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No. 11 of 2021

RODRIGUES

FOURTH REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENTARY

DEBATES

(HANSARD)

(UNREVISED)

TUESDAY 14 SEPTEMBER 2021

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RODRIGUES REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY 14 SEPTEMBER 2021

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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), 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, Education (Administration)
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- Ravina	Commissioner responsible for Arts and Culture, Library Services, Museums, Archives, Historical Sites and Buildings, Youth and Sports

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PRINCIPAL OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS

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

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RODRIGUES

Fourth Regional Assembly

Debate No. 11 of 2021

Sitting of Tuesday 14 September 2021

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

The National Anthem was played

(Madam Chairperson in the Chair)

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PAPERS LAID

- (i) The Financial Report of RodClean Co Ltd for the financial year ended 31 December 2018 (Original);
- (ii) The Financial Report of RodClean Co Ltd for the financial year ended 31 December 2019 (Original);
- (iii) The Financial Report of RodClean Co Ltd for the financial year ended 31 December 2020 (Original); and
- (iv) The Annual Report of RodClean Co Ltd for the financial year ended 31 December 2020 (Original).

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Madam Chairperson: The Fourth Island Region Member.

UPGRADE OF QUEEN ELIZABETH HOSPITAL

– CREVE COEUR

(No. B/109) The Fourth Island Region Member (Mr J.R. Augustin) asked the Commissioner for Health and Others whether, in regard to the upgrade of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital at Creve Coeur, Rodrigues into a modern hospital, he will, for the benefit of the House, state where matters stand as to date, indicating:

- (a) any amendment made to the initial aims and the project value thereof; and
- (b) all medical equipment procured in relation thereto, giving details?

Mr Roussety: Madam Chairperson, in response to Question B/109, the House may wish to note that the short term objective of my Commission is to upgrade the Queen Elizabeth Hospital at Creve Coeur, into a modern hospital with the state-of-art facilities by providing the appropriate enabling environment to deliver primary, secondary and tertiary health care services.

In order to fulfil this objective, my Commission has had several discussions with various stakeholders, in Rodrigues and Mauritius, following which a Master Plan was prepared

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by the Hospital Service Consultancy Corporation (HSCC) of India in 2018. The Master Plan proposed by the HSCC makes provision for the following phases:

Phase I

- Renovation/Reorganisation of the OPD/Administrative Block and the Maternity Block;
- Dismantling /demolition of the existing Male ward, Dialysis Unit, Laboratory, Laundry and Operating Theatre;
- Construction of a New Block (with 1 Emergency Unit, 1 Catherization Laboratory, Operating Theatre, Ward with 126 beds, ICU with 12 Beds, Intensive Cardiac Care Unit with 12 Beds - Total 150 Beds

Phase II

- Construction and expansion with additional Hospital Block with 153 beds, ICU with 12 Beds, High Dependency Unit with 12 beds.
- Upgrading of the two existing Area Health Centres from 16 beds to 30 beds each.

The House will appreciate that the recommendation made by the HSCC implies too much demolition works at the early stage, before the construction of a modern hospital block. Such course of action would adversely impact and disrupt the Health Service delivery at Queen Elizabeth Hospital as we would have no alternative to accommodate the various services during the upgrading of works in Phase I. My Commission has therefore reviewed the recommendation of the HSCC and decided to start with the construction of a Modern Hospital Block at the first instance.

In this context, Luxconsult (Mtius.) Ltd was subsequently requested to prepare the related drawings and tender document for the construction of the Modern Hospital Block which will constitute Phase I of the implementation of the Master Plan. As at date, tender document has already been prepared with a project value of Rs 422,970,000 with the following scope of works:

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- Demolition of the existing miscellaneous buildings in the vicinity of the ex-Laboratory and adjacent buildings (Laundry, Well Wisher Hall and Government quarters);
- Construction of a reinforced concrete building with 4 levels of 25,000 m² - (lower ground, ground floor, first and second floor); and
- External works comprising parking, service networks, drainage, construction of minor building, mechanical and plumbing installation.

The tender document has already been transmitted to the Central Procurement Board on 09 August 2021 for vetting and approval. Same is being awaited for launching. We expect to award the contract and start construction before the end of the calendar year 2021.

Madam Chairperson, as regard to part (b), my Commission has already instructed Luxconsult (Mtius) Ltd. to proceed with the preparation, specification and tender document for the appropriate procurement procedures for the acquisition of medical equipment to be used in different units of the new hospital block. This procedure will be done in parallel with the construction works.

Mr Augustin: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Can we know from the Commissioner the surface area of the Phase I Project?

Mr Roussety: Madam Chairperson, the service area of the Phase I Project is about 7900 m².

Mr Von-Mally: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Allow me before putting my question to welcome back the Chief Commissioner who looks quite in good shape. The respected Commissioner has been talking of buildings but what about the equipment? Can I know from the respected Commissioner when we are going to have a well-equipped laboratory at the QEH?

Mr Roussety: As I have said in my answer, Madam Chairperson, the Consultant has been asked to look for the equipment in all sections and also for the laboratory but with the procedures to be started in different units or the new blocks, this procedure will be in parallel with the construction works. The laboratory also will be constructed and the necessary equipment will be ready.

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Mr Augustin: Can we know from the Commissioner, he just said that the implementation cost for the first phase is about Rs 422 m. Can we know the project value of the two phases he announced?

Mr Roussety: Madam Chairperson, the figure that I have mentioned, Rs 422 m. is for the lower ground floor, ground floor, first floor and second floor. I have no exact figure for the first phase. Can the respected Member come with a substantive question? He will have the answer.

Mr Augustin: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Can we know from the Commissioner when the project is about to start and the completion date?

Mr Roussety: Madam Chairperson, I have just said that the tender document is at the Central Procurement Board for vetting. We are awaiting that it is approved and same will be launching very soon. We expect to award the contract and start the works before the end of this calendar year 2021. But I have not the figure for what time it will take complete the work. Three years, four years, I do not know.

Madam Chairperson: Respected Member Volbert.

Mr. Volbert: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Dans sa réponse, le commissaire a mentionné que la phase une devrait coûter dans les environs de Rs 4,000 et quelques... Rs 422 millions à peu près. Mais dans le discours programme de 2021/2022, paragraphe 148, il a été mentionné que, je cite : « Premièrement, de démarrer la phase une des travaux de construction pour le projet de l'hôpital moderne, au coût de Rs 300 million. » Est-ce que le commissaire peut nous expliquer la différence ?

Mr Roussety: Of course, Madam Chairperson, we have added some necessary services that the Rodriguans will benefit.

Mr Von-Mally: Merci, Madame la présidente. Concernant le bloc opératoire, nous savons tous que très souvent, même pour des interventions mineures, on doit envoyer les patients à Maurice. Est-ce que se serait possible de savoir du respecté commissaire si des fonds vont être alloués pour avoir un bloc opératoire digne de ce nom à Rodrigues pour qu'on puisse faire venir des chirurgiens de Maurice ou d'ailleurs quand le besoin se fait sentir ? Ainsi, ça réduirait drastiquement le nombre de patients qu'on doit envoyer à Maurice ou ailleurs pour faire des opérations.

Mr Roussety: Of course, Madam Chairperson. On the first floor, we will have operating theatre block and of course, we are caring for more a surgical operation to be performed in Rodrigues in order not to send the patient in Mauritius.

Madam Chairperson: Minority Leader.

Mr Grandcourt: J'aimerais demander, si j'ai bien compris, à travers la réponse du commissaire, c'est qu'il a eu des rencontres avec les *stakeholders* avant de faire le *master plan*. Il est venu avec le *master plan* et puis, il nous dit dans sa réponse qu'il a dû revoir le *master plan*. Mais pourquoi ? Pourquoi ils ont dû revoir le *master plan* ? Est-ce que le projet initial a été mal conçu ?

Mr Roussety: Madam Chairperson, I do not know whether the respected Minority Leader has listened to my answer fully because we have seen that the recommendation of HSCC implies too much demolition of works at an early stage before the construction of a modern hospital block. We would have to demolish the ICU, the male ward and other infrastructure so that we can begin the construction regarding the plan of HSCC. But we have found that the other way round, we will have less demolition so that we can start the project of a new modern hospital.

Madam Chairperson: Respected Member Augustin.

Mr Augustin: *Thank you, Madam Chairperson.* Le commissaire vient de dire qu'il y aura la phase I et 2. Est-ce que les services spécialisés ont été pris en compte ? Si oui, quels sont ces unités médicales spécialisées qui seront dans ce nouveau bloc de Crève-Cœur ?

Mr Roussety: *Madam Chairperson,* la spécialisation que nous prévoyons dans l'hôpital moderne, ce sera l'ophtalmologie, la chirurgie et le *ENT Services* et aussi oncologie et tous les spécialistes qui doivent venir à Rodrigues auront leur espace pour mieux travailler dans ce nouvel hôpital.

Mr Augustin: Est-ce que les spécialistes qui seront là dans ces différents domaines spécialisés, est-ce qu'ils seront en permanence ou bien ce sera comme actuellement?

Mr Roussety: En principe, nous demandons au Ministère de la santé de nous envoyer quelqu'un/quelqu'une en permanence à Rodrigues mais c'est difficile. Ça va être comme le cas

maintenant mais ce que nous prévoyons, c'est que nous envoyons nos médecins faire des spécialisations à l'extérieur comme oncologie, orthopédie, la pédiatrie et la gynécologie.

Mr Von-Mally: Okay, thank you, Madam Chairperson. Concerning the dental services, can I know from the respected Commissioner whether a dental x-ray has been earmarked in the budget? Because dental x-rays are nowhere to be seen in Rodrigues.

Mr Roussety: Madam Chairperson, for the equipment, in the new modern hospital, as I have said, all the equipment will be made available. We have asked the Consultant to prepare the specification and the appropriate procedures for the acquisition of such medical equipment.

Madam Chairperson: Respected Member Volbert.

Mr Volbert: Madame la présidente, j'aurais aimé demander au commissaire étant donné dans sa réponse qu'il a fournie, il a dit que les soins intensifs, la salle des soins intensifs et d'autres salles encore vont être déplacées. Est-ce qu'on peut savoir où ce que les salles vont être placées ? Si à l'hôpital de Crève-Cœur ou à d'autres endroits comme à Mont Lubin ou à La Ferme ?

Mr Roussety: Madame la présidente, toutes les salles des soins intensifs: le ICU, le *Intensive Cardiac Care Unit*, tous seront dans le bloc de l'hôpital moderne.

Madam Chairperson: Minority Leader.

Mr Grandcourt: Merci. Il me semble que le commissaire n'a pas répondu à la question mais ce n'est pas grave. Donc, en parlant de *upgrading de Queen Elizabeth Hospital*, entretemps, concernant le *staffing*, que prévoit le commissaire concernant tout ce qui est le recrutement de personnel additionnel dans différentes unités du service de l'hôpital à Rodrigues.

Mr Roussety: Je viens de dire, Madame la présidente, que nous allons envoyer nos médecins Rodriguais faire de la spécialisation dans plusieurs sections et aussi, il y aura des nouveaux docteurs, des généralistes qui vont être recrutés définitivement.

Mr Grandcourt: Madame la présidente, permettez-moi d'insister. Est-ce que c'est seulement les...

Madam Chairperson: Minority Leader, you cannot insist on a question. You rephrase your question, please.

Mr Grandcourt: Merci. Alors, est-ce que ça implique seulement les spécialistes, c'est-à-dire les docteurs ? Est-ce qu'il n'y aura pas comme a été annoncé dans le discours budget, les *Charge Nurse*, infirmier, *Midwife* and so on ? Est-ce que ça va être comme ça ou bien on a annoncé ça dans le discours budget juste pour faire joli ?

Mr Roussety: Madame la présidente, la formation de notre personnel continue. A chaque fois que nous avons une demande du Ministère de la santé, nous envoyons nos *Charge Nurses*, nos autres infirmiers/infirmières pour suivre des cours un peu plus poussés mais ça continue au fur et à mesure tout au long de l'année.

Madam Chairperson: Next question!

ELDERLY SLAB SCHEME

(No. B/110) The Fourth Island Region Member (Mr J.R. Augustin) asked the Commissioner for Housing and Others whether, he will state to the House on the recent review of the Elderly Slab Scheme by his Commission, indicating any new eligibility criterion and/or facility brought thereby?

Mr Baptiste: Madam Chairperson, the Elderly Slab Scheme was introduced in 2014, by this Regional Government with a view to assisting elderly persons whose roof slabs are in deteriorated conditions, but who would in principle not be eligible to apply for the normal assistance under the 'Grant for Casting of Slab', as they do not possess a valid residential land lease, house plans and building permit.

In 2017, the threshold to be eligible for this scheme was a monthly household income of Rs 18, 000 as compared to Rs 15,000 for the grant under the normal scheme.

However, when the Central Government increased the threshold for the assistance Grant for Casting of Slab in July 2018, this Regional Government decided to align same with that in Mauritius that is, Rs 20,000, effective as from November 2018.

Madam Chairperson, with the increase in the Basic Retirement Pension, some applications were rejected as the household income of the elderly, particularly households with an elderly couple exceeded Rs 20,000.

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Therefore, as a government who cares for the welfare of its elderly and in recognition to their contribution to the socio-economic and cultural development of Rodrigues, we believe that they deserve to age in dignity in decent housing conditions.

This explains why the Executive Council at its meeting held on 25 June 2021 has decided to approve the increase in income threshold eligibility for assistance under the Elderly Slab scheme to Rs 30, 000 per month.

Madam Chairperson, it is also important to point out that in line with the Budget Speech of 26 March 2021 of the Chief Commissioner; provision has been made for an additional 10% of the grant entitled by the beneficiaries so as to cope with the increase in the cost of construction materials. The maximum amount payable is therefore Rs 110,000 instead of Rs 100,000.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Mr Augustin: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Can we know from the Commissioner whether, there are elderly people who has informed this office whether the sum allocated before the 10% was not enough and whether, the Commissioner for Social Security will adjust the sum that was not enough for the roof slab?

Mr Baptiste: Madam Chairperson, in fact, this figure is in line with the existing policy of the Central Government but for the elderly, it is already being paid at a higher rate. I mean, for example for normal grant, it depends on the income level. Those earning below Rs 10,000 per month will be paid Rs 500 per meter square but for the elderly, we are paying Rs 1,000 across the board, Rs 1,000 per meter square. So, it is already higher than what they should have under the normal scheme. So, it is also worth to know that it is an assistance. It is not to meet the whole cost of recasting.

Mr Augustin: How many of these elderlies that have beneficiated such incentives until now?

Mr Baptiste: Since 2017, 413 elderly persons have benefitted from this scheme.

Madam Chairperson: Respected Member Volbert.

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Mr. Volbert: *Madam Chairperson*, j'aurais aimé au commissaire si pour bénéficier ce *scheme*, si le fait que la personne devrait avoir un bail résidentiel et si ce n'est pas le cas, comment est-ce que ça se passe?

Mr Baptiste: I have said in my answer. We have designed this scheme for the elderly because we know that many of them already possessed a housing unit dated back to 30/40/50 years and at that time, they did not have a land lease and house plan. That is why it has been designed specifically for them.

Madam Chairperson: The Deputy Chairperson.

The Deputy Chairperson: J'aimerais demander au commissaire quel est le montant total qui a été déboursé pour ces 413 bénéficiaires depuis 2017? Merci.

Mr Baptiste: Madam Chairperson, Rs 26,551,909 has been disbursed since....

Madam Chairperson: Next question.

ROAD CONSTRUCTION/MAINTENANCE - RODRIGUES

(No. B/111) The First Island Region Member (Mr L. J. VON-MALLY, GOSK) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to road construction/maintenance in Rodrigues, he will state to the House on:

- (a) when the one linking Montagne Bois Noir to Port Sud Est will be completed, giving details; and
- (b) the reasons why the one linking Anse Ali to St. François has not been resurfaced to date indicating if and when same will be done?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Madam Chairperson,

- (a) The road from Montagne Malgache to Port Sud Est is of approximate length 2 Km. The construction of the road is being done phase wise.

As at date, a total length of 785 m has been completed through two Works Order starting from Mt. Malgache for a total sum of Rs 47,832,514 as detailed below: -

- (i) **Works Order No. 1**

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Starting Date	:	20 November 2018
Completion Date	:	05 September 2019
Value	:	Rs 24,986,050 (Excl. VAT)
Length	:	448 mm

(ii) Works Order No. 2

Starting Date	:	27 August 2019
Completion Date	:	21 January 2020
Value	:	Rs 22,846,464 (Excl. VAT)
Length	:	340 m

Another third Works Order has been issued for the sum of Rs 24,999,595 VAT exclusive for a stretch of 500 m starting from Port Sud Est towards Mt Malgache.

Works started on 23 June 2021 and is due to be completed on 20 December 2021.

Subject to availability of fund, it is envisaged that another works order will be issued to complete the remaining balance 715 m.

The total value of Works Orders issued to date for this piece of road sums up to Rs 72,832,109 Excl. VAT.

Madam Chairperson, as regard to the road from Anse Ali to St Francois, survey has been carried out and it has been observed that the road cannot be simply resurfaced due to the following reasons: -

- (i) Incorrect horizontal and vertical alignments;
- (ii) There is no proper drainage network at certain sections;
- (iii) There is no security equipment at dangerous spots;
- (iv) There is no footpaths; and

- (v) Being given that the bridge is being under construction ongoing right now by the NDU, there is a need to modify the vertical alignment of the road at this particular section to match the proposed bridge finished level.

As such, Madam Chairperson, for these reasons, the complete upgrading of the road is recommended rather than the resurfacing itself.

Mr Von-Mally: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Talking about the Mt Bois Noir/Port Sud-Est link road, this is a very short stretch of road – 2 km. Can I know from the respected Deputy Chief Commissioner how come that such a short stretch of road, we will have to do it in three or four phases? How come we have not been able to construct it at one go?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Madam Chairperson, there is a financial technical issue on the matter because whenever we launch contract for road construction, there is what is known as the global contract for road maintenance – road maintenance, upgrading and construction. When we get the contract and this is awarded, the procurement regulation implies that we have to issue Works Order not going above Rs 25 m. So, this is why we have to do it phase wise so that we do not know above that Rs 25 m. That is statuted as per the contract.

Mr Von-Mally: I believe that with the rise in the cost of materials, we have to uplift this. Can I know from the respected Deputy Chief Commissioner when this road will be completed?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: As I have said in my original answer, Madam Chairperson, we are actually doing the third phase of this road and you will have noticed that instead of going from Mt Malgache towards Port Sud-Est, we are moving from Port Sud-Est upward because we want to alleviate the problem of those inhabitants who are living downstream, I mean near the Port Sud-Est. But there are some 785 m that remains to be completed and once the third phase will be completed, we are going to proceed for work with the issue of the Works Order for the remaining 785 m.

Mr Von-Mally: *Thank you, Madam Chairperson. The road from Anse Ali to St François, it is a very important link road again. It is there that many tourists go there. En fait, c'est la vitrine touristique de Rodrigues. On doit aller à Trou D'Argent etc. Pourquoi ne pas accorder plus d'importance à cette route ? Parce que c'est la vitrine touristique de Rodrigues et ce que le respecté commissaire a dit avec le pont, je ne crois pas franchement que*

le pont doit nous empêcher de construire cette route. On doit le refaire complètement. Pourquoi ne pas y aller gaiement ?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Madam Chairperson, I have given the reasons within my answers but you will note that as you are saying that this is the '*vitrine*' *par rapport au secteur touristique*, that is true but we are adding additional vitrine to the same part of the island because at this point in time, we have already issued Works Order for Mt Cabris towards St François. There will be another road. Yes, the Works Order has already been issued, once again. From Mt Cabris to St François, we have already issued the Works Order. So, this meaning that we are adding additional *vitrine* to that part of the Island and with the coming into operation of the bridge after its construction by the NDU, of course, the whole *paysage* of that section of the Island, it is going to be upgraded. That is for sure.

Madam Chairperson: Next question!

TIMEFRAME – RESUMPTION OF COMMERCIAL FLIGHTS BETWEEN MAURITIUS AND RODRIGUES

(No. B/112) Mr F. A. Grandcourt (Minority Leader) asked the Chief Commissioner whether he will, for the benefit of the House, state and table on the timeframe for the resumption of commercial flights between Mauritius and Rodrigues to date, detailing on any:-

- (a) correspondence between the appropriate authority in mainland Mauritius and his office regarding the final decision on the matter; and
- (b) study/survey made to determine the impact thereof in Rodrigues?

Mr Roussety: Madam Chairperson, with your permission I would like to reply Question B/112 as the subject relates to the prevailing COVID-19 pandemic, which is a public health issue that falls under my portfolio. I would also like to reply both PQs B/112 and B/113 together as they relate to the same subject matter.

Madam Chairperson: Yes, please proceed, Commissioner.

