the damaged steel reservoir and distributes water to the following villages:

- Montagne Cabris
- Citron
- Grand la Fouche Corail
- Cascade Jean Louis

The new reservoir will also complement supply of water to Grand La Fouche Corail reservoir which distributes water to the villages of Grand La Fouche Corail, Pistache, Piment Reposoir, Citadelle.

DIALYSIS PATIENTS

– DAY CARE SERVICES/LA FERME AREA HEALTH CENTRE

(No. B/106) Mr J. N. Nemours (Second Local Region Member for Maréchal) asked the Commissioner for Health and Others whether, in regard to dialysis patients, he will state if his Commission proposes to provide the day care services in connection thereto to La Ferme Area Health Centre and, if so, when?

Reply: The House will recall that in his budget speech for Financial Year 2019/2020, the Chief Commissioner announced the decentralization of the Dialysis Unit at Creve Coeur to La Ferme Area Health Centre.

The objective of this decentralization is not only to bring our services to the proximity of the population, but also to ensure that there is a back that will enable the continuity of the service in case any one of the two units is in a state of breakdown, which can happen in spite of measures and close monitoring being taken by my Commission.

In view of implementing the abovementioned budgetary measure, my Commission has launched tender for the construction of the appropriate building annexed to the Area Health Centre at la Ferme to host the water treatment plant and toilet facilities for the Dialysis Unit which will be accommodated in the first floor of the hospital building.

The construction of the building to host the Water Treatment Plant and toilet is now 100% completed. The site is being taken over from the contractor. My Commission has already initiated procedures for the purchase of the necessary equipment, water treatment plant and the dialysis machines.

A pool of Nursing Officers has already been sent for on-the-job-training at the Ministry of Health and Wellness in Mauritius since 2019 under the facilitating role of the Haemodialysis Coordinator of the latter Ministry.

It is expected that the Dialysis Unit at La Ferme Area Health Centre will become operational by December this year at latest.

TOURISM ALTERNATIVE LIVELIHOOD SCHEME

(No. B/114) Mr J. R. Ramdally (Second Local Region Member for St Gabriel) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the Tourism Alternative Livelihood Scheme, he will enlighten the House as to:

- (a) the works that have been carried out by the workers to date and indicating the number thereof involved therewith;
- (b) the amount of money disbursed as at to date therefor; and
- (c) the expected completion date thereof being given that economic activities have resumed in Rodrigues?

Reply: In my Budget speech 2020/21, I announced nine (9) measures aiming to provide immediate support to the local Tourism Industry, of which, the Tourism Alternative Livelihood Scheme is one of the bold measures put forward to support those directly affected.

As already stated in this Assembly, there are five (5) ongoing projects which fall under the Tourism Alternative Livelihood Scheme namely:

- (i) Restoration of islets at Ile du Sud and Ile Aux Cocos;
- (ii) Cleaning of five (5) hiking paths;
- (iii) Restoration of natural reserves at Anse Quitor and Grande Montagne;
- (iv) Coral Plantation at Jean Tac and SEMPA; and
- (v) Clearing of passes at Pointe Rond near Ile Aux Cocos, and Hermitage and Ile aux Chats.

Works with respect to coral plantation started on 04 June 2020 and works at the other four sites started on 10 June 2020. The works that have been carried to date per respective sites are as follows :-

1. Coral plantation is being carried out in the South East Marine Protected Area (SEMPA) Region South and North region under the technical supervision of Shoals Rodrigues and SEMPA department. There are twenty employees

involved in the coral plantation activities. The number of coral nubbins planted as at 31 August 2020 are:

- North region: 3434
- South region: 4540

In 4 and 6 areas in the South region and North region respectively.

As regards the clearing of passes being carried out in the North near Pointe Rond and in front of Baie Diamant and in the South near Ile Hermitage, same is being done manually by those mainly involved in pleasure crafts activities. The activity is being supervised by technicians of the Commission for Fisheries and Environment. The project also includes the demarcation of the passes with galvanized poles which will be visible at both high and low tides. Sixty-two (62) employees are involved in this project.

The third project is the restoration of surrounding islets namely, Ile Aux Cocos, Ile Aux Chats and Ile Hermitage. There are fifty-seven (57) employees involved in this project, with 23 employees on Ile aux Cocos and 34 for the Iles du Sud.