Mr Roussety: *Merci, Madame la présidente.* Madam Chairperson, as the House may be aware, the opening of borders and the resumption of commercial flights between Rodrigues and Mauritius is a decision which rests with the Central Government in Mauritius. For the time being, the scheduled date for the resumption of commercial flight between Rodrigues and Mauritius is 01 October 2021.

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Considering the continued increase of positive cases of COVID-19 in mainland Mauritius, it is feared that the forthcoming resumption of commercial flights may represent a high level of risk of entry of the SARS COV2 virus in Rodrigues. This is why my Commission has prepared a Rodrigues Response and Contingency Plan against the pandemic in order to minimise such risk. The plan is presently under consideration at the level of the Executive Council. Members of the Executive Council as well as officers of my Commission have had a video conference on Friday 10 September 2021 with the Senior Adviser of the Ministry of Health and Wellness, Dr. Catherine GAUD and the Director of Public Health Services, Dr Dinassing, of the said ministry to discuss about the consolidation and reinforcement of our programme in Rodrigues in view of the forthcoming resumption of commercial flights.

It has been agreed that a team of experts from the ministry will field a visit to Rodrigues shortly to evaluate our level of preparedness and to provide further training to our officers concerning the management of suspected and positive cases of COVID-19. We will take a stand in the light of this evaluating mission and will advise government accordingly.

In the meantime, we are accelerating our vaccination programme, particularly among the vulnerable groups to offer better protection of the community against the virus. We are also sensitising all components of the rodriguan society about the necessity to reinforce and consolidate barriers against the virus.

As regards to the Rodrigues Response and Contingency Plan against COVID-19, this is a strategic document, which is necessary for the proper management of the pandemic. The plan has been prepared with the objective of avoiding any risk of entry of the SARS COV 2 virus as far as possible, and in case it is introduced, to prevent its propagation and transmission in order to protect public health.

The plan makes provision of the following: -

- (i) eligibility of passengers to travel to Rodrigues;
- (ii) protocols to be followed in different scenarios and the point of entries, that is, port and airport as well as in different scenarios within the community;
- (iii) the consolidation of the Health Services to cope with the pandemic, particularly in case of any outbreak of COVID-19;
- (iv) communication and sensitisation of the public in Rodrigues concerning the pandemic;

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- (v) the appropriate governance framework to provide timely policy guidance and support to better manage and cope with the pandemic situation.

In a nutshell, the plan provides that:

- (i) As from 01 October 2021, only vaccinated passengers and persons under 18 years old will be able to travel to Rodrigues under defined protocol;
- (ii) Any positive cases of COVID-19 will be admitted in the Isolation Centre at Zita Jean Louis Area Health Centre, Mont Lubin for treatment;
- (iii) Self-isolation of people who have been in contact with any positive case of COVID-19 will be practiced;
- (iv) Social distancing as well as wearing of masks will have to be strictly enforced in public places, public gatherings, religious ceremonies and events;
- (v) In case of intensification of the pandemic, the Area Health Centre of La Ferme will be converted into an Isolation Centre and its service will be shifted to the nearby Community Centre in the locality;
- (vi) The Health Services will be reduced to allow redeployment of resources to deal with the pandemic; and
- (vii) Additional manpower in terms of one Anaesthetist and at least ten Medical Health Officers will be required from the Ministry of Health and Wellness as from 01 October 2021 to face with the increased risk of exposure. Request has already been sent to the ministry in that respect.

As at date, the plan is still in a draft stage and is under consideration by the Executive Council for transmission to the Ministry of Health and Wellness for approval.

Once the Rodrigues Response and Contingency Plan has been approved, a copy will be circulated among the respected Members of this House.

Unfortunately, at this stage, I consider that it is not appropriate for me to provide further details not to table the plan as it is still in the draft stage and has not yet been approved by the competent authorities.

Mr Grandcourt: Madame la présidente, j'espère qu'on aura un peu de temps pour poser des questions supplémentaires parce qu'il y a deux questions. Alors, je ne sais pas par où commencer. Il y a tellement de questions qui n'ont pas été répondues mais quand même, je vais

venir sur le *Response and Contingency Plan*, qui est d'après le commissaire, en *draft stage*. J'aimerais lui poser la question pourquoi est-ce qu'il a attendu un an et demi sachant que la maladie se propage davantage à Maurice et ailleurs, c'est la tendance, pourquoi est-ce qu'il a attendu un an et demi pour venir avec ce *Response and Contingency Plan* concernant la gestion de la pandémie à Rodrigues ?

Mr Roussety: Madame la présidente, au fur et à mesure, nous réévaluons le plan stratégique et parce que le COVID-19, toujours ça évolue et aussi, nous avons encore le temps *as at 01 October to have the plan approved by the Ministry of Health*.

Mr Grandcourt: Mais est-ce que le commissaire peut nous assurer que du moment que le plan soit approuvé, est-ce qu'il va pouvoir mettre, est-ce qu'il nous donne l'assurance qu'il va pouvoir respecter ce plan et donner le service qu'il faut à la population?

Mr Roussety: Bien sûr, Madame la présidente, nous allons respecter le plan et avec l'aide du Ministère de la santé à Maurice, c'est prévu qu'ils vont nous aider, le Dr Dinassing et Dr Catherine Gaud nous ont promis d'envoyer une équipe pour nous consolider dans ce plan-là.

Mr Grandcourt: Madame la présidente, concernant la reprise des vols sur Rodrigues, le commissaire n'a pas fait mention de la décision. Il a dit mais est-ce qu'au niveau du Conseil exécutif, est-ce qu'ils ont eu une correspondance avec le bureau du Premier ministre ? Ça, on n'a pas entendu. Et si oui, quel a été le contenu de cette correspondance ?

Mr Roussety: Oui, nous sommes en contact avec le bureau du Premier ministre mais ce n'est pas l'heure pour le moment de dévoiler cette correspondance.

Mr Grandcourt: Madame la présidente, il y a un problème. Soit on ouvre, on dit qu'on est d'accord pour ouvrir la frontière le 01 octobre ; soit on dit qu'on n'est pas d'accord. Il y a deux choses. Soit oui, soit non. Pourquoi est-ce qu'à ce moment-là, aujourd'hui, on est le 14, le commissaire peut venir nous dire que là, il ne peut pas dire, il ne peut pas se prononcer là-dessus, il ne peut pas dévoiler ? Soit, ils ont dit oui, soit ils ont dit non. Moi, je trouve que le commissaire doit être un peu plus sérieux. C'est-à-dire qu'ils ne prennent pas en considération ce que les gens disent. Est-ce que le commissaire peut nous dire est-ce qu'il a été sollicité par la Société civile, par les gens à Rodrigues concernant l'ouverture de nos frontières avec Maurice ?

Mr Roussety: Madame la présidente, il y a beaucoup des on-dit dans le public qu'on ne doit pas ouvrir frontière le 01 octobre mais officiellement, avec la Société civile, nous

n'avons pas eu de correspondance. Mais comme j'ai dit, on aura tout le temps d'ici le 01 octobre, de travailler, de finir... *Ene zour osi assez.*

(Interruptions)

Madam Chairperson: Order!

Mr Roussety: Ce que l'opposition veut que nous n'ouvrons pas, alors, il y a beaucoup de problèmes économiques à Rodrigues; et si nous ouvrons, il y a des cas qui arrivent à Rodrigues, alors là, ils vont nous taper dessus. Mais on va faire le nécessaire. Ne vous en faites pas, on va faire ce qui est bien.

Madam Chairperson: Respected Member Volbert.

Mr. Volbert: Merci, Madame la présidente. Je veux poser une question. Au début de mars de cette année-ci, avec cinq cas à Maurice, on a fermé la frontière de Maurice vers Rodrigues et le Gouvernement régional a dit qu'il faudra protéger Rodrigues, qu'il faudra que Rodrigues soit COVID-free. Mais aujourd'hui avec 300 cas par jour à Maurice, comment est-ce que ce gouvernement va pouvoir protéger ce peuple avec 300 cas et l'ouverture de la frontière ?

Mr Roussety: Madame la présidente, je crois qu'ils doivent être plus *in the picture regarding COVID-19* parce que depuis mars, on a commencé à faire des vaccins après et aussi, on a surveillé très bien les arrivés à l'aéroport pour protéger les passagers, pour protéger l'île pour être resté COVID-free. Heureusement jusqu'à maintenant, nous n'avons pas eu de cas et nous allons toujours travailler pour ne pas avoir des cas de COVID à Rodrigues. Mais il y a un risque que ça arrive mais nous, on va faire tout notre nécessaire pour l'éviter, l'éliminer un peu.

Madam Chairperson: Respected Member Von-Mally.

Mr Von-Mally: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Can I know from the respected Commissioner what is the percentage of vaccinated persons in Rodrigues? Can we know whether we have already reached herd immunity?

Mr Roussety: Madame la présidente, à la fin des questions, je vais faire un *statement sur les vaccins.*

Mr Grandcourt: Madame la présidente, le commissaire vient de nous dire qu'il faut qu'on soit *updated* sur tout ce qui est COVID-19 à Maurice. Il faut noter que Maurice est en niveau 4, c'est-à-dire, les pays découragent les gens, les touristes de venir à Maurice. Alors, on est bien au courant. C'est la raison pour laquelle pour faire suite à la question de mon collègue,

le respecté membre Volbert, il est important qu'on attire l'attention, Madame la présidente, et ma question est concernant les appareils qu'il y a dans le *Isolation Unit*, dans tous le service hospitalier à Rodrigues, est-ce que le commissaire peut nous dire par exemple, combien de *ventilator* on a, combien de *pulse oximeter* on a, combien de *rapid test* on a ? Est-ce qu'il peut nous donner un peu de détail ?

Madam Chairperson: Minority Leader, please, one question at a time.

Mr Roussety: Madame la présidente, nous avons deux *ventilators in Isolation Centre* à Mont Lubin et nous avons 10 portes d'oxygènes et avec l'aide du Ministère de la santé de Maurice, ils vont nous envoyer des *optiflows*. Les ventilateurs, c'est vrai que c'est important mais avec les nouveaux appareils qu'on en a, ça va être plus efficace pour les patients qui doivent être alités là-bas.

Mr Grandcourt: Madame la présidente, on avait posé cette même question il y a un an et demi. Il nous a donné cette réponse-là.

Madam Chairperson: Minority Leader, please, I would like to remind you that this is question time.

Mr Grandcourt: Yes, I am putting the question.

Madam Chairperson: Supplementary question should be brief and concise, please.

Mr Grandcourt: Yes, I am putting, I am introducing the question and then, I will put it.

Madam Chairperson: There is no need to introduce question, Minority Leader, please!

Mr Grandcourt: Yes. Allez, Madame la présidente, comme si on a envie qu'on... Je ne sais pas, si vous voulez que je ne pose pas de question, je ne vais pas poser la question. *Okay, c'est bon. Korek.*

Madam Chairperson: Minority Leader, you should be aware of the procedures of this House. You are a season politician. You should be showing example, here. Yes, put your question, please.

(Interruptions)

ESTABLISHED COVID-19 PROTOCOL IN RODRIGUES

(No. B/113) Mr F. A. Grandcourt (Minority Leader) asked the Commissioner for Health and Others whether, in regard to the established COVID-19 protocol in Rodrigues, he will, for the benefit of the House, state and table on if consideration is being given to the review thereof ahead of the planned lifting of flight restrictions between Mauritius and Rodrigues indicating, in the affirmative, the new measures and/or arrangements made in the health sector in relation thereto and, in the negative, the reasons therefor?

[Vide Reply PQ B/112]

Madam Chairperson: Next question.

ALTERNATIVE LIVELIHOOD SCHEME

– OCTOPUSES’ FISHERMEN

(No. B/114) Mr F. A. Grandcourt (Minority Leader) asked the Commissioner for Fisheries and Others whether, in regard to the Alternative Livelihood Scheme designed for octopuses’ fishermen during the closure of octopus fishing, he will state and table on the new measures set by his Commission in relation thereto?

Mr Payendee: Madam Chairperson, there are no new measures that have been set up by my Commission with regards to Alternative Livelihood Scheme designed for octopus’ fishermen during the closure of the octopus fishing.

Madam Chairperson: Next question.

PHYSIOTHERAPY DEPARTMENT

– QUEEN ELIZABETH HOSPITAL

(No. B/115) The First Island Region Member (Mr L. J. Von-Mally, GOSK) asked the Commissioner for Health and Others whether, in regard to the Physiotherapy Department of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, he will state:

- (a) if it is properly staffed, giving details; and

- (b) who is actually heading same, indicating if treatment to patients is being given according to prescribed standards and practice?

Mr Roussety: According to Budget Estimates for financial year 2021/2022, there is one post of Physiotherapist/Senior Physiotherapist which has not yet been funded as well as six funded posts of Physiotherapist Assistant.

As at date, the Physiotherapy Department at Queen Elizabeth Hospital is manned by one full fledge Physiotherapist Assistant and three temporary Physiotherapist Assistants who will become full fledge once they will complete their training programme as per their scheme of service. My Commission is liaising with the Ministry of Health and Wellness in this respect for their training.

We will need to fill the two remaining posts vacant of Physiotherapist Assistant as well as the post of Physiotherapist/Senior Physiotherapist to enable the Department to operate properly.

We hope to achieve this objective with the next budget for the financial year 2022/2023.

For the time being, the Department of Physiotherapy is under the supervision of the Health Director. Treatments are being given to patients as per diagnosis and prescription from Specialists and Doctors according to Physiotherapy standards and protocols.

Mr Von-Mally: Madam Chairperson, in order to give appropriate treatment, we should have a physiotherapist in order to direct these staffs how to give proper treatment. Can I know when the post of Physiotherapist/Senior Physiotherapist will be filled? Because up to now, you have an embryonic staff there.

Mr Roussety: Madam Chairperson, of course, I concur with the respected Member and the problem is that we have to complete the training and we have written to the Ministry of Health to speed up the matter for the recruitment of this Physiotherapist/Senior Physiotherapist as well as for the other posts but we hope that in a near future, we will be able to fill these posts.

Mr Von-Mally: Being given that there are more and more patients going to this department, especially these days, why does the Commissioner not have recourse to contract,

Physiotherapist on contract so that we can help here? Because we are not having proper treatment.

Mr Roussety: Madam Chairperson, I cannot agree with the respected Member. The treatment given is proper because he, himself, was at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital not long ago to have good treatment with the ladies there. But why asking such question now?

Mr Von-Mally: I have been there. This is why I am talking on their behalf. They are trying their best but if you have a problem one day, this can sue you in Court. This is why to put you on the safe side, it is better to have an appropriate Physiotherapist. *Pe empes twa gagne problème.*

Mr Roussety: I agree, Madam Chairperson.

Madam Chairperson: Yes, Mrs Agathe.

Mrs Agathe: Merci, Madame la présidente. Est-ce que le respecté commissaire peut nous dire si vraiment, il n'y a aucune personne dans ce secteur qui n'est pas qualifiée pour être promue comme senior ?

Mr Roussety: Madam Chairperson, yes, there may be someone to be promoted to Physiotherapist/Senior Physiotherapist but we have to follow all principle or instruction from the Ministry of Civil Service Affairs, procedures.

Madam Chairperson: Next question!

CONSTRUCTION – SOCIAL HOUSING UNITS

(No. B/116) Mr J. R. Ramdally (Second Local Region Member for St Gabriel) asked the Commissioner for Housing and Others whether, in regard to the construction of social housing units through the financial assistance of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, from August 2006 to February 2012, he will enlighten the House on the:

- (a) total number of housing units constructed together with the total amount of money disbursed therefor;
- (b) construction mechanisms set up therefor as well as selection criteria to benefit therefrom; and
- (c) modalities for any repayment, as may have been applicable?

Mr Baptiste: Madam Chairperson, with respect to part (a) of the question, as per available records from 2006 to 2012, there were essentially two schemes in respect to social housing in Rodrigues, namely; the Low Cost Housing Units for the Vulnerable Groups (self-help project) and the Scheme for the Rehabilitation of Houses for Elderly Citizens. Under both schemes, the RRA provided construction materials to beneficiaries and the latter had to contribute in terms of labour for the construction of their houses.

Madam Chairperson, under the Low Cost Housing Units for Vulnerable Groups Scheme, building materials were provided to 163 beneficiaries. The cost for construction materials, doors, mat, windows and top hung window were estimated at Rs 138,218 for each beneficiary.

The number of beneficiaries who completed the construction of their houses under this scheme is unknown since there was no proper monitoring. Therefore, it is quite difficult to compute the total amount disbursed during the period 2006 to February 2012 for that purpose.

With regard to the scheme for Rehabilitation of the Houses for Elderly Citizens, it was meant for provision of construction materials to senior citizens for the construction of a new or the renovation of their old corrugated iron sheet houses. Under this scheme some Rs 2.8 m. was disbursed for the financial year 2008-2009. However, the number of houses built or repaired was not available. The RRA disbursed Rs 35.6 m. for the fiscal years 2006-2007, 2007-2008 and 2008-2009.

With regard to part (b) of the question, there were no well-defined eligibility criteria for the two schemes and therefore, it was not possible to ascertain whether, those who benefitted were in fact eligible for the grant. For example, in the case of Housing Scheme for the Elderly, in some 54 cases, beneficiaries were below 60 years old. As a result of lack of supervision in many cases, materials were used for other purposes, such as, water tanks rather than for the construction of houses.

Madam Chairperson, following various damning reports from the Director of Audit, the then regional government decided to come up with a new mechanism. In fact, in January 2010, the Rodrigues Housing and Property Company Ltd was incorporated by the MR regional government. It was expected to provide housing assistance to vulnerable families. However, there was no clearly defined vision and mission of this company. It was understaffed and did not have the right personnel and resources and, was unable to build a single housing unit two years after its setting up.

(Interruptions)

Madam Chairperson: Order!

Mr Baptiste: It had to be winded-up as it was an '*elephant blanc*' and its responsibilities was transferred to the RRA.

With regard to part (c) of the question, no payment was required under both schemes as described above.

I have to inform the House, that the first Regional Government awarded a contract for the construction of 83 low cost housing units of 33.09 m³ each in 2003-2004 for a sum of Rs 20,217,153. Same were to be allocated to eligible households at a subsidise rate. However, with the changing government, these housing units were allocated by the next Regional Government and the beneficiaries have two options for payment, namely; monthly repayment in instalment or payment in *toto* in one instalment.

The beneficiaries effected payment at the Cash Office of the Central Administration and, their accounts were updated by the Commission for Public Infrastructure. Thereafter, the Rodrigues Housing and Property Development Company Ltd became the entity responsible for collection of the money from the beneficiaries until its winding up.

Madam Chairperson, while the RRA invested Rs 35.6 m. in housing projects over the three financial years from 2006 to 2009, we are now making provision for some Rs 100 m. for only one financial year. This shows how far we have come in our commitment to provide this type of housing units to all eligible beneficiaries in Rodrigues. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Mr Ramdally: D'année en année le rapport de l'Audit mentionne cette compagnie, le Rodrigues Housing and Property Development Company et il y a une somme de Rs 3 million qui a été investi dans cette compagnie. Peut-on savoir du commissaire quelle a été l'utilité de cette somme puisqu'il n'y avait pas de maison construite ?

Mr Baptiste: It was meant for payment of administrative cost and salaries. But not a single housing unit.

Mr Grandcourt: Madame la présidente, le Rodrigues Housing Company était responsable pour la gestion des bâtiments publics y compris le marché de Port Mathurin. Il n'y avait pas que construire les maisons, il n'y avait pas que seulement ramassé l'argent de ceux qui devaient repayer mais aussi la gestion des bâtiments publics. C'est la raison pour laquelle

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le marché de Port Mathurin est en piteuse état parce que ce n'est pas géré. Donc, Madame la présidente, est-ce que le commissaire peut nous dire pourquoi est-ce qu'ils n'ont pas continué ce projet, ils ont *wind-up* la compagnie de Rodrigues Housing Company ?

Mr Baptiste: As I have said, the vision and mission was not clearly defined. It seems that the government at that time itself were not well clearly defined. They did not even know how to manage it. Because if I quote from the Budget Speech 2011, where the then Chief Commissioner mentioned that, I quote: "*Mr Chairperson, Sir, in order to sve on management cost we are looking forward to merge Rodclean Ltd. and Rodrigues Housing Property Development Co. Ltd.*" So, they did not even know how to deal with the company and as I said it was an '*elephant blanc*' and our achievement today is far ahead of what they planned.

Madam Chairperson: Respected Member, Volbert.

Mr Volbert: Merci, Madame la présidente,...

(Interruptions)

Madam Chairperson: Minority Leader, the Commissioner for Environment, please no-cross talking.

Mr Volbert: Merci, Madame la présidente, d'après sa réponse le commissaire a dit que – *not a single unit has been built*. Est-ce que je peux demander au commissaire s'il y avait des demandes pour la construction, demandes des maisons par des maisons par des bénéficiaires ?

(Interruptions)

Madam Chairperson: Order!

Mr Baptiste: Yes, but unfortunately, this government could not meet the demand, the requirement, that is why they were kicked out of power.

Madam Chairperson: Next question. Order!

WORK ORDERS

– SUCCESSFUL BIDDERS/COST/SCOPE OF WORKS/COMPLETION DATE

(No. B/117) Mr J. R. Ramdally (Second Local Region Member for St Gabriel) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether he will give a list, if any, of work orders that have been/will be issued by his Commission stating the successful bidders, the cost and the scope of works and completion date for each project?

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The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Madam Chairperson, I am tabling a list of Works Order issued as requested by the respected Member under the following contracts: -

The first projects which were still ongoing as at June 2021 under the contract Procurement for Maintenance, Upgrading, Resurfacing and Construction of Roads launched in 2018 for a contract value of Rs 235,927,245 and awarded to Transinvest. The projects that were still ongoing as at June 2021, we have: -

- (i) Construction of access road at Baie Malgache;
- (ii) Construction of access road from St Gabriel to Malartic;
- (iii) Construction of playground at Roche Bon Dieu;
- (iv) Road re-profiling at Jardin Mamzelle;
- (v) Proposed levelling of access road from Cité Patate to Dans Coco;
- (vi) Resurfacing of road from Malabar to Citronelle.

And, all these projects amount to Rs 24,551,658.

The second projects which are ongoing and which have been awarded this time under the Procurement for Maintenance, Upgrading, Resurfacing and Construction of Roads launched in 2020 and awarded to Transinvest for the global value of Rs 309,349,793. The projects are as follows: -

- (i) Resurfacing of road from Grand La Fouche Corail to Reposoir;
- (ii) Resurfacing of road from Dans Samy to Montagne Tonnerre;
- (iii) Upgrading of access road from Sailesh Boutique to *La Chapelle de Camp du Roi*;
- (iv) Levelling of access road at Montagne Cabris Est morcellement;
- (v) Upgrading of access road towards DBM building at La Ferme;
- (vi) Patching of roads around the island;
- (vii) Construction of access at Roche Bon Dieu dumping site;
- (viii) Construction of roads from Montagne Malgache to Port Sud Est (like I just mentioned);
- (ix) Construction of roads from Saponaire to Anse Femy;
- (x) Upgrading works at Grand La Fouche Corail junction;

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- (xi) Proposed box culvert at Papayes;
- (xii) Proposed construction of bus station at Rivière Coco;
- (xiii) Proposed drain at Le Chou, near Le Chou College;
- (xiv) Construction of parking and ancillary facilities at Songes College;
- (xv) Proposed construction of road and box culvert at Anse Raffin, near football ground, just issued, Madam Chairperson;
- (xvi) Road repairs around the island for patching works, which is right now ongoing;
- (xvi) Construction of road from Montagne Cabris to St. François.

I would like to further add that as regards to contracts, there has been the award of 25 km of track road in Regions 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6, still awarded to Transinvest for the construction track road for the contract value of Rs 86 m.

Another contract was awarded also to Laxmanbhai for the construction of 5 km in Region No. 2 for a contract value of Rs 19,069,863.

Other projects which have been awarded, Madam Chairperson, include:

- (i) construction of 1000 m³ concrete circular reservoir at Hauteur Accacia;
- (ii) construction of 100 m³ concrete circular reservoir at Montagne Cabris;
- (iii) we have just awarded the contract for the construction of 100 m³ concrete reservoir at Montagne Goyaves;
- (iv) contract for the disilting of dam at Cascade Pigeon; and
- (v) lately we have also awarded the contract for the dismantling and removal of existing steel reservoir at Crève-Coeur.

Madam Chairperson, I am also tabling a list of projects whose Work Orders will be issued shortly by my Commission. The surveys and designs of these projects have either just been completed or underway and it includes the following:

- (i) the Cygangué to Mont Lubin road;
- (ii) the access road towards RCSS building at Mont Lubin;
- (iii) we have also the construction of access road at Anse Nicolas (Phase II);
- (iv) we have access road at Songes morcellement;

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- (v) we are moving ahead also with the upgrading of Fond Accacia road including the cross drain at Le Cardinal pre-primary school. We are going to award this, this week, Madam Chairperson;
- (vi) we have already carried out the survey for the improvement of road at Baie Lascars;
- (vii) we are also awarding this week the access road towards Steward Bégué in Cornflour, Baie aux Huitres;
- (viii) We have also directed the contractor to carry out survey for the construction for the excavation of work from behind Queen Elizabeth at Crève Coeur.

We have also, Madam Chairperson, carried out visits and we are going to receive the different designs and surveys from the contractor for the following projects as regards to box culverts which have been mentioned in the budget speech of the Chief Commissioner. We are expecting survey from the contractor Transinvest for the following box culverts, Anse Femi (Graviers); Rivière Banane; Nassola; Champs; Grand Baie; Eau Vannée; Vanqueur; and Rivière Coco. And, finally, Madam Chairperson, there has been the bidding exercise which has launched for the construction of another additional 30 km of track road and, I should say that the closing date for submission is today itself, 14 September 2021.

(Applause)

Madam Chairperson: Respected Member, Volbert.

Mr Volbert: *Merci, Madame la présidente.* There are lots of Work Orders issued. *Mais je vais prendre qu'un seul. C'est-à-dire, le Work Order sortant de main road, Roche Bon Dieu to the dumping site at Roche Bon Dieu.* Is it true that for 30 metres of road to be constructed, the sum of Rs 3.5 m. has been earmarked?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Let me check the figures, Madam Chairperson, as regards to what has been mentioned by the Member. So, you mean for the construction of the road from (let me check it out, please) Roche Bon Dieu to dumping site. That was under the proposal of the Commission for Environment, if I remember well. The value, (let me check it out) figure mentioned by the respected Member is not as the information provided to me. We have the value, the contract value amounts to Rs 2,787,766 and it includes excavation works and laying and compaction of graded stones. Unfortunately, I do not have the exact figures.

But if you are telling me that it is for 13 metres, I do not think that it fits that figure as per the rate contract that is under my Commission.

Madam Chairperson: Respected Member, Von-Mally.

Mr Von-Mally: Merci, Madame la présidente. Le respecté commissaire a parlé de la route de Baie Lascars. Etant donné que la route reliant Baie Lascars à l'hôpital de Crève-Cœur a été fermée, il y a de plus en plus de trafic sur la route de Baie Lascars à Anse aux Anglais. Et ça, pose un risque pour les randonneurs, pour les piétons. Est-ce que le respecté commissaire a pensé construire des trottoirs appropriés pour ces gens-là ? Parce que sinon un de ces jours on aura des sérieux problèmes, des sérieux accidents de ce côté-là. L'agrandissement de la route et le trottoir. Est-ce que s'est prévu dans ces projets ?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: It is not part of the project that we are envisaging to complete so far. But just to reassure the respected Member, view that he has mentioned about the closure of the road passing through the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and I have mentioned it in my answer also. We are proceeding ahead with the excavation of work that is going to go around the ... This is going to be quite difficult view the basaltic and the rocky nature of the site but we have opted rather upon recommendation and advice to go around the Queen Elizabeth Hospital itself.

Madam Chairperson: The Minority Leader. As regards to the issuing of Works Order for the construction of track roads around the island, can I ask the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, it has happened that the initial Works Order has been modified, that is, some track roads have been cancelled after the issuing of the Works Order? And, if yes, can he tell us why?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Yes, Madam Chairperson. Some track roads have been cancelled for various reasons. One of the reasons that has propped up during the construction is that they have to go... No, there is no political reason, it is for technical reasons, Madam Chairperson. Technical reasons in the way that, there are some track roads which have to go through the private land. And, as such we have looked for the... either we have to go for compensation or we have to look for consensus with the owner. This is one thing.

The second thing that has propped up during construction of track roads is that some track roads have not been recommended because of the topography, as regards to the sloppy nature of the site. So, being given that the construction of such track road will lead to a problem of road security, the engineer had advised not to go further with this.

Mr Grandcourt: Madam Chairperson, can I ask the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether same applies for one of the track road at Montagne Tonnerre – towards the ‘L’ family?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Yes, Madam Chairperson, as regards to the construction of the track road at Montagne Tonnerre, you will note that we have proceeded just previously with the resurfacing of the Quatre Vents Montagne Tonnerre road and there is a part of the road that we have not proceeded with resurfacing. In fact, the inhabitants of Montagne Tonnerre which live near the playground, they do not have access to bus services because of the sloppy nature that I have just mentioned. In fact, the sloppy nature from the playground, I mean, near the Nancy’s house up to the top where the bus shelter has been constructed. So, what we are opting for? We are opting for the upgrading for that part of the road either by reprofiling it towards the Lisette and then moving it downwards so that these persons can have access to the bus facilities. You will agree with me it is quite difficult in the morning for a school child having some 15/20 kilos on his back to go up from the playground up to the site where they have to catch the bus, where the bus station here. So, this is why there was a track road there but we are proceeding with the reprofiling so that we can have buses going down near to that part of the playground.

Madam Chairperson: Respected Member, Perrine.

Mr Perrine: Merci, Madame la présidente. Je ne sais pas si j’ai bien entendu, concernant la route sur la zone industrielle de Baie Lascars. Est-ce que le Chef commissaire adjoint peut nous dire qu’en est-il de la situation, quand est-ce que ça va se faire et combien d’argent a été voté pour ce projet-là dans ce budget-là ?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Madam Chairperson, we have had visits as regards to the sites with the contractor, we have seen that there is need for putting/adding in the project, drains for evacuation of water. The contractor has been instructed to go ahead with the design and the surveys. In fact, if I remember well, there will be some 200 metres of road which have to be constructed. We have also looked into the possibility of introducing parking facilities. Because we very well know that in this area there will be loading and unloading that is going to be done. So, as regards, we are in fact, optimising maximum space as regards for the procurement of parking facilities around this area. Because it is a commercial area. As regards to the budget amount, there is one item under my Commission – ‘Improving accesses in villages’, and this can be taken from that item.

Madam Chairperson: Minority Leader.

Mr Grandcourt: Merci, Madame la présidente. Concernant tous les *Works Order* qui ont été *issued* à travers l'île, donc ça aussi a un impact sur l'approvisionnement en eau pour la construction sachant, que pour faire du béton il faut de l'eau propre. Donc, quelles sont les mesures qui a été prise par la commission, le fait que lui aussi il est responsable de la gestion de l'eau à Rodrigues, quelle précaution est-ce qu'il a pris pour *meet all these demands* ? Est-ce que, par exemple, il va prendre de l'eau de dessalement pour donner aux contracteurs pour pouvoir terminer ces projets ?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Yes, Madam Chairperson. If I read the mind of the Minority Leader, (yes, I have to read your mind) then you are agreeing that there is a boom in the construction industry right now and this may lead to a lack of water for the construction industry. This is what I anticipate from your answer. But so far, Madam Chairperson, we have not received any complaint as regards to the contractors who have been provided with the Works Order or whatever contract has been awarded but nevertheless, we are going to cope with the matter if ever that issue is going to crop up.

Madam Chairperson: Respected Member, Augustin.

Mr Augustin: Yes, thank you, Madam Chairperson. With regard to all the Works Orders issued for road construction, can we know from the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether street lightings and bus shelters have been taken into consideration for that?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: In fact, Madam Chairperson, it is a policy of my Commissioner that whenever we are going ahead with the construction of road, we do incorporate all security measures. I am going to give two examples so that you can see the difference in our doing.

If you travel from La Ferme towards Camp Pintade, you will see that when you reach Piments up to Baie Topaze the road is very narrow. And then, when you reach the new reconstructed road, you will see that *il y a un changement dans la vitrine, comme mentionnait par le membre tout-à-l'heure*, as regards to the road infrastructure. We have the road shoulder; we have incorporated all facilities as regards to road security including the street lighting that you have mentioned. The same thing will be observed if you travel from Grand La Fouche Corail to Anse Baleine, from Grand La Fouche Corail to Rivière Coco the road is very narrow. I think they proceeded only at the time for resurfacing. But from Rivière Coco towards Anse Baleine, you will see once again *ene changement dans la vitrine*, incorporating in fact, security measures like, handrails, guardrails and (lighting is not coming,

I am coming to answer that) footpaths for that part of the road. In fact, we have already awarded to the CEB, the necessary funds (I do not have the value) for the installation of street lightings along that road. In fact, it is part of our plan and part of our policy that whenever we are proceeding with construction of road, we ensure its road safety. If you go to Rivière Banane, you will note that we have also applied the same policy.

Madam Chairperson: Respected Member, Volbert.

Mr Volbert: Merci, Madame la présidente. Avec la construction des *track roads* dans la Région 1, est-ce que le Chef commissaire adjoint peut nous dire si le cas de monsieur R. A. à côté de Caverne Tamarin, R. A., 92 ans et sa femme 89 ans aveugle, si ce couple va avoir un accès digne ?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: I do not have the exact name of the... *Enfin* R. A. for me is... but nevertheless, I can assure, if that person is blind and require a track road then with the closing of the track road contract today, and if ever, it avers to be responsive, we are going to provide him with the track road.

Madam Chairperson: Minority Leader.

Mr Grandcourt: Yes, thank you, Madam Chairperson. With regard to street lighting, the Commissioner said that, for example, the road at Camp Pintade is a *vitrine* but at night it is black out, there is no *vitrine* at night. So, can he tell us how street lighting is being monitored in Rodrigues? Because in many areas of the island there is black out and we know that the bill is still being paid on a monthly basis. So, can the Commissioner tell us how street lighting is monitored around the island?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Madam Chairperson, this question does not relate to the main question but nevertheless I am going to answer it. Street lighting is monitored by the electrification unit of my Commission. True to say that we do have a problem as regards to the installation of old street lamps that whenever it rains there is the solar switch goes off many a times. And, many of the lamps that have been installed whenever we replaced the bulb it burnt out quite rapidly. This is one thing that we have to do. So, this is why we have decided to gradually replace all these lamps. You will see that all newly procured lamps that we have had at the level of my Commission is of led type. And, you can see the difference. So, in fact, we are going to have some additional 200 lamps that are coming because we have had a contract for 400 lamps, 200 have already been provided, we are awaiting for additional 200 and for the additional 200, as I have mentioned, we are going to proceed with the installation for

Rivière Coco, if I remember well, Anse Rivière Coco to Anse Raffin, Allée Tamarin, Jardin Mamzelle from agricultural plot, we have Montagne Malgache, we have from Ti Réserve to Malartic, we have also from Réposoir to Piments, which is very dark, and then, we have another site from Montagne Goyaves to Baladirou. The funds, the contract have already been awarded to the CEB and we are awaiting for them to proceed with the work, Madam Chairperson.

Madam Chairperson: Respected Members, before we proceed any further, I wish to draw the attention of the House that with effect from 06 September 2021, responsibility for the subject of education has now been assigned to the Commissioner for Training and others. Our best wishes to the Commissioner on this new responsibility bestowed upon her. Yes, the Second Local Region Member for St. Gabriel.

NON-AVAILABILITY – TEXTBOOKS/SECONDARY SCHOOLS - RODRIGUES

(No. B/118) Mr J. R. Ramdally (Second Local Region Member for St Gabriel) asked the Commissioner for Education and Others whether, in regard to the non-availability of some textbooks in secondary schools around Rodrigues for the academic year 2021/2022, she will enlighten the House as to where matters stand as at date?

Mrs Gaspard Pierre-Louis: It has been the case for three months so, there is nothing new. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Madam Chairperson, with regard to textbooks for secondary students in Rodrigues, Grades 7 to 9 avail of free textbooks from the Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology, since January 2020 in line with the Government Programme 2020/2024.

The scheme concerns both mainstream and extended programme of State and Grant-Aided Private Secondary Schools and includes textbooks with enlarged print for students with impaired vision. While PSEA is responsible for delivery of books for the mainstream, the Ministry has the responsibility to deliver books for the extended programme.

With regard to the mainstream for Grade 7 to 9, 38 titles out of 39 have already been delivered to Rodrigues. The remaining title will be ship to Rodrigues on the next vessel. The main problems however, remain with the availability of books for the extended programmes. We have got few of them. However, since they are available online, arrangements have been done with the colleges to print the chapters as for their need and we have also extended the printing facilities available at the RRA for those schools that need same.

/UNREVISED/

Madam Chairperson, with regard to Grades 10 to 13, textbooks are being provided to students under the Free Book Loan Scheme of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly.

According to information gathered:

- (i) For Grade 10 - 7,070 textbooks representing the total number required have already been received and delivered to schools.
- (ii) For Grade 11 - 5,642 textbooks were awarded and 5,582 textbooks have already been delivered in colleges. Additional textbooks are expected by the next vessels.
- (iii) For Grade 12 – 1,725 textbooks have been awarded and 1,345 textbooks have already been delivered in colleges and additional textbooks are expected by the next vessel;
- (iv) For Grade 13 – 1,345 textbooks were awarded and 1,130 textbooks have been delivered in colleges and additional textbooks are expected by the next vessel.

Madam Chairperson, you will note also that following launching of bids, we have had difficulties to obtain some textbooks, that is why the Commission for Education has decided to grant some financial facilities to the different PTA's of the different colleges so that they can purchase the additional books that are required. And, as at now regarding textbooks procured by the PTA for Grades 10 to 13 are still missing: -

- Marechal College - 11 titles for a total of 545 books
- Ananias André Le Chou College - 19 titles for a total of 665 books
- Mont Lubin College - 1 title
- Songes College - 2 titles
- Rodrigues College - 3 titles

Madam Chairperson: Respected Member, Augustin.

Mr Augustin: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Can we know from the Commissioner for Education in regard to supply to delivery of secondary textbooks for academic year 2021-2022, who has been awarded the contract and for how much?

Mrs Gaspard Pierre-Louis: In fact, Madam Chairperson, since as I have just said, there are textbooks that have been purchased by the PTAs, so we have requested them to follow the procurement procedures but I do not have the name of each supplier for the PTAs. However, I can give the details about the amount procured by the Commission for Education. So, we

have spent some Rs 7 m. So, in fact, we have at the level of the Commission for Education purchased secondary textbooks for the academic year 2021-2022 for the amount of Rs 7,842,770 exclusive of VAT and awarded to Edition Le Printemps Limité.

Madam Chairperson: Respected Member, Perrine.

Mr Perrine: Madame la présidente, pourrais-je demander au respecté commissaire, quand est-ce que la commission a pris la décision de donner cette responsabilité aux PTAs pour l'achat des livres dans des collèges de Rodrigues ?

Mrs Gaspard Pierre-Louis: En effet, Madame la présidente, ça a été une décision collégiale à la suite du *bid* qui a été *non-responsive*. On avait discuté avec les différents recteurs et les PTA et on a décidé c'était à partir de mai, en mai 2021 que la décision a été prise pour donner ce *grant* au PTA. De toute manière, ça n'allait pas trop faire une grande différence parce que même les PTA, ils ont des difficultés à avoir les livres parce que ces livres ne sont pas tous disponibles sur le marché Mauricien pour raison de la COVID-19.

Mr Perrine: Madame la présidente, je suis vraiment désolé. Là nous avons un sérieux problème. Nos enfants sont en train de souffrir à l'école parce qu'il n'y a pas de livre. A cause l'irresponsabilité de ce gouvernement régional. On ne peut pas attendre au mois de mai pour venir dire aux PTAs d'aller acheter les livres. Pendant tout ce temps durant les vacances...

Madam Chairperson: Your question, please.

Mr Perrine: *My question is.* Pour quoi la commission a jugé bon de donner ce contrat aux PTAs au mois de mai alors qu'il avait largement le temps depuis de décembre pour faire ce *procurement exercise* pour avoir des livres pour nos enfants à l'école ?

Mrs Gaspard Pierre-Louis: Madame la présidente, je crois qu'il y a des gens qui ne comprennent rien ici, dans cette Chambre. J'ai bien expliqué, il y a eu un *procurement procedures*...

Madam Chairperson: Order!

Mrs Gaspard Pierre-Louis: Il y a eu un *procurement procedures* qui a été fait, qui a été *non-responsive*, on a discuté avec les PTAs, on est tombé d'accord pour qu'ils prennent désormais la responsabilité pour l'achat des livres. D'ailleurs, moi je rencontre chaque quinzaine depuis que j'ai pris la responsabilité de l'éducation, j'ai assumé l'intérim. Je rencontre chaque quinzaine les recteurs pour voir l'évolution de la situation au niveau des livres et j'assure la Chambre qu'aujourd'hui même si les livres sont manquants, je l'ai dit peut-être

en anglais, je vais le dire en français maintenant. On est tombé d'accord que les livres et les chapitres qu'on a besoin soit les collèges les impriment pour travailler pour travailler en classe ou bien nous avons mis à la disposition des collèges la facilité pour imprimer ces livres à l'Administration centrale et aujourd'hui il y a aucun enfant qui est discriminé à cause du retard des livres.