The works being carried out at Ile Hermitage and Ile Aux Chat comprise the following:

- Collection of garbage;
- Cleaning of pathways on Ile Hermitage;
- Cutting of bushes and exotic plants;
- Planting of endemic plants; and
- Stacking of green wastes.

For Ile aux Cocos tourism site, the following works are being carried out:

- Cleaning of the embarkation point located at Pointe Diable;
- Collection of garbage;
- Cleaning of the existing pathway to provide a guided access to explore the island so as to respect the limit of the ecosystem and the nature reserve.
- The creation of a second and longer pathway.
- Upgrading of the actual amenities such as cleaning and painting of benches, handrails and the front of the building.

It is to be noted that some one thousand and one hundred (1100) endemic plants have been planted on Ile Hermitage and some one hundred plants on Ile aux Cocos in view of combating soil erosion.

The works are being carried out under supervision and technical advice of the Commission for Forestry. Based on technical recommendations of the above Commission, the next planting season will be in March 2021, and it is being planned to continue the planting exercise in the next season.

For the time being, drip system has been put in place on Ile Hermitage by the employees themselves.

I have been informed, that on Ile Hermitage, the roots of the exotic plants such as “L’Accacia”, have not been removed from the soil for the time being to avoid soil erosion. Upon successful growth of the endemic plants, the uprooting of the invasive and exotic plants

The fourth project is the cleaning and upgrading of five (5) hiking paths which are being carried out by one hundred and forty-eight (148) employees at the following sites:

- Anse Aux Anglais via Mont Limon to Port Sud Es;
- Gravieres via Trou d’Argent to Saint François and Restoration of Natural Reserves at Anse Bouteille;
- Mourouk to Gravieres; and
- Pistaches via Plaine Mapou to Plaine Corail.

Last but not least, the fifth project is the restoration of Nature Reserves whereby 102 employees are involved at:

- Grande Montagne Reserve;
- Anse Quitor Reserve; and
- A new site at Jean Tac for the conservation and protection of marine turtles.

I will now mention the works carried out at respective sites and under the supervision of the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation:

- At Grande Montagne Reserve 5000 endemic plants have been planted over almost one hectare
- 12,500 m² of land has been cleared at Anse Quitor Reserve to provide a better environment for the endemic plants on the site to grow.

- Moreover, under the supervision of Commission for Forestry, “Association Tourisme Réunion” is implementing the restoration of marine turtle site at Jean Tac. 15,000m² of land have been cleared of *Acacia Nilotica*.

Endemic plants with special properties of attracting marine turtle will be planted on the site under the technical expertise of Commission for Forestry.

I am pleased to further inform the House that a new project has been taken on board under the Tourism Alternative Livelihood Scheme, namely, the deployment and monitoring of 15 Fish Aggregate Devices (FADs) around Rodrigues. Same will be implemented by the Big Game Fishing Operators under the supervision of the Commission for Fisheries.

I am further informed that an amount of Rs 11,330, 357.05 has already been disbursed for the Tourism Alternative Livelihood Scheme. I wish to refer the respected Members to my answer provided to Question B/87 for more details on the project expenditure.

As stated in this House, Tourism Alternative Livelihood Scheme is expected to last until December 2020. However, I have been informed, that with the growing trends in the number of tourism arrivals, for the month of September, thirty-seven (37) employees have already left the scheme. Hence, the scheme will be maintained as scheduled subject to availability of manpower on site.

Allow me, to express my appreciation to the wonderful jobs being undertaken by all the employees of the tourism sector.

CONSTRUCTION TRACK ROADS

– DIFFERENT LOCAL REGIONS OF THE ISLAND

(No. B/115) Mr J. R. Ramdally (Second Local Region Member for St Gabriel) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the construction of track roads in the different local regions of the island, he will inform the House as to where matters stand specifying if the identification of the proposed track roads has already been done and, if not, to state when same will be undertaken together with the expected commencement and completion date for the works?