(Interruptions)

Madam Chairperson: Respected Member, Agathe.

Mrs Agathe: Merci, Madame la présidente. En écoutant Madame la commissaire parlant du manque des livres exagérer dans les collèges ça fait frémir. La question à la commissaire, c'est que tous ces livres manquants, est-ce que la commissaire sait que dans certaines écoles on écrit les questions au tableau. La quantité de temps qu'on perd, comment est-ce que la commissaire s'assure pour que ces élèves-là ne soient pas pénalisés ?

Mrs Gaspard Pierre-Louis: Madame la présidente, c'est facile d'utiliser des mots qui font sensation, frémir. Je l'ai dit déjà, moi je rencontre chaque lundi, chaque quinzaine, les recteurs à la commission de l'Education et ce sont ces recteurs, je crois que j'ai le besoin de leurs faire confiance, ce sont des chefs d'établissement, ils viennent dans les réunions. On suit collège après collège, les livres manquants comment ça se passe, comment ils s'organisent et il y a des collèges qui ont donné ces chapitres à être imprimé à l'Administration centrale où la commission a fait l'acquisition d'encres. Très souvent on a fait venir de l'encre par Dornier, chaque fois que le Dornier arrive. Et, je crois sur parole ces recteurs, qui pour moi, sont des gens responsables et qui viennent apporter les éléments vrais. Ce qui veut dire que, Madame la présidente, au sein des collèges, si c'est vrai que j'ai mentionné, le manque de certain livre, les professeurs et les recteurs s'organisent. Et, pour eux aujourd'hui, il y a aucun élève qui est discriminé parce qu'il n'a pas eu son livre à temps. Et, d'ailleurs je l'ai dit, peut-être je ne l'ai pas dit en détail, il y a plusieurs raisons aussi pour lesquelles les livres ne sont pas arrivés à temps, même que les PTAs ont achetés. Il y a eu dans certains cas, des endroits qui étaient déclarés comme Red Zone où ces entreprises, ces distributeurs de livre ne pouvaient travailler, c'est pour ça que ça a été retardé. On a eu des cas, par exemple, aussi où il y a eu des *positive cases* dans les *printing units* pour certains livres. Donc, la raison pour laquelle ces imprimeries ont été fermées donc certains livres pas reçus. Il y a eu d'autres cas, je le disais aussi au départ où les livres ne sont pas *available* sur le marché mauricien. Donc, je ne sais pas si eux ils auraient pu faire des miracles mais aujourd'hui je suis sûre et je crois sur parole ce que les recteurs me disent. D'ailleurs, on va les rencontrer ce jeudi encore une fois, que qu'aujourd'hui le manque

de livre n'est pas un souci majeur parce que le travail continu, les impressions se font et ils rapportent l'évolution de la situation chaque semaine.

Madam Chairperson: Respected Member, Volbert.

Mr Volbert: Merci, Madame la présidente. Je ne sais pas si la commissaire va répondre à la question mais je vais poser quand même par rapport à la perte des livres, *upon lost of books*, les ... *amounting - the amount is paid*. Est-ce que je peux savoir où cet argent aille si c'est avec la commission ou avec la PTA ?

Mrs Gaspard Pierre-Louis: Madame la présidente, en effet on a réfléchi, il faudrait, d'ailleurs plusieurs fois on a eu l'occasion de discuter dessus, faudrait revoir avec le temps le *Book Loan Scheme*, quoique quand même avec les livres offertes par le ministère de l'Education pour Grade 7 to 9 aujourd'hui, le problème est à moitié résolu. On a vu qu'il y a beaucoup de gaspillage. Il y a des enfants qui ne traitent pas bien les livres quoiqu'il y a d'autres aussi qui gèrent bien leurs livres. Donc, il y a des cas où les livres se perdent. C'est vrai pour une raison de responsabilité, ces enfants doivent contribuer. La contribution va à la PTA et non pas à la commission de l'Education.

Madam Chairperson: Respected Member, Perrine.

Mr Perrine: Madame la présidente, je suis vraiment désolé. Tous ce que Madame la commissaire vient de nous dire ici, ne nous intéressent pas. Ce qui nous intéresse c'est que quels sont les modalités qu'elle est en train de mettre en place pour que ces problèmes que nos enfants font fassent, ce n'est pas aujourd'hui ça ! Ce n'est pas en 2019, c'est bien avant. C'est bien avant que ce problème existe. Et, on a tiré la sonnette d'alarme depuis belle lurette. Aujourd'hui, nous avons l'impression que la commission de l'Education a complètement failli sur la question de l'éducation de toute façon.

Madam Chairperson: Your question!

Mr Perrine: Mais ma question est qu'est-ce que madame... Mon enfant est en train de souffrir parce qu'il n'y a pas de livre à l'école. Mais, Madame la présidente,...

Madam Chairperson: Your question, please. We are still waiting for the question, Respected Member.

(Interruptions)

Mr Perrine: *Ecoute ki zot kozé! Pa zot problem. Mo zenfant pa zot problem.*

Madam Chairperson: Order!

Mr Perrine: Madame la présidente,...

Madam Chairperson: Respected Member, you put your question now.

(Interruptions)

Mr Perrine: Qu'est-ce que, Madame la commissaire, nouvellement recrue, nouvellement avoir la responsabilité, assigner la responsabilité de l'éducation, quel miracle elle va faire pour qu'elle puisse nous assurer que d'ici au cours de ce trimestre qui va arriver, à la fin de ce trimestre, on aura les livres pour tous ces enfants qui souffrent de manque de livre au sein de l'éducation à Rodrigues ?

Mrs Gaspard Pierre-Louis: Madame la présidente, je pense que je vais réfléchir à une formule...

(Interruptions)

Madam Chairperson: Order!

Mrs Gaspard Pierre-Louis: Je vais réfléchir à une formule pour envoyer le respecté membre chercher ces livres ailleurs, là où on a des problèmes par rapport au...

(Interruptions)

Madam Chairperson: Respected Member, Von-Mally. Order! Order! Respected Members from both sides of the House!

(Interruptions)

Respected Member, Von-Mally.

Mr Von-Mally: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. On the legal aspect of the question, the respected Commissioner has been talking of the printing certain chapters from textbooks. Can she reassure us that she has got the permission of the authors to pay the required royalties, etc. so that we do not have legal problem when printing certain chapters? I think if we can arrange, it is better for the students to have their chapters and books ready.

Mrs Gaspard Pierre-Louis: En effet, Madame la présidente, on a pris note de cette éventualité aussi, c'est pour ça qu'on a discuté aussi avec les recteurs pour qu'il n'y a pas d'exagération. Parce que de toute manière les livres vont arriver incessamment, il n'y a pas d'exagération mais dans le but d'assurer que le travail se fasse et que l'enfant n'est pas discriminé. Donc, il y a des arrangements qui sont faites. Mais on a discuté de ce sujet-là.

Madam Chairperson: The Deputy Chairperson.

Mr Ramdally: Merci, Madame la présidente. Donc, concernant les livres dans le secondaire, il y a deux parties de livre. Il y a la partie sur le *nine-year schooling*, veut dire de Grade 7 à Grade 9. La commissaire a mentionné qu'il y a la PSEA qui est responsable et le ministère. Puis-je savoir du commissaire quel est le rôle du RRA dans le processus d'acquisition de livre pour Grade 7 à Grade 9 ?

Mrs Gaspard Pierre-Louis: Madame la présidente, je pense que ça va sans dire qu'au niveau de la commission de l'Education, il y a une communication constante avec les deux entité, c'est-à-dire, le ministère pour les *extended stream* et la PSEA pour le *main stream*. Il y a une communication constante pour qu'on puisse *monitor* l'arrivée des livres. Et, je dois dire aussi, que malheureusement, c'est un fait que même dans les collèges à Maurice ces livres ne sont pas disponibles. C'est-à-dire, il n'y a pas que Rodrigues qui souffre de ce problème-là. Parce que comme j'ai dit au départ, les livres qui sont prescrit par la MIE on les a... de la PSEA, Grade 7 à 9, ça il n'y a pas de grand problème. Mais pour les autres livres nous sommes en constante communication et nous recherchons les informations et assurons que les livres dès qu'ils arrivent à Maurice on puisse les avoir. Je dois rassurer la Chambre que par rapport au discussion que nous avons eue au niveau de la commission de l'Education, il y a une bonne communication avec le ministère et on est rassuré qu'à chaque fois qu'il y a un lot de livre imprimer, Rodrigues ait sa part au plus vite. Et moi, Madame la présidente, je dois dire que si ce *Book Loan Scheme* est une bonne mesure pour les enfants nécessiteux, je pense que d'abord c'est le rôle de chaque parent. Et moi, j'invite les parents qui sont ici, comme moi, d'acheter. C'est ma responsabilité de subvenir de mes enfants. Ben autant de trouver, de me donner comme priorité la responsabilité d'acheter des livres pour mes enfants et surtout laisser ça aussi pour d'autre enfant. Pourquoi pas quand mes enfants ont leurs livres, ils peuvent aider les autres à suivre. Donc, je pense c'est très important. Mais je maintiens que c'est une mesure qui aussi les familles qui en ont besoin.

Madam Chairperson: Respected Member, Agathe.

Mrs Agathe: Merci, Madame la présidente. Est-ce que la commissaire peut nous dire, peut assurer cette Chambre s'il y a une tentative *to cancel the Free Book Loan Scheme*, et puis, Madame a ajouté que les parents responsables comme elle pourrait acheter les livres. Mais quand est-ce que cette information a été divulgué aux parents ? Merci.

Mrs Gaspard Pierre-Louis: Madame la présidente, je viens de dire que c'est une mesure intéressante qui aide les famille qui sont dans le besoin, les familles nécessiteuses toutefois, je pense que personne n'a besoin de dire à quelqu'un de donner à manger à ces

enfants. On sait que nos enfants sont à l'école, les livres sont une nécessité, moi je pense que ceux qui peuvent se donnent la responsabilité d'acheter leurs livres. Mais bien sûre on va continuer, à aucun moment on a remis en question le *Free Book Loan Scheme*. Mais bien sûre il faudrait l'améliorer et on va essayer de voir avec l'expérience que nous avons eue récemment si on peut continuer à collaborer avec les PTA et l'année prochaine on va leur donner le *grant* aussi pour continuer à faire l'acquisition des livres.

(Interruptions)

Madam Chairperson: Respected Member, Agathe.

Mrs Agathe: Merci, Madame la présidente.

(Interruptions)

Madam Chairperson: Order! Respected Member Perrine, please.

Mrs Agathe: Nous savons tous qu'il y a des parents responsables qui sont conscients de l'éducation mais est-ce que ces parents-là savent ?

(Interruptions)

Madam Chairperson: At this point of the Fourth Regional Assembly's mandate, Respected Members, you should be accustomed to the conventions and principles of parliament. You have no reasonable excuse for such an affront to the dignity and the solemnity of this House. So, please. The Chair will not tolerate anymore. Yes, please.

Mrs Agathe: Merci, Madame la présidente. Comme Madame la commissaire a dit que les parents peuvent acheter les livres, est-ce que tous ces parents responsables savent vraiment comment faire la commande des livres, est-ce qu'il y a ces livres-là sur le marcher ici ? Donc, je pense que la commissaire aurait pu à travers les collèges, je ne sais pas comment, à la radio comme on a l'habitude de faire, de dire aux parents comment avoir ces livres manquants. Parce qu'il y a des parents qui veulent acheter des livres mais ils ne savent pas où ça de s'en procurer.

Mrs Gaspard Pierre-Louis: Madame la présidente, c'est vrai. Jusqu'ici, je dois l'avouer, il y a beaucoup de parent qui achètent leurs livres dans les différents *book store* à Rodrigues. Ça existe à Port Mathurin. D'ailleurs, on avait fait, Madame la commissaire de la Culture avait fait une vente des livres récemment avec les revendeurs locaux. Ces livres sont disponibles, je dis bien, il y a des parents qui peuvent faire des efforts, qui ont les moyens et dans bien des cas, il y a des parents qui l'ont fait, qui ont acheté leurs livres.

Madam Chairperson: Next question.

FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE (FMD)

(No. B/119) **Mr F. A. Grandcourt (Minority Leader)** asked the Commissioner for Agriculture and Others whether, in regard to the occurrence of Foot-and-Mouth Disease in Rodrigues, he will state to the House on where matter stands as at date?

Mr Payendee: Madam Chairperson, I made a statement on the outbreak of the Foot and Mouth Disease during the sitting of 11 May 2021 whereby, I elaborated lengthily on the chronology of the events. The immediate measures put in place to prevent the spread and the relentless efforts to have the appropriate vaccine available on the island. So, I do not want to go again on all these things but just to continue where matter stands.

Madam Chairperson, I wish to inform the House that a consignment of 182,000 doses of vaccines was delivered in Rodrigues on 19 May 2021 by Dornier. I again seize the opportunity to extent my gratitude to the ‘Agence Française de Développement’, the European Union for their financial assistance, the Indian Ocean Commission for the technical assistance and the Ministry of Agro and Food Security for the logistics put in place to convey the vaccines to Rodrigues.

Madam Chairperson, the first round of the mass vaccination campaign for the breeders started on 24 May 2021. Then ten teams were organised for the activity and under close supervision of four Veterinary Officers. And, the first round of the mass vaccination campaign was completed on 24 June 2021.

Madam Chairperson, I wish to inform the House, that the second round on the mass vaccination campaigns started on 25 June 2021. The number of animal vaccinated as at date are as follows:-

First round

SN	TYPE OF ANIMAL	LIVESTOCK VACCINATED
1	Bovines	7,494
2	Small ruminants	21,560
TOTAL		29,054

Second Round

SN	TYPE OF ANIMAL	LIVESTOCK VACCINATED
1	Bovines	6,982
2	Small ruminants	20,107
TOTAL		27,089

Madam Chairperson, I am informed that about 86% of livestock has already been vaccinated as at date.

I wish to inform to inform the House, the post vaccination monitoring, post vaccination sero-surveillance is important to evaluate the effect of the vaccine on the animals. It provides an estimate of anti-bodies level against FMD and is considered as the gold standard for measuring population herd immunity due to pest infection of vaccination. The output of post-vaccination sero-surveillance is an important component of disease surveillance and coverage data to enable future decision making, such as, negotiation for resumption of trade of animals between Mauritius and Rodrigues, that is, the removal of the embargo.

Madam Chairperson, as such, based on international publication guidelines for post-vaccination monitoring, blood collection started on 23 August 2021. Four replicate of blood samples are taken from each animal and will be used as follows: -

- One to be tested in Rodrigues as my Office has already procured all the required equipment and the test kits amounting to Rs 2 m.;
- One to be kept at the reference in Rodrigues;
- One to be sent to the Animal Health Laboratory in Mauritius; and

The four samples to be sent to the ANSES for external quality control. Based on sampling procedures, 200 farms around the island have been selected and blood to be collected from approximately 2,000 animals.

Madam Chairperson, I am informed that blood samples for disease surveillance will be collected up to the first week of October 2021. The disease test will be run for one week and expected to be completed by 13 October 2021. As mentioned earlier, negotiation on ... embargo on export of the animals will be based on the results obtained.

I also wish to inform the House that a visio conference was organised between the ‘Agence Française de Développement’, European Union, Prime Minister’s Office, Ministry of Agro Industry and Food Security and the Rodrigues Regional Assembly on 24 June 2021, on the subject matter and make a way forwards upon disease surveillance on the island.

Madam Chairperson, on the last note, my Commission has also received a correspondence from the Ministry for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and the Territorial Integrity on 09 September 2021 dealing with the constitution of the National Project Steering Committee of the Technical Corporation Programme for the setting of a national livestock information system. As such, I am being made aware that the ministry has consulted the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) for technical support and the latter has agreed to provide technical assistance to the tune of 300,000 USD. We have for software development, a development of an appropriate legislative framework and setting up of a traceability for pigs and poultry and setting up of a facility system in Rodrigues.

Madam Chairperson, this initiative which involves microchipping of all livestock is a loadable one and my Commission will be duly represented on the committee. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Mr Grandcourt: Madame la présidente, permettez-moi de demander au commissaire. Alors, concernant les *Red Zones* à Rodrigues, est-ce qu’il y en a toujours ? Parce qu’on voit que les gens transportent les animaux à travers l’île, ils consomment ces viandes-là. Donc, qu’est-ce que le commissaire peut nous dire là-dessus ?

Mr Payendee: Oui, Madame la présidente, le *Red Zone* existe toujours mais comme on avait passé le genre de communiqué à la radio pour dire aux gens que n’importe qui, qui doit bouger des animaux doit avoir l’aval de la commission, c’est-à-dire, la recommandation des vétérinaires pour pouvoir bouger. Comme ça on voit comment ça se passe et on peut faire le *montinoring* d’une façon positive.

Mr Grandcourt: Est-ce que le commissaire est au courant qu’il n’y a pas de contrôle ? Parce que nous savons très bien que les vétérinaires sont pris avec la vaccination et moi j’ai été témoin des gens qui transportaient des animaux. Je leurs ai posé la question, ils disent qu’il n’y a pas de contrôle, donc ils transportent ça et là à travers l’île, des animaux, toutes types d’animaux pour la consommation.

Mr Payendee: Ce n’est pas vrai, Madame la présidente, de dire qu’il n’y a pas de contrôle, je ne suis pas d’accord du tout avec le Minority Leader. C’est vrai qu’il y a le system

qui est en place, il y a le protocole mais il y a des gens qui malheureusement, peut-être ne respectent pas les protocoles. Ça ne veut pas dire qu'il n'y a pas de contrôle. Donc, je ne suis pas d'accord avec cela.

Madam Chairperson: Respected Member, Perrine.

Mr Perrine: Madame la présidente, le commissaire nous a dit que la première dose de la vaccination a terminé le 24 juin 2021. Et, la deuxième dose a commencé le 25 juin 2021. Il a dit aussi qu'il a une dizaine d'équipes avec des 4 x 4 en location qui fait le tour du pays pour justement régler ce problème de vaccin. Est-ce que je peux demander au commissaire, pourquoi dans la région là où j'habite, les animaux n'ont toujours pas reçus leur deuxième dose de vaccin depuis le 25 juin ?

Mr Payendee: Madame la présidente, je ne suis pas au courant dans la région où habite le membre on n'a pas fait de vaccination. Mais vaccination normalement vaccination ça doit être fait partout à Rodrigues. Mais je dois dire aussi que on avait finalement un petit problème de vaccin. Il manquait quelques 10,000 vaccins qu'on a demandés... J'ai fait personnellement téléphoner au ministre de l'Agro-Industrie et on vient d'avoir les 10,000. Donc forcément, tous les animaux qui ont eu leur première dose aura leur deuxième dose.

Mr Perrine: En tout cas, chez moi les animaux n'ont pas eu leur deuxième dose de vaccin. Et, *si zot pa contan, ale la police.*

Madame la présidente, deuxième question. Nous avons vu la commission donner des facilités à des vendeurs, des acheteurs des animaux, etc. mais jusqu'à présent les éleveurs qui sont les plus affectés par cette pandémie de *Foot and Mouth Diseases*, jusqu'à présent ces éleveurs toutes leurs petites économies partent dans la nourriture pour les animaux. Qu'est-ce que le commissaire prévoit pour ces éleveurs à ce jour ?

Mr Payendee: Madame la présidente, ce n'est pas bien aussi dont le membre a formulé la question. Est-ce que ce n'est pas vrai qu'on aide les vendeurs - je ne sais pas de quels vendeurs il parle, mais je dois dire que oui, tous ces gens dans la chaîne complète de l'élevage et vu qu'il y a l'embargo sur la transportation des animaux sur Maurice, il y a toute une gamme de personne qui sont affectées par le FMD. Donc, nous on prend en compte tout le monde, à tous les niveaux, que ce soit les vendeurs, comme il le dit et les éleveurs aussi. Donc, tout le monde est pris... Mais il faut, bien sûre, Madame la présidente...

Madam Chairperson: Respected Members, please.

Mr Payendee: Bien sûre, Madame la présidente, il y a des procédures. Si n'importe personne qui... tout le monde n'est pas éleveur et il y a des conditions. Il y a un certain nombre d'animaux pour au moins respectés pour pouvoir avoir... Il y a des critères qui sont mis en place par ma commission pour pouvoir aider. Mais je dois dire qu'on n'a pas eu... On dit – il y a quelque personne, il y a quelque personne. Mais personne, même les membres de l'opposition, personne n'est venu avec quelque chose de plausible pour me donner des noms des personnes qui sont affectées.

Madam Chairperson: I would like to remind Respected Members from the minority side that putting question from a sitting position is completely out of order. This is unparliamentary. Yes, Minority Leader.

Mr Grandcourt: J'aimerais demandé au commissaire, si jamais ils ont fait une étude sur l'impact économique de cet embargo sur Rodrigues ? Est-ce qu'il y a eu des collectes de data qui malheureusement, des fois ce n'est pas *available* dans les bureaux, est-ce qu'il traite la pandémie d'une façon scientifique en collection des données pour pouvoir analyser et en même temps prendre des mesures qu'il faut dans le futur ?

Mr Payendee: Oui, Madame la présidente, ce n'est pas la première fois qu'on fait face à ce genre de pandémie. On a eu ce problème-là une fois, c'est la deuxième fois et je pense qu'on a bien géré, je dois dire qu'on a bien géré la FMD. Parce que personne ne parle de FMD, il y a que les membres de l'opposition qui parlent de ça. Mais je n'entends pas les membres du public, les éleveurs, tout le monde. On ne parle même pas, on ne sait même pas s'il y a... On se pose la question s'il y a toujours FMD à Rodrigues.

(Interruptions)

Madam Chairperson: Order!

Mr Payendee: Donc, oui, Madame la présidente. Oui, le travail se fait d'une façon très scientifique. D'ailleurs, je dois peut-être informer le Minority Leader qu'on a employé 10 jeunes. Dans chaque équipe de vaccination, il y a une personne qu'on a acheté... vraiment, ce n'est pas le *e-health* mais c'est le *e-agriculture*. On a donné des tablettes à ces jeunes qui notent tous ce qu'on peut noter. D'ailleurs, même les *tagging* tout ça. Donc, tous les infos par rapport à ces éleveurs sont notées et même leurs positions économique, l'effets de FMD sur Rodrigues. Tout ça, est noté par éleveur par éleveur. Tous ceux qui ont été... où on est passé pour faire de la vaccination. Donc, là aujourd'hui la commission à une base de donnée vraiment extraordinaire parce que là on pourra... on attendait ça pour commencer à donner les cartes

d'éleveurs. Parce que là on est sûre qui sont les vrais éleveurs, parce que là on a vu les animaux. Donc, tous ces travaux étaient fait d'une façon très scientifique, ce qui nous donne l'occasion maintenant de dire qui sont les vrais éleveurs à Rodrigues et comment on pourra donner... pas comme dans le passé donner à tout le monde des cartes d'éleveurs mais là on va donner à des vrais éleveurs leur carte avec tous les données qu'on a collectées, Madame la présidente.

Madam Chairperson: Respected Member, Félicité.

Mr Félicité: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. So, last time the Commissioner mentioned that there was a matter on subsidies of local meat. So, he said that there will be an inquiry on that. Can we know where matter stands concerning this inquiry on meat?

Mr Payendee: Yes, *pou la viande bon marché*. C'est ça, la viande Rs 10, Madame la présidente, si ce n'est pas *unparliamentary*. Oui, on avait dit, c'est vrai que pour pouvoir aider les éleveurs... de toute façon il fallait trouver des mesures vues qu'il y a l'embargo, c'est-à-dire, on avait mis le *Meat Subsidy* sur la viande. Mais il y avait quand même quelque personne qui passait. Comme la dit, le Minority Leader, le protocole est en place, il y a des gens qui passent à côté et qui ne respectent pas. Mais c'est vrai qu'on a fait des enquêtes mais là on sait qui sont ces gens qui font n'importe quoi. Donc, la prochaine fois qu'on va mettre le *Meat Subsidy*, ces gens seront exclus de la liste.

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

At 12.36 p.m., the sitting was suspended for one hour.

On resuming at 1.38 p.m. with Madam Chairperson in the Chair.

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

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Madam Chairperson, with your permission...

Madam Chairperson: Respected Member... Sorry, Commissioner. Respected Members, everyone is aware of the existing law concerning public health. I have already given instructions to relevant officers and from now on, everyone is expected to wear face mask correctly covering nose and mouth. Thank you. Yes.

INFORMATION – CASE OF DANGEROUS DRUGS

(No. B/120) The Second Local Region Member of La Ferme (Mr. J.N. VOLBERT) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the

Commissioner of Police, information as to any case of dangerous drugs recently detected in Rodrigues and to state: -

- (a) if any arrest has been made in relation thereto;
- (b) if any additional measure taken/to be taken to tighten control, including around the port and airport; and
- (c) if any sensitisation campaigns have been envisaged, giving details?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Yes, Madam Chairperson, with your permission, I would like to answer to this question in the absence of the Chief Commissioner.

Madam Chairperson: Yes, please, proceed.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: I am informed by Police that three drug cases with importance seizures have been established by the Anti-Drug and Smuggling Unit (ADSU) of Rodrigues since January 2021.

I am further informed that four persons have been arrested up to now in connection with the above cases and that Police is still enquiring into the matter.

Further to the said arrests, I am also informed that Police has taken the following additional measures to tighten control particularly at the port and airport:

- a. Reinforced vigilance at the airport and harbour with deployment of ADSU officers to profile and identify potential drug dealers amongst luggage, passengers and employees;
- b. Surveillance of the passenger terminal on the arrival of ships and yachts;
- c. Assistance to Customs Officers in the scanning of luggage;
- d. Deployment of sniffers dogs for checking of suspicious luggage at airport and search operation with ADSU;
- e. Regular patrol in lagoon, off lagoon and in territorial waters by the National Coast Guard (NCG); and
- f. Round the Clock (CCTV) surveillance and access control to Port Mathurin jetty and RADAR Surveillance of maritime traffic National Coast Guard (NCG).

Madam Chairperson, with regards to part (c) of the question, the Rodrigues Regional Assembly has always been committed to the collective effort to fight against drug.

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A Committee on Drugs and Substance Abuse Prevention Amongst the Youth in Rodrigues was set up under the chairmanship of the Commissioner for Youth and Sports to bring together different partners engaged in the laudable fight.

An Action plan on Drug and Substance Abuse Prevention among the Youth in Rodrigues from 2020 and onwards has been prepared in September 2020 whereby 10 key strategic areas have been defined among which “Prevention and Sensitisation” is the main strategic area.

As part of the action plan, Madam Chairperson, a sensitisation march was organised on Saturday 26 June 2021 to commemorate the International Day Against Drugs Abuse and Illicit Trafficking in collaboration with the Committee on Drugs and Substance Abuse.

In addition to that, Madam Chairperson, following the recent drug seizure in Rodrigues, a Mega Sensitisation March was organised on Saturday 24 July 2021.

Additionally, a Youth Trail Against Drugs was organised for the first time in Rodrigues on Sunday 22 August 2021 to commemorate International Youth Day.

Madam Chairperson, the next Matching Fund project between RRA and the UNFPA for the period January 2022 to December 2023 of about 500,000 USD will be essentially allocated to the fight against substance abuse/alcohol/drugs and all related activities.

I wish also to inform the House that the following activities under the strategic plan will be organised as from the year 2021 and onwards:

- i. Training on Drug Free Lifestyle for 120 young people aged between 14-17 years annually;
- ii. Increased sensitisation campaigns on existing legislations concerning drug and alcohol consumption through radio, TV, social media, talks and conferences;
- iii. Training of 25 peer educators specialised in sensitisation on drugs consumption yearly;
- iv. Training of 280 participants of which youth leaders, *‘agents de santé communautaire’* and *‘agents de l’éducation’*.

In addition, Madam Chairperson, the Rodrigues Police will reinforce the Anti-Drug and Smuggling Unit team. This team regularly holds sensitisation campaigns in schools and at community level.

Madam Chairperson: Respected Member Volbert.

Mr. Volbert: *Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Contrairement à l'aéroport où there are scanning devices, scanning machines placed, est-ce que le Deputy Chief Commissioner peut nous dire si dans le port, ces machines sont installées pour mieux contrôler les marchandises dans le container park et dans le precinct du harbour?*

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Madam Chairperson, if we refer to the report on the Commission of Enquiry on Drug Trafficking that was conducted in July in 2018, there were some recommendations that were made in various departments including what has to be done at the port and when I have questioned about what the different institutions and departments have been done, I consider that we have made some arrangement but as regard to the scanner that is to be placed at the port, yet, there is still improvement to be made but nevertheless, as regard to the other measures that have to be taken in order to curtail down if any as regard to the incoming of drugs through the port area, there has been much which has been done.

Mr. Volbert: *Il y a différents points d'entrées, différentes passes comme à Port Sud-Est, St François etc. en sus du port. Est-ce que vous allez conseiller, upon your advice, inform the authorities to place officers in these entry ports with fully equipped boats and equipment, boats and so on?*

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: We have to see things straightforwardly, Madam Chairperson, being given that if we refer to the last seizure of drug, I think by assessment, we can see that there is most probability that same has occurred previously because with the closing of the borders between Mauritius and Rodrigues and the flights that are coming say, once every 15 days, if ever there is drug that is coming right now in Rodrigues, it is going to be through the sea. So, this is why as per recommendation that has been set in the report on drug enquiry, there has been reinforced vigilance by the National Coastguard. In fact, as I have said in my answer, there is regular patrol in lagoon, off-lagoon and in territorial waters by the National Coastguard and I consider that if they are doing same, they should be controlling the sites and the passes that have been mentioned by the Member.

Madam Chairperson: Next question!

Madam Chairperson: I would like to remind respected Members once more that this House is a law abiding House and we have to abide to existing laws. Wearing of face mask should be at all times. Thank you.

Mr Payendee: It is difficult, Madam Chairperson, with this.

(Interruptions)

SUBSIDY – COST OF AGRICULTURAL LABOUR

(No. B/121) The Fifth Island Region Member (Mr. Z. Félicité) asked the Commissioner for Agriculture and Others whether, in regard to the subsidy of up to fifty per cent on the cost of agricultural labour, as announced in the budget speech 2020/2021, he will, for the benefit of the House, state and table the:

- (a) objectives of the incentive;
- (b) eligibility criteria to benefit therefrom; and
- (c) number of beneficiaries together with the total amount disbursed therefor as at date?

Mr Payendee: Madam Chairperson, I wish to inform the House that the objectives of a subsidy are to increase the area under staple crops, improve the guarantee and guarantee the food security status of the Island, to encourage the cultivation of all agricultural land available, encourage the younger generation to get involved in agriculture and to support those who are already in the sector. Madam Chairperson, the eligibility criteria to benefit the scheme subsidy are as follows:

For planters:

- (i) they have to be involved in staple crop production over minimum area of one acre and well-known to the Commission;
- (ii) they have to be involved in staple production continuously over the past three years;
- (iii) Planters must be above 18 years old;
- (iv) They must own an agricultural permit or lease or a short proof that they have applied for same;
- (v) Only one member per household and for one plot.

For agricultural workers, that is the youth:

- (i) Applicant must be between 18 and 40 years old;
- (ii) Priority will be given to those who have followed training in agriculture at places, institutions recognised by the Commission for Agriculture or possess working experience in agriculture accepted by the Commission for Agriculture;

- (iii) Only one member of the household will be allowed to produce service as worker;
- (iv) Applicant must own or cultivate a piece of land;
- (v) Cultivation of staple will have an advantage;
- (vi) Applicant who are involved in staple crop production and those who derive income solely on agriculture will have an advantage.

Madam Chairperson, I wish to inform the House that a communiqué for this scheme was launched in January 2021, 32 young agricultural workers applied and the applications were processed accordingly.

Madam Chairperson, after assessment of the young applicants, it was noticed that most of them do not have much experience in fieldwork. It was decided in June 2021 to give a first batch of applicant opportunity to have hands-on practice and expose to different activities involved in cultivation of crops. Consequently, a batch of 10 young people have already started on the different plots of my Commission and another batch of 20 will start as from next week. I am informed that an amount of Rs 285,898 have already been disbursed and agricultural claims are still being processed. I table the information as requested.

Madam Chairperson: Respected Member Félicité.

Mr Félicité: Yes. So, if I heard that there were 32 applicants and from the 32 applicants, how many have benefited from this scheme?

Mr Payendee: As I said in my answer, 10 have already benefited and 20 coming soon.

Madam Chairperson: Respected Member Félicité, yes.

Mr Félicité: So, in the meantime, what your Commission is being done to help the other planters in order to reduce the labour cost?

Mr Payendee: I did not get this question, Madam Chairperson. There is a lot of work that we are doing in the Commission. The question is about these young people, also.

Madam Chairperson: Minority Leader.

Mr Grandcourt: Oui, Madame la présidente, permettez-moi. Madame la présidente, d'après ce que j'ai entendu, ça démontre que les gens ne sont pas intéressés. Ça a été annoncé en grande pompe mais les gens ne sont pas intéressés dans le secteur de l'agriculture parce qu'il y a trop de problèmes. Donc, il y a trop de critères qu'il faut voir avant que quelqu'un

puisse bénéficier de ce *scheme* là. Donc, j'aimerais demander au commissaire s'il peut alléger ces critères-là afin que les gens puissent avoir accès à ça parce que je vois là que ce n'est pas du sérieux. Les gens ne sont pas intéressés.

Mr Payendee: Madam Chairperson, *again*, ces mots du *Minority Leader* «les gens ne sont pas intéressés», ce n'est pas forcément vrai. Les gens sont intéressés. Mais vous savez aujourd'hui, il y a beaucoup d'opportunité pour les jeunes. Il n'y a pas que dans l'agriculture. Donc, les jeunes sont un peu partout. Il y a même avec la commission de la formation, il y a beaucoup d'opportunités. Donc, les gens choisissent ce qu'ils veulent. Mais aussi, l'autre côté, il y a la façon de faire de l'agriculture par nos aînés. C'est-à-dire, ils n'ont pas l'habitude de payer autant de jeunes pour travailler pour eux. Ils ont l'habitude de faire leur truc eux-mêmes. Donc, ça change un peu de la façon dont on voulait. C'est pour ça nous, au niveau de la commission, on a emmené ces jeunes sur nos plots à nous pour les former. C'est-à-dire, les 10 qui sont déjà là, ils travaillent actuellement sur trois plots : Citronnelle, Baie aux Huitres et Mangués. Donc, ils ont déjà... Après, on les entraîne surtout pour la production des semences où il y a un genre de *scarcity area*. Donc, ils ont déjà commencé à demander du terrain pour commencer à faire les semences d'ognons. Donc, je vois que l'initiative, l'opportunité qu'on donne à ces jeunes est en train de porter ses fruits.

Mr Félicité: Your first objective of the scheme is to increase the area of cultivation under staple crops. So, can I know from the Commissioner whether this has achieved right now?

Mr Payendee: The objective, Madam Chairperson, it does not have to be reached immediately. So, again, I said that these young people, the 10 young who are working already in the plots have already asked for more land to be able to produce seeds of onions, which means that definitely, it is attaining its objective.

Madam Chairperson: Respected Member Volbert.

Mr. Volbert: Yes, thank you, Madam Chairperson. Il y a des gens, cultivateurs qui produisent mais ils n'ont pas leur permis ni leur bail agricole. Ils sont des grands travailleurs. Est-ce qu'il y a une possibilité que ces gens-là tombent sous ces critères-là ?

Mr Payendee: Madam Chairperson, on a fait comme j'avais mentionné dans ma réponse, on a lancé un '*expression of interest*'. Donc, tous ceux qui sont intéressés, bien sûr, ils peuvent venir. Concernant les permis agricoles, bien sûr, il y a un protocole pour ça définitivement et moi, personnellement, j'ai emmené un papier au conseil qui a été approuvé

d'ailleurs par le Conseil exécutif où on a une façon pour les jeunes, c'est-à-dire de 18 à 30 ans. On leur donne une priorité par rapport à location des terres, des permis agricoles.

Mr Félicité: Can I know from the Commissioner the total amount that has been earmarked for this scheme?

Mr Payendee: Madam Chairperson, we earmarked about Rs 1 m.

Madam Chairperson: Next question!

TABLET LOAN SCHEME

(No. B/122) The Fifth Island Region Member (Mr Z. Félicité) asked the Commissioner for Education and Others whether, in regard to the Tablet Loan Scheme, as announced in the budget speech 2020/2021, she will inform the House on where matters stand as at date?

Mrs Gaspard Pierre Louis: Madam Chairperson, with respect to Question B/122, I would like to inform the House that following the period of confinement in Rodrigues from March 2020 to April 2020 and subsequent closing of schools, it was observed that many students were not able to follow online educational programmes due to lack of IT equipment and facilities at home level.

Subsequently, with a view to give a fair chance to all students in Rodrigues to enhance and supplement their learning as well as facilitate their research work, the Chief Commissioner in his Budget Speech of Financial Year 2020/2021 announced that the following measures will be implemented:

- (i) Development of a Tablet Loan Scheme at each college in Rodrigues so as to allow students from low income families to have access to a tablet on loan;
- (ii) Provision for a subsidy of 50% up to Rs 3,000 on procurement of Tablets for students of Grade 9 to 13 whose family income does not exceed Rs 10,000 per month; and
- (iii) Provision of Internet Education Pack (2 GB) on a monthly basis to Grade 13 students as from June 2020.

The modalities for the Tablet Loan Scheme were thus developed in collaboration with the Management of the Rodrigues Educational Development Company (REDCO) Ltd Colleges and Rodrigues College.

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Subsequently, it was proposed that a comprehensive survey be carried out to determine the number of students from Grade 7 to 13 whose family income does not exceed Rs 10,000 that will be eligible for the Tablet Loan Scheme.

Following the surveys carried out at the level of the secondary schools, it was found that more than 2,000 students may be eligible for the Tablet Loan Scheme.

With regard to the budgetary provision for the year 2020/2021, we thus decided to implement the project for the Grade 10 students for all secondary schools whose responsible parties are beneficiaries of social aid and or receive an assistance from the National Empowerment Foundation (NEF).

Madam Chairperson, I am informed that bids through the Request for Sealed Quotations method were launched on 15 December 2020 with closing date set for 11 January 2021. However, the bidding exercise was unsuccessful as the lowest offer received was far higher than the estimated costs.

Subsequently, bids for the supply, delivery and commissioning of tablets were re-launched on 25 March 2021 with closing date set for 09 April. Thereafter, a contract was awarded on 21 May 2021 for the procurement of 200 tablets for the sum of Rs 2,099,900 inclusive of VAT. Tablets were supplied by the successful bidder on 21 June 2021.

The Tablet Loan Scheme was launched among Grade 10 students on 25 June 2021.

Madam, Chairperson, the modalities for the implementation of the Tablet Loan Scheme are as follows: -

- (i) The responsible parties will have to apply for the Tablet Loan Scheme at the level of their ward's school and submit documentary evidence;
- (ii) The schools will collect all application forms and carry out a first screening exercise prior to forwarding applications to the Commission;
- (iii) A second screening exercise will be done at the level of Commission to finalise the list of beneficiaries;
- (iv) The schools will have to collect tablets at the level of the Commission and distribute same to all eligible students; and
- (v) Responsible parties will have to sign an undertaking to ensure the safekeeping and utilisation of tablet.

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Madam Chairperson, the possibility that the Tablet Loan Scheme be extended during this financial year to all grades that is, Grade 7 to Grade 9 and students of Grade 11 to 13 whose responsible party are in receipt of social aid and/or assistance from the National Empowerment Foundation (NEF) is being looked into.

I am informed that meanwhile, Request for Sealed Quotations for the supply, delivery, and commissioning of 350 additional tablets were launched on 17 August 2021 with closing date set for 03 September 2021. The bids are at evaluation stage to date.

Mr Félicité: So, can I ask the Commissioner in the budget speech, it was said that *on va donner priorité aux élèves de grade 9 à 13*. Now in your answer, you say that it is from Grade 7 to Grade 13. Can you explain why this has changed?

Mrs Gaspard Pierre Louis: In fact, Madam Chairperson, as I just said in the answer, we started with Grade 10 but we have seen that with the tendency of in terms of the number of eligible students, we see that it is possible that with the budget provision for this financial year, we can extend to the whole grade of course based on the conditions I just mentioned, that is, beneficiary of social aid or NEF. So, we are planning to extend to more students to ensure that everybody has the necessary materials in case we have to what we call the *continuité pédagogique*.

Mr Félicité: So, up today, there is no student who is eligible of course, has not received any tablet. Is it not?

Madam Chairperson: Respected Member Félicité, you should put your question in an orderly manner. You address the Chair, please.

Mrs Gaspard Pierre Louis: Madam Chairperson, in fact, I mentioned that students of Grade 10 have already benefitted from the Tablet Loan Scheme and I also just gave the different procedures for the students to have their tablet. So, we bought 200 tablets and we have delivered 100 tablets by now and we are awaiting other documents from the colleges to deliver the other tablets and we are planning to procure 350 additional tablets.

Madam Chairperson: Next question!