Reply: Tenders were launched on 16 July 2019 for the Construction of about 30 km Track Roads including footpath and Civil Works in Rodrigues for the 6 Local Regions and the closing date was fixed on 22 August 2019. Only one bid was received. On 27 September 2019 the Central Procurement Board has recommended the award for Lot 2 only. The contract was

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awarded to Laxmanbhai and Co. (Mtius) Ltd on 30 October 2019 for the sum of Rs 19,069,863.50 excluding VAT. Two Works Orders have been issued under the said contract:

(a) Works Order No. 1 for the construction of about 2030m of accesses

Date Issued	: 20 April 2020
Estimated Cost	: Rs 9, 985,704.90 Excluding VAT
Commencement Date	: 29 April 2020
Expected Completion Date	: 29 October 2020

(b) Works Order No. 2 for the construction of about 2536m of accesses

Date Issued	: 24 June 2020
Estimated Cost	: Rs 9,084,158.60 Excluding VAT
Commencement Date	: 09 July 2020
Expected Completion Date	: 29 October 2020

However, the contractor could not start the works promptly due to various reasons associated with the lock down and unavailability of flights to and from Mauritius. (The key personnel was confined in Mauritius and arrangement to obtain a licence for a specialised equipment from the National Radiation Authority was unduly delay.

A new procurement exercise for Local Regions 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6 was launched on 26 May 2020 for the Construction of 25 Km Track Roads including Footpaths and Other Civil Works. The closing date for the submission of bids was fixed on 08 July 2020. Three bids were received.

On 30 July 2020, the Central Procurement Board has approved the award of the contract for the Construction of about 25 kms of Track Roads including Footpaths and Other Civil Works in Rodrigues (i.e about 5 km of track roads for each Local Regions 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6) to

the lowest responsive bidder, Transinvest Construction Ltd for the total amount of Rs 86,000,000 excluding VAT. Notification of award was issued to the selected and unsuccessful bidders on 31 July 2020 and letter of award will be issued shortly. The duration of the contract is 24 months and the duration for each lot shall be six months.

The track roads and footpaths to be constructed under the contract have already been shortlisted for all five regions and the Executive Council has approved that the shortlisted list be surveyed so that Work Orders could be issued for the different Regions.

Survey for Region 6 is starting this week and my Commission will issue the works order once same is completed.

DISTRIBUTION OF WATER – DRY SEASON

(No. B/116) Mr J. R. Ramdally (Second Local Region Member for St Gabriel) asked Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to distribution of water during the forthcoming dry season, he will enlighten the House on any measure that his Commission is contemplating to cater for any decrease in the production of water around the island?

Reply: The production of water is presently 8880 m³ as compared to 9055 m³ for the same period last year. With the forthcoming dry season, it is expected that the surface and ground water production will decrease. With a view to mitigate this effect and reduce the possible occurrence of disruption in water distribution, the following measures have already been taken:

1. Securing water production

- (a) The new desalination plants at Pointe Coton and Songes are now fully operational and producing around 1000 m³/day and 500 m³/day respectively. Thus, the total desalinated water (i.e with the addition of Cavern Bouteille: 204 m³/day; Osmosum: 296 m³/day and Pointe Venus: 384 m³/day), is approximately 2,384 m³/day. It is worth noted that this production is more or less stable.
- (b) Recently, Anse Raffin treatment plant has been rehabilitated in house and is now producing about 300 m³/day. We are actually proceeding with the treatment plant of Creve Coeur to exploit the water from Cascade Pigeon Dam more optimally.

- (c) Ensuring availability of spare pumps to mitigate any loss of production due to breakdown.

As such, my commission has proactively procured some 7 spare pumps in store for the following boreholes and pumping stations namely La Ferme, Marechal, Mont Lubin, Lataniers, Montagne Bois Noir, Roche Bon Dieu and Cascade Pigeon.

Procurement for some 10 submersible pumps for other boreholes and other pumping stations are under evaluation.

- (d) A spare borehole at Fond Baie aux Huitres fully operational can be operated to cater decrease in water from Pave la Bonte Dam.
- (e) Cleaning of dams have been carried out at Mourouk to ensure that the incoming flows of surface water are not hindered and to increase the capacity of the dams. My Commission will proceed with the desilting of Pavé La Bonté, Cygangue and Fond Camp du Roi dams and the rehabilitation of some sources such as Soupirs, Papayes and Citron in the coming weeks.
- (f) Rehabilitation of Bassin Banane to provide water to the villagers of Mte Longue.

- 2. Improvement of the distribution network to reduce water loss and interconnecting of reservoirs to allow the possibility of more possible inter-transfers between reservoirs and production sources. As such,

- (a) The distribution networks are being repaired continuously around the island and the remaining galvanized pipes are being replaced progressively to minimize water loss.
- (b) New pipe lines and networks have been laid at the following Morcellement: Mourouk, Songes, Roche Bon Dieu, Baladirou, Anse Nicolas, Petite Butte, Rivere Banane, Baie Diamant, Batatran and Pointe Vingt Tour.
- (c) The second phase for renewal of pipelines in Port Mathurin is ongoing under the NDU project: Upgrading of drain in Port Mathurin and is in

progress. It is estimated that about 30% of the distributed water in the existing Asbestos/galvanised of Port Mathurin network is loss. Such loss will be curtailed with the completion of the project scheduled by the end of this year.

- (d) Alternative and standby sources to replenish service reservoirs are being implemented. This is the case at Malartic reservoir which can now be supplied with water directly from Malabar Borehole. My Commission is actually working on a new pipeline from Trefles to Coromandel reservoir so that it may be supplied with water from Roche Bon Dieu pumping station instead of going through Petit Brulé. As such, the reservoir may be served from both sources in case of need.

3. Individual and localised issues with water shortages

The water tankers of the Water Resources Unit will attend for any individual and localised complaints. Resort to private tankers will be considered depending upon the severity of the situation.

As already stated in this House, the policy of the Regional Government is to ensure weekly distribution of water to the population by 2022. In addition to the 40 villages which were already being served with water once a week, the same policy is being applied to the villages which are being served by the 300m³ cubic reservoir of Petit Brulé since the start of this month. This includes the villages of Nassola, Lataniers, Palissade, Mte Bois Noir and Mte Malgache.

My Commission envisages to extend the same policy to the villages of Grande Montagne, Trefles and Coromandel shortly.

CONSTRUCTION – YOUTH CENTRE/BALADIROU

(No. B/117) Mr J. R. Ramdally (Second Local Region Member for St Gabriel) asked the Commissioner for Youth and Others whether, in regard to construction of a Youth Centre at Baladirou, she will enlighten the House as to where matters stand stating on the amount of money disbursed therefor as at to date, the objectives thereof as well as the target groups, and indicating how the centre will be, or is being, operated?

Reply: The construction of the Baladirou Youth Residential and Training Centre is an infrastructural development that marks a turning point in Rodrigues history and social landscape and especially that of our youth and the villagers of Baladirou.

I would like to thank my colleagues for having provided all the necessary support to shape and realize this landmark project.

The Baladirou Youth Residential and Training Centre was inaugurated on Saturday 2nd of August 2020 to the tune of around sixty million rupees. Never in history of Rodrigues has a government invested that much in a building that targets the youth and caters for the training and leisure needs of the youth at the same time.

We acknowledge how the ancient building has contributed in shaping the Rodriguan population. We also noted with much concern the deteriorated state in which the previous buildings were. We recall also how many of us spent school vacation or been on residential training there. Those who experienced Baladirou shared how they have grown and gained in terms of maturity. Therefore it was of utmost importance to have an appropriate residential centre for exchange, leisure and training.

Before coming to the objectives of the Centre, I would like to elaborate on the need of constructing such infrastructure in Rodrigues. First of all, it was a long felt project by all the youth and the whole of community of Rodrigues.

Each year, numerous groups and/or associations from Rodrigues and Mauritius plan and carry out their residential training activities and other exchange programmes. In doing so, we noted with much concern that accommodation for big groups in Rodrigues is the main problem faced by those participants especially during peak tourist season. Each year, my Commission organizes around eight to ten residential seminars/training sessions for both the youth and sports community. On top of that, we receive several requests from other organizations in Rodrigues itself. The two accommodation centres, that is, Malabar Centre d'Accueil with 30 persons capacity and Manique with 18 persons capacity under the aegis of my Commission cannot meet the high demand for residential training. It is to be noted that the space available at the two existing centres is not that conducive to outdoor activities. Therefore, the need for an appropriate youth-friendly and training infrastructure was deeply felt.