LACK OF EDUCATORS

– GOVERNMENT PRIMARY SCHOOLS

(No. B/123) The Second Local Region Member of La Ferme (Mr. J. N. Volbert) asked the Commissioner for Education and Others whether, in regard to the lack of Educators

in the government primary schools in Rodrigues, she will, for the benefit of the House, state on the number of Trainee Educators actually being trained in Mauritius, providing the timeframe as to when they will be able to assume duty in Rodrigues together with the interim remedial actions taken at the level of her Commission to alleviate the shortage?

Mrs Gaspard Pierre Louis: Madam Chairperson, I wish to inform the House, that in line with the mission of the Regional Government to provide Holistic and Quality Education at Pre-primary, Primary and Secondary levels, the Commission for Education spared no effort to provide adequate Human Resources to the various institutions to ensure effective teaching and learning.

The yearly budget provisions cater for funded positions in the Grade of Trainee Primary School Educator to meet the requirements of Primary School Educators in Government Primary Schools based on forecast that takes into account construction of new schools or extension of existing one, retirement and promotion prospects in the Grade as well as forecasts in number of new entrants.

Madam Chairperson, I have been informed that since end 2011, following the different recruitment exercises by the Public Service Commission (PSC), 72 additional Human Resources have been recruited to join the Government Primary Schools in Rodrigues among which there are 50 Trainee Primary School Educators (General purpose), six Trainee Primary School Educators (*kreol Morisien*) and 16 Trainee Primary School Educators (Non-Core subjects).

I am informed that to date, all classes of the Government Primary School are manned. The teaching staff comprises of 133 Primary School Educators (General Purpose), 14 Supply Teachers (excluding HEP Supply Teachers) and four Deputy Head Masters.

Upon resumption of school in June 2021, there was a shortage of 23 School Educators in government primary schools that has occurred for the following main reasons: -

- (i) Temporary shortage for replacement of Primary School Educators on maternity leave; and
- (ii) the change in National Policy regarding admission to Grade 1 for Academic Year 2021/22 where there has been a considerable increase in the number of pupils for admission in Grade 1 from 420 in 2020 to 623 in academic year 2022 which has caused an increase in the number of classes for Grade 1 in some

schools and subsequently, an increase in the requirement for Primary School Educators.

Madam Chairperson, I wish to inform the House that presently, there are 18 Trainee Educators – that is, 15 Trainee Educators (Non-Core Subjects) and three Trainee Educators for *Kreol Morisien* who are on training in Mauritius.

The three Trainee Primary School Educators - *Kreol Morisien* will complete their training programme in December 2021. And the 15 Trainee Primary School Educators (Non-Core subjects) will complete their training in March 2023.

There is also a batch of 10 candidates who were enlisted as Trainee Primary School Educators (Non-Core Subjects) in August 2021. Five of them have assumed duty on 04 August 2021. Three others assumed duty on 13 September 2021. Two declined the offer. Another two candidates have been offered employment as from 10 September 2021 to replace the two candidates who declined the offers.

Madam Chairperson, I am also informed that 41 additional posts of Trainee Primary School Educator-General Purpose and seven additional posts of Trainee Primary School Educator – (*Kreol Morisien*) have already been advertised and awaiting interview. It is expected that the delegation of the Public Service Commission (PSC) will proceed to Rodrigues for interview upon resumption of flights.

Madam Chairperson, in view to palliate the shortage of Primary School Educators in government schools, 24 Supply Teachers were posted in the different Government Primary Schools in Rodrigues out of which 14 have been posted for teaching of General Purpose and 10 for teaching of Non-Core subjects.

I also wish to inform the House that the Supply Teachers have been provided with necessary training to equip them with necessary knowledge and tools to deliver their works effectively.

The training has been carried out by the Inspectorate Cadre of the Commission for Education and by the academics from the MIE using the online mode.

Madam Chairperson, I wish to inform the House that in view of ensuring that we do not have any shortage again, we have made a request to the Ministry for Education and the MIE so that the training can be conducted in Rodrigues for the new recruits on a blended note, that is online and face-to-face by the Inspectorate Cadre, by the local pool of the lecturers recently

recruited by the MIE and by the resource persons from the MIE itself. We are also contemplating to request that the 15 Trainee Primary School Educators actually on training and who would normally complete their programme in March 2023 that they can come back to Rodrigues and complete their training in Rodrigues itself.

Madam Chairperson, may I share with you the very important fact that actually on the grand total of 145 classes of all the government schools, only 22 have a class population of 24 to 28 students. This is in line with the vision of the Chief Commissioner to reduce the class size to a maximum of 20 students to ensure that optimal learning takes place in the class as the teacher has much time to devote individual attention to the students and this is also another reason why they have necessitated additional teachers.

Madam Chairperson: Respected Member Volbert.

Mr. Volbert: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. *D'après la réponse de la commissaire*, as at June 2021, there was a lack of 23, I think 24 Educators. There is a lack of 24 Educators. Can I know if as at date, if the said number of educators still needed to complete the lack?

Mrs Gaspard Pierre Louis: Madam Chairperson, I would like to point out again that though we had the shortage of teachers, no classes have been left unattended and with the recruitment of the Supply Teachers, so, we have been able to ensure that there is no shortage at now.

Mr Volbert: Will the number of Trainee Educators actually undergoing courses in Mauritius, will this number be sufficient to overcome the shortage of staff in all government primary schools?

Mrs Gaspard Pierre Louis: In fact, Madam Chairperson, as I mentioned in the main answer also, with the recruitment of the additional 41 trainees as per the advertisement already completed, we expect that we will not have any shortage again. Mostly, if we are planning to have all the training programme here, so, they will undergo their training under supervision and at the same time, delivering classes.

Mr Volbert: Gouverner, c'est prévoir. Alors, le gouvernement construit des écoles communautaires, pratiquement, plusieurs écoles communautaires ont été construites. Et qui dit construction des écoles communautaires dit qu'on a besoin des *Educators* après et cela pour compléter ces courts, l'*Educator*, ça prend trois ans pour compléter. Donc, est-ce que je peux savoir pourquoi le recrutement n'a pas été fait avant que les écoles soient construites ou pendant que les écoles soient en constructions ? Pourquoi ça n'a pas été fait ?

Mrs Gaspard Pierre Louis: Madame la présidente, je l'ai dit aussi dans ma réponse que le *shortage* qu'on a eu, c'est aussi par rapport aux gens qui sont... *temporary shortage* par rapport aux personnes qui ont eu des promotions ou bien par rapport à *short leave for maternity*. Donc, en général, je dois dire que déjà, c'est important de savoir que le recrutement se fait par rapport à la provision budgétaire, nombre de budget, nombre de postes qu'on a pu avoir. Mais en même temps c'est bon de noter aussi que durant les dernières années, on a eu quand même 17... on a eu cinq *Teachers Primary School Educators* qui ont eu le poste de *Headmaster* et on a eu 17 *Deputy* aussi, 17 *Primary School Educators* qui ont été promus au rang de *Deputy Headmaster*. Ce qui fait que cette promotion aussi ont fait qu'on a eu *shortage* au niveau de *teaching staff*. C'est pour cela que pour nous maintenant... C'est un projet d'ensemble.

L'année dernière, après que le Chef commissaire en a parlé pendant beaucoup de temps, la MIE a recruté une vingtaine de *local pool of lecturers* qui seront formés pour former les nouveaux recrues et pour la formation continue. Donc, c'est une stratégie d'ensemble maintenant qu'au lieu de les envoyer à Maurice, de les former par les Rodriguais qui connaissent le contexte, de faire venir les *academics* de Maurice pour avoir plus d'ouverture aussi et en même temps, assurer que les classes se font. Donc, pour nous, la question de *shortage* ne sera plus le cas mais pour répondre directement à votre question, c'est que *we recruit pending provision of funds* mais quand même, je dois dire que depuis... Donc, en 2011, il y a eu à la fin de l'année - 10 ; 2014 - il y a eu recrutement ; 2015 - il y a eu une trentaine ; 2018 - il y a eu des recrutements ; 2019 - il y a eu des recrutements ; 2020 pareil ; 2021 aussi et là, on attend 41 postes. Je pense que quand même, c'est une bonne prévision en prélude de l'ouverture de nouvelles écoles.

Madam Chairperson: Respected Member Agathe.

Mrs Agathe: Merci, Madame. Vu l'exigence de l'éducation, je voudrais demander à la commissaire si on peut voir que les *Supply Teachers newly recruited be not posted in upper classes*? Parce que pour qu'un enseignant puisse continuer l'enseignement en quatrième, en grade 4, il faut que cette personne ait pris connaissance de ce qui a été fait dans les trois petites classes parce qu'il y a des *Supply Teachers* qui ont été postés carrément *in the upper classes*?

Mrs Gaspard Pierre Louis: Madame la présidente, je dois vous avouer que je ne connais pas les détails de chaque école comment ça se passe mais la bonne nouvelle, c'est qu'après que les formations étaient délivrées par les inspecteurs locaux, par les cadres, les *academics* de la MIE et aussi, par rapport au feedback que nous avons eu des maitresses d'écoles, on a pu constater qu'ils apprécient le travail que font les *Supply Teachers*. Cependant,

c'est sûr aussi que ces *Supply Teachers* ne doivent pas être laissés *on their own*. Il y aura une supervision constante, un travail en équipe avec les autres staffs. Donc, je pense qu'au niveau de chaque école, il y a une organisation pour que les enfants aient les meilleures formations.

Madam Chairperson: Respected Member Perrine.

Mr Perrine: Merci, Madame la présidente. Madame la présidente, tous les ans, il y a des profs qui partent *on maternity leave*, à la retraite. Il y a des professeurs qui ont des promotions. Tous les ans, c'est comme ça. Cette affaire de recrutement, ça ne date pas d'hier. Aujourd'hui, nous avons l'impression que...

Madam Chairperson: This is question time. Your question, please.

Mr Perrine: Yes, I will put my question. La commission de l'éducation jusqu'à maintenant, n'a pas fait grand-chose concernant cette affaire de recrutement et nous avons des exemples. Pourquoi l'Assemblée régionale de Rodrigues ne copie pas sur la RCEA ou RCA concernant les recrutements des *Teachers*, la formation des *Teachers*? Aujourd'hui, la RCEA, c'est un exemple pour Rodrigues. Mais regardez ce que fait l'Assemblée régionale, c'est une catastrophe ! Pourquoi on ne copie pas ?

Mrs Gaspard Pierre Louis: Madame la présidente, peut-être je dois rappeler à la chambre que déjà pour que la RCEA recrute, le budget est donné par l'Assemblée régionale et les critères de recrutement sont les mêmes. Donc, je pense que probablement, ils ont une flexibilité quand même par rapport au recrutement mais les procédures sont les mêmes, les critères sont les mêmes. Donc, bien sûr, on a toujours travaillé en collaboration avec la RCEA, surtout on va aussi continuer la formation des éducateurs parce que quand même, nous reconnaissons la capacité de la directrice de RCEA. Donc, pour nous, cette collaboration continue et on n'a pas à être en compétition avec la RCEA, non plus à copier parce que c'est les mêmes procédures. Par contre, je dois le mentionner que d'après que les rencontres que nous avons eues avec les *Heads of Schools* et les recteurs aussi, cette année... pour quelle raison ? On ne sait pas. On a eu une recrudescence dans le nombre de personnes qui demande *maternity leave*. Donc, c'est le cas. C'est un fait. On parlait des *COVID babies*, des *confinement babies*. On ne sait pas mais c'est un fait. Donc, voilà ce que je peux dire par rapport à...

Madam Chairperson: Respected Member Volbert.

Mr. Volbert: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Est-il vrai qu'il y a des *Deputy Headmasters* qui ont été promus et le fait qu'il y a un manque de professeurs, d'*Educators* et ces *Deputy Headmasters*, ils enseignent et d'après mes informations, ils ne sont pas encore

nommés en permanence *in their posts*. Est-il vrai ? Et si oui, quelles sont les procédures pour les nommer en permanence à leurs postes ?

Mrs Gaspard Pierre Louis: Madame la présidente, je ne sais pas si le respecté membre fait référence à une personne en particulier mais je l'ai dit dans ma réponse qu'il y a quatre *Deputy Headmasters* qui sont en place pour assurer que les enfants ne perdent pas et je pense que c'est connu aussi que le *Deputy Headmasters*, ils ont pour tâche de continuer à travailler aussi. Ils n'ont pas à rester tout comme dans les collèges. Ils n'ont pas à rester que dans le bureau à faire l'administratif. Donc c'est aussi connu qu'ils sont appelés à délivrer des classes et avec les *Supply Teachers* que nous avons eus, donc, ces personnes-là aussi, ils pourront former mais en même temps, ils pourront être *relieved* aussi au niveau des classes.

Madam Chairperson: Next question!

LAND ALLOCATED – HOTEL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

– 2007 TO DATE

(No. B/124) The Second Island Region Member (Mr J. L. R. Perrine) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to land allocated for hotel development projects in Rodrigues, from 2007 to date, he will state and table, for the benefit of the House, the status of each project as at date, indicating any action undertaken by his Commission for any non-compliance to the lease conditions?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Madam Chairperson, once again with your permission, I would like to answer this question.

Madam Chairperson: Yes, please, proceed.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Madam Chairperson, with regard to land allocated for hotel development projects in Rodrigues from 2007 to date, I am informed that eight leases were issued in that respect. Out of the eight leases issued, seven have been cancelled by the Commission for Land for non-compliance to the lease conditions. One has applied for an extension in development period and the request is being processed for a decision.

Madam Chairperson, moreover, I wish to point out that prior to February 2012, some five leases were issued. However, same were subsequently cancelled for failure to comply with the lease conditions.

Madam Chairperson, I am informed that as per available records, the leases were cancelled as per Article 15 due to failure to erect the building within the specified period, namely: -

- (i) either 18 months after signature of lease to start the project; and
- (ii) or 36 months after signature of lease agreement for completion of projects.

I am hereby tabling the requested information.

Madam Chairperson: Yes, respected Member Perrine.

Mr Perrine: Madame la présidente, j'aimerais en attendant que je reçois les documents concernant les données, j'aimerais demander au Chef Commissaire adjoint qui remplace le Chef commissaire aujourd'hui, concernant ces huit projets qui ont été alloués depuis 2007 à ce jour. Est-ce qu'il y a parmi ces projets-là, des projets qui sont en cours ? On attend les jugements, on attend des affaires légales. Est-ce qu'il y a des projets parmi qui sont en cours, poursuites au niveau de l'Assemblée ?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Yes, Madam Chairperson, normally, whenever the Regional Government is going to proceed for the cancellation of lease, the applicant or the beneficiary is informed and there are cases that there has been Court issues and normally, the cancellation of lease is not done until there is the final judgement of the Court issues relating to the case.

Mr Perrine: Yes, Madam Chairperson, est-ce que je peux demander au Chef commissaire adjoint concernant les différents terrains qui ont été...différents '*lease*' qui ont été *cancelled*, est-ce que ces terrains-là de facto ils reviennent à l'Assemblée régionale ou il y a toujours des terrains qui sont bloqués par des procédures légales?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: If it has been cancelled, it has been cancelled and if it is cancelled, it becomes the property of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly.

Madam Chairperson: Next question!

IMPLEMENTATION PROJECTS – WOMEN EMPOWERMENT/2012 TO DATE

(No. B/125) Mr J.L.R. Perrine (Second Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner for Women's Affairs and Others whether, in regard to the implementation of projects aimed at women empowerment at the level of her Commission, from 2012 to date, she will state and table on the number thereof, indicating each project status as at date?

Mrs Gaspard Pierre-Louis: Madam Chairperson, with respect to question B/125, I would like first of all to thank the respected Member for giving me the opportunity to elaborate on actions and measures taken by this Regional Government since 2012 to date for the empowerment of Women in Rodrigues.

As the House is aware, women in Rodrigues are reputed for playing a central role in supporting their households and communities, generating income and contributing to the socio economic development of the island. They have always been considered as resilient, determined, resourceful, versatile and facilitators of change in family life and society at large.

Their contribution in political, social and economic sectors which has helped to shape the new economic and social landscape in Rodrigues is undeniable. Since 2012 to date, this Regional Government has set women empowerment among one of its main priorities of its agenda. There is a strong commitment and eagerness to take the right actions to ensure equitable and full participation of women so as to enable them to contribute fully in all areas of development in Rodrigues.

Such commitment is driven by pledges, such as, the Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the 1995 Beijing Platform of Action, the 1997 SADC Declaration on Gender and its 1998 Addendum on the Prevention and Eradication of Violence against women and children among others. The commitment is also aligned with Goal 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), that is, “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”. As such, no effort has been spared to come up with measures and actions to empower women in Rodrigues and at the same time eliminate inequalities between men and women. The main focus has been on the following five axes of empowerment:

- (i) Development of Capacity Building Programmes for Women;
- (ii) Entrepreneurship and Women Empowerment;
- (iii) Facilitating the implementation of Income Generating Project;
- (iv) Organisation of Health and Wellness Activities for women; and
- (v) Providing the right platform for women business and talents.

Regarding the Capacity Building Programmes, we have among others initiated training programmes for leadership levels, Leadership courses, Entrepreneurship Development Skills, Literacy in Information and Communication Technology. We have initiated courses for Basic Trade Skills as dressmaking, embroidery, basketry, cookery and so on. And, we have also

collaborated with local, national and foreign training institutions so that we can give the best to our women. We also recently launched the Girls and Women Leadership Hub on the occasion of the 08 March 2021 in the context of the International Women's Day.

The Hub aims at promoting collaboration and networking among women in Rodrigues. The Hub targets all women at all spheres of society namely women in informal labour, private and public sectors, women entrepreneurs, women professionals, women in politics and unemployed women. We firmly believe that Capacity Building Programmes have been the key for empowering women with knowledge, skills and self-confidence required to enable them to participate fully in the development of the island.

With regard to Entrepreneurship and Women Empowerment in Rodrigues, we have invested a lot in terms of assistance, such as, the Booster Grant Scheme to help them to boost their businesses. We have introduced the Technology Acquisition and Modernisation Scheme for those willing to have new technologies in their SMEs. We have initiated the project for the Freight Rebate and Subsidy Scheme for import and for export. We have elaborated the Project Write Up Scheme, we have seen that according to the data many women have benefitted. We have elaborated the Family Farm Project. Recently, on TV I was proud to see how the women are enjoying such projects. We have also invested in Income Generating Projects for women. As we know that access to finance is one of the main hindrance for women entrepreneurs to start their activities and as I mentioned in the introduction of this answer, we have also invested a lot in Health and Wellness Activities for Women. Everyone will remember the different activities: the Rodrigues Women Sports Day (a very popular one); we have aerobics courses for women in the different centres; and we have also organised the Jeux des Femmes de l'Océan Indien, where we gave the opportunity to women in Rodrigues to meet and to network with women in Mauritius and to other parts of the Indian Ocean. We have also provided the platform for women businesses and talents with other empowerment activities. And here, I am making reference to the 'Tournée Rodriguaise', to the different participation of women at national and international level, the Anuga Fair, the Sailex in 2013. I remember also we sent few women entrepreneurs in France for different training programmes. And, of course, Madam Chairperson, it is good to note that women empowerment and gender equality has not been only the prerogative of the Commission responsible for Women Affairs and Gender Equality but it is the concern and responsibility of each and every one to ensure the sustainable development of the island. That is why in all the different recruitments that we have been doing

at the level of the RRA we always ensure that we have a fair share in terms of women access to job.

It is also important to note that because we believed in the capacity of women because we believe that women should have the opportunity as well as men to participate at a high level that is why in 2016, the Chief Commissioner brought the amendments for the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act, so that we can ensure that more women have accessed to the different participation at political level mostly to ensure that there is a fair representativeness of women in the Assembly.

Madam Chairperson, though there have been major improvements in terms of women empowerment, much still need to be done to advance gender equality and enhance capacity building of women so as to ensure the full participation of women in the economic, social and political development of Rodrigues. We must all lead way and adopt a gender sensitive approach across all our actions and programmes so that Rodrigues can accelerate its progress towards sustainable development.

Madam Chairperson, the list of projects implemented for the empowerment of women in Rodrigues for years 2012 to date and their status thereof is being compiled and will be tabled in due course.

Mr Perrine: Madam Chairperson, merci. Je constate que la commissaire a fait un travail excellent. Depuis 2012 à ce jour, beaucoup de travail a été fait, abattu par elle. Mais certes, nous constatons que malheureusement, les résultats parlent d'elles-mêmes. Je vois qu'elle a aussi fait mention du Goal 5 –Sustainable Development, c'est une très bonne chose. Elle a parlé de développement, entrepreneurship, facilité, les organisations, *providing platform for business, etc.* Mais qu'en-est-il de ces projets qui ont été érigés, moi j'appelle ça des éléphants blancs. Je parle de Montagne Croupier, première chose.

Madam Chairperson: Your question, please.