As a caring government, we responded to the need of our youth and other institutions to promote training, to promote togetherness, participation and engagement.

This youth and residential training centre has since its very opening, seen the engagement of our youth when they planted some more than 200 trees in the area to beautify the centre and its surrounding.

Therefore the specific objectives of the Baladirou Residential and Training Centre are:-

- To provide an accommodation space for youth groups and organisations, women's association, sports organisations and the elderly to carry out their residential training activities;
- To provide an appropriate space for the Commission for Youth and other Commissions (such as the Commission for Education) to organize their recreational and leisure activities such as Special Vacances, Colonie de Vacances, Camp de Vacances, boot camp amongst others during the school vacation.
- To provide a convenient youth friendly space for the youth to have sound and healthy leisure activities and appropriate training to make them better citizens.
- To host our youth and sports delegations and exchanges programmes from Mauritius and abroad with attached conditions.
- To accommodate conferences/seminars organized by other government institutions and NGOs' against appropriate fees.
- To act as a sport village when hosting a regional and all international events.

The construction of the Baladirou Youth Residential and Training Centre targets all age groups of Rodrigues who operate in institutions in a structured manner and responding to the training needs of the island. It may be used as a residential training centre for all training activities and programmes to be carried out by all Commissions of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and other NGOs' against appropriate fee.

The project is also a landmark in the village of Baladirou as well. Their village has seen two major development and represents opportunities for small businesses. The project has changed the life of many Rodriguans and villagers of Baladirou. Who would have thought that a tarred road will have been constructed to access on the beach of Baladirou. Not many of us but we did it. The nearest neighbor of the Centre, Mr. C. can testify it. This access road has changed their lives.

In view of the operating of the Centre, my colleagues of the Executive Council have during its meeting of Friday 10th July 2020 approved the conditions of use of the Baladirou Youth Residential and Training Centre.

A daily fee will be applicable for residential use at the Centre. The fee will be used to meet the cost of day to day services such as cleaning, logistic and laundry. A refundable Deposit Fee will also be applicable to cater for any damage to the building or to any equipment/furniture or any loss of materials/equipment. The refundable deposit fee will also be given back only upon satisfaction that the place has been cleaned and restored immediately after use and appropriate handing over is made.

To summarise, the construction of the Baladirou Youth Residential and Training Centre is in line with the mission of my Commission to create an enabling and conducive environment and act as a catalyst and facilitator for the population, for the development of our youth *et pour une jeunesse responsable de son avenir*.

STAPLE CROP PRODUCTION SCHEME

(No. B/118) Miss M. R. Collet (First Local Region Member for Maréchal) asked the Commissioner for Agriculture and Others whether, in regard to the Staple Crop Production Scheme as announced in the Budget Speech 2020/2021, he will state and table for the benefit of the House on:-

- (a) the objectives thereof;
- (b) what the scheme provides for;
- (c) the criteria to benefit therefrom; and
- (d) the intended start date thereof and cost implications therefor?

Reply: I wish to inform the House that:-

- (a) During the past years, the area under staples crops in Rodrigues have been decreasing as shown in the table below:

Year	Maize		Cassava		Sweet Potato	
	Area/ha	Prod/T	Area/ha	Prod/T	Area/ha	Prod/T
2014	188	87.4	3	44.7	3.1	37.5

/UNREVISED/

2015	87.4	390.7	1.8	17.7	1.1	13.6
2016	43.5	288.5	1.4	17	1.8	25.3
2017	148.6	523	2	36.7	1.5	16.4
2018	73.1	337.9	2.5	40.2	0.9	9.1

The main reasons for such reduction are as follows:-

- Climate change (long drought spell)
- Effects of Climatic change such as decrease and change in rainfall patterns and proliferation of pests and diseases;
- Lack of equipment for mechanization
- Lack of labour
- Competitiveness of emerging sector for labour
- Stray animals

Staples production used to account for above 60% of the total area under production and now the figure has dropped on average to 40% for the past 5 years. The main reason being that planters have not been able to grow maize on two seasons and the bean and onion planters have not been able to plant maize either before planting of onion or bean or after the harvest of these crops due to insufficient rainfall.

The main objectives of the staple schemes are as follows:

- To increase the area under staple crops.
- Improve and guarantee the food security status of the island.
- Encourage cultivation of all agricultural land available.
- Encourage the younger generation to get involved in agriculture.
- To support those that are already in the sector.

With the recent impact of the Covid- 19, it is generally felt that the Rodrigues must be self-sufficient in its food production, mainly for staples and fresh vegetables. Rodrigues used to be called the “grenier” for Mauritius some years back and now it is our commitment to make Rodrigues become that “grenier” again by providing producers with maximum support for them to increase and improve production for the local market in a first instance and for exporting and processing in a second phase.

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The following will be provided to producers under the schemes:

- Rehabilitation of 200 acres of land to be put at the disposal of the planters.
- Subsidy for the payment of labour/ internship cost up to a maximum of Rs 250 per day.
- Payment for mechanization service up to Rs 2000 per acre of land.
- Subsidy of 50% up to a maximum of Rs 25 000 per acre to planters for purchase of material to fence their agricultural land.

- Subsidy for the purchase of quality seeds.

The criteria for the allocation of the schemes are as follows:

- Planter must be of 18 years or above.
- Planters applied or possess an agricultural permit.
- Planter must be cultivating on area of at least 1.0 and 0.5 acre of staple and cash crops respectively.
- Planters having grown staple crop continuously during the past 3 years.
- Planter must be known to the ARES.
- Planter must hold a planters' card issued by ARES or the SFWF.
- Planter must have an agricultural permit/lease or show evidence that he/she has applied for same.
- Priority will be given to planters who have adopted new techniques and technology.

The Schemes will be implemented as from the month of October 2020 and will be on a first come first serve basis. Communiqués will be broadcasted to inform all those interested to come and make their applications.

**TOURISM SECTOR – STATISTICS/TOURIST ARRIVAL IN RODRIGUES
– JUNE TO AUGUST 2020**

(No. B/119) Miss M. R. Collet (First Local Region Member for Maréchal) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the tourism sector, he will state, for the benefit of the House, the statistics for tourist arrivals in Rodrigues for the period June to August 2020 and the impact thereof on the local economy?

Reply: Following discussions held with relevant authorities in Mauritius, it was agreed that commercial flights between Mauritius and Rodrigues would resume in a progressive manner as follows:

- one scheduled daily flight for the month of July;
- two for the month of August;
- and eventually three for the month of September.

However, I am informed that due to the increase in demand, one additional flight per day were scheduled on certain days during the month of July and August.

It is a fact, that the tourist arrivals for the month of July and August 2020 representing 1,707 and 3,371 respectively as compared to same period in 2019, that is 6,411 and 7,181, respectively have drastically dropped mainly due to the limited number of scheduled flights.

My government, being a proactive one, had already anticipated such effects since April 2020. In order to mitigate negative impacts on our local economy, bold measures have been announced in my last budget speech. Same have been developed and implemented under the Tourism Alternative Livelihood Scheme which I have just elaborated earlier in this House.

It is expected that there will be a continuous increase in the number of visitors for the coming months from our main market. Since the number of commercial flights has increased daily as from 1st September 2020. Moreover, a first tourism promotional marketing event is scheduled in September 2020 in Mauritius, namely “Weekend Rodriguais” from 18 to 20 September 2020 with a view to further promote our destination.

I wish to inform the House, that my Commission in close collaboration with l’Office du Tourisme and our partners, Tourism Operators, is closely monitoring the progress of tourism arrivals in view to better anticipate the economic impact on our Island.

SCHEMES/FACILITIES - POST-SECONDARY STUDENTS

/TERTIARY OR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION - MAURITIUS OR ABROAD

(No. B/120) Miss M. R. Collet (First Local Region Member for Maréchal) asked the Commissioner for Vocational Training and Others whether, in regard to the schemes and facilities applicable for students attending tertiary or vocational education institutions in

mainland Mauritius and abroad as well as via distance learning from Rodrigues, she will state and table:

- (a) what the schemes provide for;
- (b) the set criteria to benefit therefrom; and
- (c) the funds disbursed therefor for the last two and the present academic year(s), respectively

(Vide Statement by Commissioner)

At 3.07p.m. the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Friday 09 October 2020 at 3.00 p.m.