Mr Perrine: *Yes, my question.* Pourquoi Montagne Croupier n'a pas fonctionnée ? Pourquoi l'usine de Gravieres n'a pas fonctionnée ? Pourquoi l'usine des ourites à St. Gabriel n'a fonctionnée ? Pourquoi Le Limon D'Or n'a pas fonctionné ? Pourquoi le restaurant Mont Limon n'a pas fonctionné à ce jour ? Est-ce que, Madame, peut nous dire pourquoi pendant tous ces dix ans, elle n'a pas cru bon de faire en sorte que ces entreprises qu'elle s'était forcé de mettre en place ne fonctionnent pas aujourd'hui ?

Mrs Gaspard Pierre-Louis: Madame la présidente, je l'ai dit déjà, on a fait beaucoup de chose et moi, je suis très, très fière. J'ai eu l'occasion récemment d'avoir un forum avec les

femmes où on donner encore de l'aide au association féminine pour qu'il continue à aller plus loin. Je suis contente qu'au sein du gouvernement avec le Chef commissaire et les collègues, nous avons joués ce rôle de facilitateur, nous avons aidé ces personnes à mettre leurs projets en place. Aujourd'hui, c'est vrai, il y a des projets qui marchent bien mieux, il y en a qui marche moins, il y en a qui nécessite encore plus de *push*. Mais, Madame la présidente, je disais aux femmes aussi récemment que dans le cadre de ce processus de *Gender Empowerment, Women Empowerment* chacun a son rôle. La commission, le gouvernement a le rôle de facilitateur et les femmes doivent eux aussi s'engager à faire marcher des projets. Si c'est vrai que... par exemple, à Mont Limon, on a vu que ces dames elles n'ont pas pu gérer le projet, on leur a pas mis de côté quand même, on leur a donné la chance, c'est un bâtiment du gouvernement. On a repris dans le dialogue avec eux. Aujourd'hui, on peut mettre cette établissement, ce bâtiment a la porter d'autre personne qui veulent s'engager. Mais on n'a pas pour autant abandonner ces femmes. Et, ces femmes qui ne travaillent en groupe ne veulent nécessairement veut dire qu'elle ne travaille pas, qu'elle ne fonctionne pas. Elle continue à fonctionner. On va continuer à donner du support à ceux qui veulent. Mais pour moi je suis satisfaite que mon rôle de facilitateur je l'ai joué à plein et aujourd'hui on donne la chance à ces femmes d'aller plus loin.

Madam Chairperson: Question time is over.

STATEMENT BY COMMISSIONERS

Madam Chairperson: The Commissioner for Women Affairs and Others.

CAMPAGNE DE VACCINATION – COVID-19/RODRIGUES

Mr Roussety: Madame la présidente, permettez-moi de faire cette déclaration pour informer la Chambre sur l'évolution de notre campagne de vaccination contre la COVID-19 à Rodrigues.

La campagne a été démarrée pendant le mois de février de cette année et fut lancée par ma commission conjointement avec le ministère de la Santé et du Bien-Etre. La vaccination est une de notre stratégie prioritaire pour combattre la pandémie de COVID-19 en offrant une meilleure immunité collective à la population, surtout aux personnes qui sont plus à risques.

Au début, la campagne fut focalisée sur les *frontliners* qui sont plus vulnérables à être contaminés en cas de l'introduction du virus chez nous. Heureusement, à ce jour tel n'est pas encore le cas car Rodrigues est toujours COVID Free.

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Après les *frontliners*, au début du mois de mars de cette année, nous avons procédé avec la vaccination des personnes âgées de plus de 60 ans ainsi que les personnes qui ont un comorbidité sévère.

Vers la mi-avril, notre campagne de vaccination fut ouverte au grand public et décentralisée vers les centres de santé communautaires et ensuite, vers les centres communautaires à travers Rodrigues.

A partir de demain, ma commission procédera avec la vaccination des personnes vulnérables qui bénéficient d'une visite médicale à domicile par la commission de la Sécurité Sociale. Quatre équipes médicales sont déjà constituées et sillonneront les différentes régions de l'île.

De février de cette année à ce jour, nous avons reçu plus de 44,000 doses de vaccins comme suit :

- AstraZeneca: 5,410
- Covaxin: 2,030
- Sinopharm: 33,840
- Johnson and Johnson: 3,500.

Nous avons pu administrer la première dose de vaccin à 22,986 personnes qui représentent 76.5% de la population adulte, âgée de plus de 18 ans soit 52% de la population. A ce jour 18,196 personnes ont déjà été complètement vaccinées. Ce chiffre représente 60.6% de la population adulte.

Si au début de la campagne il y eut une réticence des personnes pour se faire vaccinées, aujourd'hui tel n'est plus le cas car, grâce à nos stratégies de communication et de sensibilisation, il y a actuellement un engouement de la part de la population pour se faire vaccinée, à tel point qu'à ce jour, notre stock de vaccin de Sinopharm a été épuisé.

(Interruptions)

Madam Chairperson: Order!

Mr Roussety: Malheureusement, le Dornier n'a pas pu faire le déplacement à temps la semaine dernière pour nous transporter les 5,000 doses additionnelles de Sinopharm qu'on a reçu du ministère de la Santé et du Bien Etre. Les 5,000 doses additionnelles arriveront à Rodrigues demain par Le Dornier. Ce jeudi, c'est-à-dire, après demain, nous poursuivront notre campagne de vaccination avec Sinopharm. Entretemps, nous avons toujours un stock de 2,400

doses de Johnson and Johnson qui est à la disposition de ceux qui veulent se faire vacciner avec ce vaccin, y compris des personnes vulnérables.

Nous pensons pouvoir atteindre l'immunité collective de la population d'ici fin de ce mois de septembre ou début d'octobre.

Je profite de cette occasion pour faire un appel pressant à tous ceux qui ne sont pas encore vaccinés et ceux aussi du côté de l'opposition pour se faire vacciner et de montrer leur intérêt et de se rendre dans les différents centres de vaccination pour se faire vacciner. Cela est très important afin d'offrir une meilleure protection, surtout à vos proches qui sont vulnérables. Bien sûr avec la vaccination, il faut toujours pratiquer les gestes barrières.

Je remercie tous ceux qui collaborent avec nous, sans oublier le gouvernement central et le ministère de la Santé et du Bien Etre. Madame la présidente, je vous remercie pour votre attention.

Madam Chairperson: The Commissioner for Women Affairs and Others.

Mrs Gaspard Pierre-Louis: Madam Chairperson, allow me to have a short statement regarding the resumption of schools yesterday and as the House is aware, the COVID-19 Restriction of Access to Specified Institutions, Places and Premises Regulations 2021 has been amended to be applicable to the island of Rodrigues as from 13 September 2021. The Regulations make provision for the purpose of preventing a spread of COVID-19 during the quarantine period that no person shall have access to educational institutions unless he produces his COVID-19 vaccination card certifying that he has been vaccinated with a COVID-19 vaccine and in case he has not been vaccinated with COVID-19 vaccine, a PCR test result slip certifying a negative result dating back not more than seven days from the date of the PCR test was undertaken.

I wish to inform the House that, as for preparedness for school resumption on 13 September 2021, in the context of the new sanitary measures, meetings have been organised with Heads of educational institutions of pre-primary, primary and secondary sector as well as SENS schools in view of firstly accessing the preparedness of schools and also to ensure that educational institutions undertake premedial measures, if any, on time. I personally chaired some of the meetings organised at the level of the Commission for Education regarding sanitary measures at schools particularly concerning availability of water and the application of *geste* barriers in schools. I also co-chaired a meeting with my colleague, the Deputy Chief Commissioner, responsible for Water Resources and Transport on Monday 30 August 2021

with officers of the NTA and responsible officers of educational institutions to come up with ways and means to improve transport facilities for students and water supply in schools. A follow-up meeting is scheduled for Thursday 16 September with the National Transport Authority to finalise transport arrangements following observations made by the NTA upon resumption of classes from period 13 to 15 September 2021.

Madam Chairperson, with regard to vaccination of staff of educational institutions as well as students of 18 years and over, those concerned have been sensitised and encouraged to be vaccinated via the media and through their respective heads of schools and dedicated vaccination sessions were organised on 28 and 29 August 2021.

Madam Chairperson, based on information submitted by the different educational institutions, the latest statistics on vaccination of staff for educational institutions are as follows:

- Pre-primary schools - 95%
- Primary schools and SENS schools - 95%
- REDCO colleges - 95%
- MITD - 96%

It has also been reported that no incidence occurred on school resumption yesterday. All schools have put in place a system to control access to the school premises. The educational institutions have been instructed to strictly abide to the Regulations on restricted access and to allow access only to vaccinated staff and visitors. These concern also students of 18 years and more. Those who are not yet vaccinated have to produce a valid PCR negative test result.

Regarding the established guidelines for sanitary measures in schools, meetings were organised at the level of the Commission for Education with head of schools before resumption of schools to assess the preparedness of schools in line with the guidelines and also to refresh the heads of institutions on the guidelines.

The meeting was complimented by an information session by the Commission for Health on Friday 10 September at the Leisure Centre, Mon Plaisir with all Headmasters and Deputy Headmasters of primary schools, primary schools' inspectors, rectors of colleges and manager of pre-primary schools and manager of the special needs school to sensitise them on sanitary measures before resumption of schools.

A video conference meeting was also organised with the Director, Health and Wellness of the Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology on Thursday 09

September 2021. The aim of the meeting was to give the opportunity to the heads of schools to request for clarifications on any query they may have regarding the guidelines on sanitary measures in schools. During the video conference session, the Director, Health and Wellness has also seized the opportunity to talk on the importance of *geste barrière*, such as, hand washing, sanitizing and wearing of mask and how the respect *geste barrière* by all can effectively reduce COVID-19 transmission. And, schools have been requested to train for the coming up of borders and to continue to improve and to address any shortcomings. We also seized the opportunity to obtain from the Director, Health and Wellness of the Ministry of Education, the experience of Mauritius, how they are handling the matters at the level of different schools. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

(Applause)

Madam Chairperson: Commissioner for Sports and Others.

**PARTICIPATION/ATHLETES RODRIGUAIS - JEUX OLYMPIQUE ET
PARALYMPIQUE DE TOKYO/JAPON**

Mrs Edouard-Ravina: *Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Je vais faire deux petits statements.*

Madame la présidente, c'est avec un sentiment d'extrême fierté que je m'adresse à cet auguste Assemblée aujourd'hui pour vous faire part de la reconnaissance de l'Assemblée régionale et du peuple de Rodrigues après la participation de nos athlètes, Mervin Clair et Eddy Capdor aux Jeux Olympique et Paralympique respectivement.

Madame la présidente, en effet, Mervin Clair a fait un parcours exceptionnel en quête d'une médaille pour ces Jeux, en dominant ces adversaires en seizième et huitième de final. Il a malheureusement chuté en quart de final face à un adversaire très coriace. Il est à noter que Mervin Clair est à sa deuxième participation aux Jeux Olympique. Il a donc fait un bon significatif en avant comparé à la dernière édition où il avait atteint la huitième de final.

Madame la présidente, pour sa part, Eddy Capdor, handisportif, a participé à l'épreuve de saut en longueur le 4 septembre dernier au Jeux Paralympique et s'est classé neuvième. Il était accompagné par son Coach Fabrice Ramsamy. Il est à noter qu'Eddy Capdor était le seul athlète masculin de la Team Maurice. Il marque ainsi l'histoire du sport Rodriguais en devenant le premier handisportif à participer aux Jeux Paralympique.

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Madame la présidente, je tiens à informer la Chambre que Mervin Clair et Eddy Capdor ont bénéficié d'un soutien financier de Rs 40,000 chacun pour leur préparation à ces Jeux Olympique et Paralympique et le Coach Fabrice Ramsamy lui a bénéficié d'une somme de Rs 25,000 pour sa participation.

Madame la présidente, malgré que nos athlètes n'ont pu obtenir une médaille lors de ces jeux, nous sommes d'avis que leur participation à un Jeux Olympique est l'accomplissement d'un rêve tant convoité par des sportifs à travers le monde.

Nous pouvons dire, Madame la présidente, haut et fort que nos compatriotes ont dignement représenté Maurice, la République et l'île Rodrigues. C'est pourquoi, en signe de reconnaissance, l'Assemblée régionale remettra aux deux athlètes un *cash voucher* de Rs 25,000 et au Coach Fabrice Ramsamy une somme de Rs 10,000 pour l'effort fourni et pour avoir de nouveau mis notre île en avant.

Madame la présidente, je voudrais aussi témoigner ma reconnaissance et félicitation à l'arbitre Patrice Milazar, désormais arbitre internationale, qui a été sélectionné par la FIFA pour la première fois comme quatrième arbitre pour officier le match Ouganda/Mali, comptant pour les éliminatoires pour la Coupe du Monde 2022, au Qatar en Ouganda le 6 septembre dernier. Je suis sûre que les opportunités pour lui dans un avenir très proche vont s'ouvrir.

Madame la présidente, voir notre compatriote évoluer à un tel niveau démontre le potentiel et la capacité de nos arbitres à évoluer au niveau international, au niveau mondial. C'est pourquoi l'Assemblée régionale n'a pas hésité à financer et faciliter son déplacement sur Maurice y compris les frais de quarantaine de l'arbitre international Patrice Milazar. Madame la présidente, nous lui souhaitons de persévérer dans son parcours pour officier des grands matches à venir comme la phase finale de la Coupe du Monde pour son développement personnel et pour l'honneur de notre île. Ensemble, avançons sûrement vers la réalisation de faire de Rodrigues une île Sportive.

JOURNEE INTERNATIONALE DE LA JEUNESSE 2021

Madame la présidente, permettez-moi aussi d'informer la Chambre des activités qui ont été organisé par ma commission et ces partenaires dans le cadre de la Journée Internationale de la Jeunesse 2021.

Madame la présidente, comme vous le savez bien l'Assemblée Générale des Nations Unies en 1999 a commémorée chaque année le 12 aout la Journée Internationale de la Jeunesse afin d'attirer l'attention des communautés locales, nationales et internationales sur les

problématiques de la jeunesse et célébrer le potentiel des jeunes en tant que partenaires dans la société en général.

Madame la présidente, le thème de la Journée Internationale 2021 est « Transformer les systèmes alimentaires : Les innovations des jeunes pour la santé humaine et celle de notre planète ». Il souligne que le succès d'un tel effort ne sera pas atteint sans la participation active et significative des jeunes.

Madame la présidente, pour commémorer la Journée Internationale de la Jeunesse 2021 à Rodrigues, ma commission a organisé du 7 au 22 août 2021 trois activités majeurs et innovatrices qui ont touchés plus de 1,500 jeunes : -

1. Lancement de la Caravane de la Jeunesse le samedi 7 août dernier sur le Parking Autobus de Mont Lubin

Le Projet Caravane de la jeunesse est une initiative financée par la UNFPA et l'Assemblée régionale de Rodrigues. Les partenaires de cette caravane sont la communauté et les organisations non-gouvernementales qui travaillent avec ou pour les jeunes. Le projet vise à promouvoir la santé sexuelle et reproductive des jeunes et offrir un service de proximité qui vise à travailler de village en village pour sensibiliser et prévenir la grossesse précoce, prévenir l'abus des drogues et d'alcool entre autres et valoriser surtout le potentiel des jeunes et leurs capacités. Un bus a été acheté et customisé pour la sensibilisation des jeunes sur la santé sexuelle et reproductive, comme je l'ai dit et avec la Caravane je peux dire, que la proximité n'a plus de frein. Ce projet a coûté à l'Assemblée régionale et la UNFPA Rs 3,519,000.

2. La Grande Rencontre des Jeunes Parlementaires - Organisation de la Colloque de la Jeunesse le samedi 14 août 2021 au gymnase du collège de Le Chou

Le colloque de la Jeunesse a réuni 300 jeunes ayant fait l'expérience des parlements des jeunes pendant ces huit dernières années et ceci depuis 2013 à ce jour.

Ce colloque a été organisé afin de préparer la 10^{ème} Edition du parlement des Jeunes. Cette 9^{ème} édition du Parlement des Jeunes a été un franc succès en nous donnant des pistes solides pour mieux consolider la 10^{ème} Edition du Parlement et surtout les questions et les priorités mises en avant par les jeunes

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participants comprenaient les répercussions de la pandémie de COVID-19, notamment en ce qui concerne ses effets sur la santé humaine, sur la santé sociale, l'environnement et les systèmes alimentaires. Dans les recommandations, les jeunes participants ont souligné l'importance d'œuvrer pour des systèmes alimentaires durables et équitables, comme là ci-bien encourager l'Assemblée régionale pour atteindre la souveraineté alimentaire. Ils ont aussi souligné l'importance pour les jeunes et les autorités de prendre des décisions claires sur les choix alimentaires et pour la santé humaine. Les deux personnes ressources de cette colloque étaient le Père Wilbert Kalenga Wa Kalenga, et Miss Stenny Emilien, Lead Analyst au niveau de l'Assemblée régionale.

Madame la présidente, la dernière activité organisée dans le cadre de la Journée Internationale de la Jeunesse est l'organisation pour la première fois du Trail de la Jeunesse qui a eu lieu le dimanche 22 Août dernier. Faisant suite au récent cas de drogue dure à Rodrigues, le Trail de la Jeunesse avait comme slogan : '*Youth Trail against Drugs*'. Mais cette mesure était surtout annonçant depuis mars dernier par le Chef commissaire dans son discours budget 2021-2022, qui avait pour thème – 'Votre Avenir Vos Besoins Notre Priorité'.

Madame la présidente, le Trail de la Jeunesse fut organisé en collaboration avec Rod Trail Association et fut un succès énorme. Ce Trail de la Jeunesse mobilisé plus de 1,000 participants et officiels et le Trail de la Jeunesse fut médiatisé internationalement par le Sports Event Administration (ROAG) où l'évènement a été vu par 143,000 internautes.

Madame la présidente, la Journée International de la Jeunesse était un franc succès où nous avons vu la force des jeunes et je leurs souhaite bon courage et bonne chance dans leurs initiatives et leurs parcours. Merci pour votre attention.

(Applause)

ADJOURNMENT

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Madam Chairperson, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Tuesday 26 October 2021 at 10.30 a.m.

Mrs Gaspard Pierre-Louis rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Madam Chairperson: The House stands adjourned. Yes, respected Member, Von-Mally.

MATTER RAISED

SECTEUR TOURISTIQUE – ALTERNATIVE LIVELIHOOD PROGRAMME

Mr L. J. Von-Mally, GOSK (First Island Region Member): Merci, Madame la présidente. Mon intervention s'adresse au commissaire responsable du Tourisme. Madame la présidente, (je crois que vous êtes en train de remplacer le Chef commissaire), il n'est un secret pour personne que le secteur touristique a été durement impacté par la COVID-19, surtout dû au manque de vol entre Maurice et Rodrigues. Il y a eu l'*Arternative Livelihood Programme*, initiative fort louable qu'on appelle aussi travail alternatif. Mais malheureusement, tout ça s'est terminé vendredi dernier le 10 septembre. Mais, Madame la présidente, je crois que nous sommes tous d'accord que ce n'est pas demain la veille que l'industrie touristique va retrouver ces lustres d'antan. Il y a les travailleurs, il y a beaucoup de travailleur dans ce secteur qui ne reçoivent pas un salaire décent et les employeurs n'arrivent pas bien à payer leurs employées. Il y a beaucoup qui ont été licencié. Pour essayer de redémarrer ce secteur, redémarrer cette économie ce n'est pas facile. Ça va prendre du temps et ce n'est pas aussi dans les mois à venir que les touristes vont affluer vers Rodrigues. Donc, ce secteur a encore besoin d'aide. Donc, je demanderais au gouvernement régional d'essayer, pourquoi pas de mettre un budget spécial à la disposition de ces employés du secteur touristique en *extending*, étendre l'aide l'*Alternative Livelihood Programme* pour ne serais que jusqu'à décembre. Pourquoi ne pas les aider jusqu'à décembre pour leur permettre de joindre les deux bouts et de redémarrer petit à petit leurs entreprises. Sinon, ce sera la catastrophe. Donc, voilà j'espère que cela va être fait et cela va aider ces employés du secteur touristique. Je vous remercie, Madame la présidente.

Madam Chairperson: Deputy Chief Commissioner.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: The statement made by the respected Member Von-Mally, it is true to say that one of the sectors that is most affected by the COVID-19 is the tourism sector, that is true. It is true also that those who are engaged in that activity they are the most affected. That as you have said yourself, the Regional Government has taken bold step in order to curb or to at least minimize to the minimum, minimize the possibility of these employees getting fired or losing their job. Several actions have been taken in order to help the

industry. We have had the as regards to the lease of the tourism enterprises, we have exempted them from payment of same, especially the employees. We have given the opportunity for some tourism enterprise to shift to other activity, such as, to do entertainment so that they can keep up their job. But the most, as you have said, that the Regional Government has done is to set the Tourism Alternative Livelihood Scheme which have engaged some 482 employers in the tourism sector, not only we have taken those in the tourism sector on board but we have also taken those in the entrepreneurship sector on board. I think there were some 89 of those who were engaged in the entrepreneurial sector, who were working at the '*bazar*' of Port Mathurin, which have joined the Tourism Alternative Livelihood. I, personally, I had two meetings during the absence of the Chief Commissioner, when he was in Mauritius, first I had a meeting with those supervisors who are working with the Tourism Alternative Livelihood and I also had a meeting under the join working group which comprises of all the operators, the ATR and the related employers of the sector. We did agree that if the border is going to be opened by 01 October that Tourism Alternative Livelihood will stop by 10 September. It was agreeable in partnership with the supervisors.

As regards to the join working group, they did request for an extension. But when we looked at figures and statistics of last year, we did see that as regards to the coming in of tourism, we had up to more than 4,000 tourists after the second month of opening of border. In fact, the border between Mauritius and Rodrigues last year, it was opened I think in July. In July we had 1,900 something tourists coming from Mauritius. In August, we end up with almost 4,000 and in September, we almost end up with 6,000 which was almost the same norm as was in 2019. So, coping based on this statistic, we requested the employers to take on board their employees so that they can start preparing for the coming of the tourism. But we remain pending upon the opening of the border between Mauritius and Rodrigues as regards to 01 October. And, if ever, this is going to be extended then, of course, we are going to consider the extension and the taking on board of the employees as regards to the Tourism Alternative Livelihood Scheme. Thank you, very much.

Madam Chairperson: The Fourth Island Region Member.

PROBLEMES DE TRANSPORT– CITE PATATE/DANS COCO

Mr J. R. Augustin (Fourth Island Region Member): Merci, Madame la présidente. Mon intervention sera pour le commissaire du Transport. Etant donné qu'il y a la route qui a été ouverte a Cité Patate vers Dans Coco. Les habitants de Cité Patate ils font face à des problèmes de transport depuis belle lurette. Mais comme la route a été ouverte, est-ce que c'est

possible pour la commission du Transport de faire le trajet de transport de Cité Patate à Dans Coco et surtout, pour les étudiants, les écoliers de ce petit village ? Merci beaucoup.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: I think, I once told it this Assembly, Madam Chairperson, there was a survey which was carried out as regards to the road structure. I have the NTA, the Police and officers of my Commission. In fact, when they did the survey, they tried to look into the possibility of making a loop for buses coming from Rivière Coco up to Cité Patate and back. But as regards to the proceed, to proceed up to Dans Coco, the report was negative, I should say from the NTA and the Police. There is a problem as regards to the road, so we cannot allow buses especially, those carrying up to 59 passengers to go from Cité Patate to Dans Coco. Yes. Nevertheless, Madam Chairperson, if ever there is problem as regards to the students, I will liaise with the Commission for Education to ensure that these students who are leaving Cité Patate to Dans Coco Community School, they are availed of a transport. We did it for the students of Jardin Mamzelle, we can do it for the students of Dans Coco, if need be.

Madam Chairperson: Minority Leader.

DIFFICULTES/AIDES-SOIGNANTS – SECTEUR DE LA SANTE

Mr F. A. Grandcourt (Minority Leader): Merci, Madame la présidente. Donc, moi je vais m'adresser au commissaire de la Santé. Madame la présidente, je vais parler surtout pour les aides-soignants. On parle de la pandémie. Le commissaire vient de parler de ce *plan – response and contingency plan* pour tous ce qui concerne la pandémie. Donc, il y a une partie des fonctionnaires qu'il faut aussi prendre en considération, qui travaillent bien sûre dans le secteur de la Santé, tous ces personnels. Donc, alors ce sont des *frontliners* bien sûre mais ils font face à beaucoup de difficulté. Et, la question qu'on se pose, c'est que, si jamais demain il y a le COVID-19 à Rodrigues, comment est-ce qu'on va réagir ? Est-ce que ces gens-là dans ces institutions subir ce choc. C'est considéré à l'étranger comme un choc pour ces *frontliners* parce qu'ils vont vivre certainement des moments difficiles. Alors, comment est-ce que la commission se prépare à cela ? Qu'est-ce qui est mis en place par le commissaire, la commission pour palier à ce manque ? Prenant en considération que dans la santé on a que l'administration, Madame la présidente. Qu'est-ce qui va se passer concernant les gens qui sont, par exemple, *bed ridden* et les gens qui suivent des traitements ? Certainement, il y aura des répercussions. Qu'est-ce qui a été fait pour cela ? Comment est-ce qu'on va accompagner ces travailleurs-là, surtout en ce qui concerne le surmenage et le mal-être psychologique ? Peut-être qu'on ne réalise pas mais si ça perdure pendant des mois, est-ce qu'il y aura accès de staff

à l'hôpital ? Qu'advient-il des *shift-system* à l'hôpital ? Est-ce qu'on va faire venir les personnels ? Est-ce qu'on va, par exemple, chercher ceux qui sont à la retraite ? Comment est-ce qu'on va faire, Madame la présidente ? Donc, je tenais à dire aussi, parce que ces gens-là font face à beaucoup d'inquiétude. Comme nous, nous n'avons pas trop confiance dans système de la santé à Rodrigues, eux aussi ils se posent beaucoup de question. Et, j'aimerais simplement ici aujourd'hui attirer l'attention du commissaire concernant ces gens qui sont supposés nous sauver demain mais ces gens-là, ils doivent être vraiment pris en considération et ils doivent être vraiment encadrer pour pouvoir donner le meilleur d'eux-mêmes. Merci, Madame la présidente.

Madam Chairperson: The Commissioner for Health.

Mr S. P. Roussety (Commissioner for Health): Madame la présidente, moi je vais dire que tous les personnels de la santé ont suivis des cours concernant le COVID-19. Le Minority Leader parle des aides-soignantes et puis il saute du coq à l'âne pour aller vers les personnes alitées. Je ne comprends pas ce qu'il veut dire. Mais il y a aussi dans cette Assemblée, il ne faut pas être si pessimiste comme des oiseaux de mauvaises augures. Mais on fait tout à la commission de la Santé pour pouvoir sortir Rodrigues s'il y a un pétrin. Merci.

Madam Chairperson: Second Island Region Member.

PROBLEMES DE NOTRE SOCIETE

Mr J. L. R. Perrine (Second Island Region Member): Madame la présidente, merci de me donner l'occasion d'attirer l'attention de la Chambre sur les problèmes qui rongent notre société actuellement. Certains d'entre nous, nous ne nous rendons pas compte parce qu'il y a un mal-être dans notre pays actuellement. Il y a avec tous ces agissements qu'il y a eu ces derniers temps, ces problèmes qu'il y a eu ces derniers temps concernant nos jeunes, nos enfants, concernant parfois les grandes personnes qui sont impliquées. Donc, jusqu'à maintenant nous n'avons fait aucun commentaire là-dessus pour dire que nous sommes sensibles à ce qui se passe. Ce n'est pas parce que nous ne disons rien que nous ne pas au courant. Nous sommes au courant de beaucoup de chose mais nous avons aussi notre responsabilité au sein de cette opposition de donner, d'apporter notre soutien là où il faut pour pouvoir sortir Rodrigues de ce pétrin. L'image qu'on a actuellement de notre pays n'est pas très bonne à voir. Et, je pense que, là encore une fois, le gouvernement régional a raté une grande chance de réunir l'opposition et le gouvernement pour faire tête à tous ces problèmes que nous faisons face actuellement. Et, ce n'est pas fini, il y a encore des choses que nous

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attendons à voir parce que la société de Rodrigues est malade. Il y a aussi cette affaire d'ouverture de frontière mais il y a aussi la société elle-même qui n'est pas...

(Interruptions)

Madame la présidente, écoutez, regardez-moi ces bandes de personnes là-bas.

Madam Chairperson: Order!

Mr Perrine: Alors, juste pour dire que nous sommes en crise dans ce pays et il faut absolument que tous les Rodriguais comme un seul patriote se mette la tête ensemble pour pouvoir sortir notre île de ce grand problèmes qu'on est en train de faire face. Je dis bien, ce n'est pas joli, joli à voir, ce n'est pas joli, joli à entendre mais seulement le gouvernement a raté une occasion pour mettre ensemble et la société civile et l'opposition et le gouvernement ensemble, pour pouvoir faire un plan d'avenir pour notre île Rodrigues concernant ces problèmes que nous sommes en train de faire face.

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

Mr J. N. Volbert (Second Local Region member for La Ferme): Merci, Madame la présidente. Mon intervention sera adressée au commissaire de la Santé.

LE CANCER - ETUDE

De ce côté de la Chambre, plusieurs parmi nous à plusieurs reprises ont déjà soulevé la question sur le Cancer dans la population Rodriguaise. J'ai moi-même dans une question voulu savoir, cette année-ci même, le nombre de cas recenser par catégorie et également le nombre de décès liés à cette maladie. 323 cas de 2017 à 2020, 131 décès de 2017 à 2020. Un cas de plus est un cas de trop. Plusieurs fois, que ce soit à travers des questions parlementaires ou à l'ajournement des travaux ou encore dans les interventions du débat budgétaire, j'ai attiré l'attention sur cette maladie à mainte reprise depuis 2018. J'ai demandé à ce qu'une étude soit commanditée et jusqu'ici hélas, rien n'a été fait. On est tous ou presque tous indifférent jusqu'à ce qu'on soit directement concerné. Le Cancer tue aveuglement. Beaucoup de famille perd un proche. J'ai, moi-même perdu un proche la semaine dernière, emporté par ce monstre qui est le Cancer. J'ai pu assister, Madame la présidente, et constater comment cette maladie ronge une personne, voir la souffrance endurer, assister impuissamment sans pouvoir aider. Sans pouvoir aider - les patients en phase terminale sont laissés pour compte dans la salle d'admission. Je réitère ma demande pour qu'une étude soit faite. *You are in the driving seat,*

please help your people. Je vous en supplie aider votre peuple, mettez la somme qu'il faut dans les équipements afin de faire les dépistages précoces. La santé n'a pas de prix. Le Cancer n'épargne personne. Il n'y a pas d'âge ni couche sociale, on est tous à risque et concerner. Merci, Madame la présidente.

(Applause)

Madam Chairperson: Commissioner for Health.

Mr Roussety: Madame la présidente, le problème du Cancer est un problème mondial. Ça n'affecte pas seulement Rodrigues mais tout le monde entier souffre du Cancer. Je suis conscient que cette maladie tue et n'épargne personne avec cette maladie. Même mon père est mort du Cancer, je l'ai vu mourir. Mais pour ce qui est de l'étude, nous avons commandité une étude depuis mars de cette année, peut-être, avant même mais le problème c'est qu'avec la restriction des vols, l'Université de Maurice n'a pas pu venir pour commencer cette étude. Tout a été fait pour commencer l'étude, on va même recruter deux personnes pour commencer à faire des statistiques sur cette maladie. Mais moi je dis que nous aussi nous avons notre part de responsabilité à prendre concernant le Cancer. Il faut se faire dépister bien à l'avance. Mais je me demande combien d'homme... mais là je tire le chapeau les dames, elles vont à l'hôpital et elles dépistent leurs Cancer de sein prématurément. Mais les hommes, non. Ils attendent dernière heure pour aller à l'hôpital. Il y a beaucoup de test qu'on peut faire à l'hôpital concernant le Cancer, surtout le Cancer de prostate, le Cancer des colons. Mais l'étude a été déjà commandité mais là on attend toujours avec l'ouverture des vols pour que l'Université de Maurice vienne à Rodrigues pour commencer cette étude. Merci.

Madam Chairperson: I transmit my deepest condolences to Mr Volbert and the bereaved family. The Third Island Region Member.

Mrs M. T. Agathe (Third Island Region Member): Madame la présidente, je voudrais cette après-midi m'adresser au commissaire de la Sécurité Sociale qui est aussi responsable du bien-être des personnes âgées. Je ne sais pas si le commissaire est au courant, la dernière fois j'ai été à l'hôpital de Crève-Cœur, j'ai vu une vieille dame âgée de plus de 85 ans qui reçoit les visites médicales à domicile, qui a été obligé de venir à l'hôpital pour passer sur le *board* comme on dit. Si cette personne est alitée – non, la personne n'est pas alitée mais elle peut à peine marcher, elle reçoit les visites médicales à la maison. Comment se fait-il que cette même personne est appelée à venir passer le *board* ? Aussi, je voudrais attirer l'attention du commissaire sur le fait qu'il y a plusieurs personnes âgées qui reçoivent des visites à

domicile, il y en a même certaines qui sont alitées, dans certain cas il y a plus de deux mois qu'elles ne reçoivent plus de visite et il y a, à peu près un mois et demi une personne m'a appelée me disant qu'elle n'a plus de médicaments qu'elle souffre beaucoup. Et, pour ajouter à ça, peut-être ça c'est une erreur de la famille – quand on a été prendre ces médicaments à la pharmacie, on ne lui a pas rendu son papier de prescription. Donc, cette personne-là, ça fait presque deux mois, il y a deux mois je connais bien il y a d'autre encore qui ne reçoive pas de visite et non pas des médicaments. Et, ces personnes-là se soucier contre la pandémie. Je crois qu'on a annoncé ça ce matin à la radio. Mais demanderais aussi qu'il y a plus d'information. Parce qu'on sait quand on va faire ce vaccin, il faut attendre 30 minutes. Parce que la quantité de médecin que nous avons, que le protocole soit bien respecté et qu'il y a des ambulances aussi qui accompagnent ces médecins au cas où ces personnes recevant des visites à domicile ont des problèmes après la vaccination. Merci, Madame la présidente.

Madam Chairperson: Yes, Commissioner for Social Security and Others.

Mr L. D. Baptiste (Commissioner for Social Security & Others): Donc, juste pour vous rappeler qu'il y a quand même des protocoles, des procédures bien établies par rapport aux examens médicaux *according to the National Pensions Act*. Donc, c'est légal, c'est beaucoup plus que *simple policy*. Mais généralement, c'est normal seulement les *bedridden patients* sur conseil du médecin, si c'est bien écrit sur le *medical prescription* là, pour aller passer les examens médicaux. Donc, à ce moment-là ils vont avoir le *domiciliary board*. Mais si ce n'est pas bien spécifié sur le certificat médical donc définitivement la personne doit se rendre à l'hôpital ou à l'endroit indiquer. Néanmoins, si jamais il y a des cas, parce qu'entre temps il se pourrait que la personne tombe malade et n'arrive à marcher, contrairement aux années précédentes donc il faudra à ce moment-là informer la commission de la Sécurité Sociale et nous allons leur faire part des actions à prendre pour qu'ils puissent avoir cette visite pour le *board* médical à domicile. Aussi, c'est bien de rappeler que plus de 1,200 personnes âgées bénéficient du *Carer's Allowance*, ce qui fait que chaque année il y a beaucoup, beaucoup, beaucoup de *board* médical. Donc, si jamais il y a trois, quatre, cinq cas, ce n'est pas énorme. Par rapport maintenant pour ceux qui n'ont pas eu la visite des médecins à temps, si vous pouvez nous faire parvenir les noms. Parce que là, moi je ne saurais pas. A ce moment-là on va prendre des actions nécessaires. Donc, d'ordinaire quand même il y a pas mal de parent, de proche qui téléphone au sein de la commission pour informer de ça et à ce moment-là nous prenons les dispositions nécessaires. Merci.

Madam Chairperson: The House stands adjourned.

At 3.25 p.m., the Assembly was, on its rising adjourned to Tuesday 26 October 2021 at 10.30 a.m.

WRITTEN ANSWERS

IMPLEMENTATION – FAMILY DOCTOR PROJECT

(No. B/126) Mr J. R. Augustin (Fourth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner for Health and Others whether, whether, in regard to the implementation of the Family Doctor project, he will, for the benefit of the House, state where matters stand as at date, indicating the: -

- (a) number of community centres involved, their physical state and the facilities available thereat;
- (b) total staff requirement, detailing the financial implications therefor and highlighting any additional recruitment required for the purposes thereof;
- (c) total cost of the project together with a breakdown of cost estimates for the upgrading of community centres?

Reply: Madam Chairperson, in 2016 the Rodrigues Regional Assembly recruited a UNDP International Consultant, Dr. L.G. Martinez-Monterrey to carry out a study on how to introduce the Concept of Family Doctor in Rodrigues. In June 2016, the Consultant fielded his first mission to Rodrigues for a first survey and thereafter submitted his final recommendations in August 2016.

The project will start on a pilot basis in Six (06) Community Health Centres which have been renovated as follows:

- a) Port Sud Est - renovation completed ;
- b) Riviere Coco - renovation works completed at 90 %;
- c) Roche Bon Dieu - renovation completed ;
- d) Petit Gabriel - renovation completed;
- e) Cascade Jean Louis - tender procedure is ongoing;
- f) Oyster Bay - inaugurated on 13 August 2021.

Madam Chairperson, the Human Resource requirement to kick start the Project is as follows:

- Six (06) Doctors (1 for each Centre)

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- Six (06) Nursing officers (1 for each Centre)
- Six (06) Medical Social Worker (1 for each Centre)
- Six (06) Health Care Assistant (1 for each Centre)

These manpower will not involve major cost to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly at this stage as we are envisaging to make arrangement from existing pool of staff in these grades, except for allowances which will be defined at a later stage.

Unfortunately, my Commission need to focus all its efforts and resources on the prevailing context of the COVID-19 pandemy. We are targeting to kick start the project in January 2021.

Madam Chairperson, as regard to part (c), the cost of the infrastructural projects for the Family Doctor Scheme is as follows:

- Upgrading of Petit Gabriel: Rs 3,737,500
- Upgrading of Oyster Bay: Rs 13,568,919
- Upgrading of Roche Bon Dieu : Rs 3,400,000
- Upgrading of Port Sud Est: Rs 3,869,000
- Upgrading of Riviere Cocos: Rs 3,898,000
- Upgrading of Cascade Jean Louis: (Tender launched on 25.08.2021 and the closing date has been fixed on 28.09.2021)

OPEN DE RODRIGUES

(No. B/127) Mr J. N. Volbert (Second Local Region member for La Ferme) the Commissioner for Sports and Others whether she will state and table, for the benefit of the House, on the *Open de Rodrigues* scheduled for September/October 2021, specifying from which item vote of the approved 2021/2022 budget funds therefor have been earmarked?

Reply: Madam Chairperson, I wish to inform the House that the Open de Rodrigues competition is being organised for the first time by my Commission in collaboration with 25 Regional Sport community of elite sport persons represented by the Regional Sport committees in Rodrigues, from 24 September to 3 October 2021.

The competition is organised in the special context of the COVID-19 pandemic, whereby most competitions at national and international levels have been cancelled for an undetermined period.

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This has a direct impact on the preparation and the progress of our local athletes because they cannot set clear objectives for their training programmes. The competitions in which they normally participate in Mauritius are important targets to benchmark their performances and to improve accordingly.

Madam chairperson, as athletes and teams are training regularly without any competition in view, my Commission took the responsibility and challenge to organise a competitive local elite competition to inter-alia: -

1. keep our athletes motivated and prepared for any competition (including the Indian Ocean Island Games 2023 and the CJSOI in 2022 in Mauritius) which may be organised if the effects of the pandemic are mitigated;
2. consolidate the development of sports disciplines which have recently been revived and;
3. to improve the performance of our elite athletes and keep them focussed and motivated.
4. To keep the population of Rodrigues in a competition mode in this difficult time of international break due to the sanitary conditions of COVID-19 prevailing
5. To bring Competition at the home of ‘Rodriguan’
6. To empower the different regional committees and other stakeholders in sports by providing them with the opportunity to organise competition
7. To give the opportunity to our referees to officiate in a high-level competition locally
8. To sensitise the population about the worthy use of sports premises that has recently been constructed or renovated by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly
9. To give the opportunity to the athletes of Rodrigues to compete for their zone in an open competition
10. To give opportunity to our athletes to compete in a non-zone competition and to be detected by our sports committees and coaches
11. To develop such trait of character as Sportsmanship, Respect of others and Fair play among the population
12. To strengthen the sense of Patriotism in the population

Madam Chairperson, the competition will enlist the participation of around 1500 athletes aged 16 years (at the final level), over 300 officials and 150 coaches across twenty-five sport disciplines which have been categorized into open zone category and open non-zone

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as follows; Sports discipline under the open zone category include, football, volleyball, handball and basketball. Twenty-one disciplines are considered under the open non-zone category namely, Boxing, Judo, Wrestling, Cycling/VTT Kickboxing, Boxe Francaise, Swimming Archery Moto-cross Karate (Shotokan and Wadoryu) Taekwondo, Athletics, Petanque, Rugby, badminton, trail, handisport, weight lifting, tennis and Brazilian Jujitsu.

Madam Chairperson, the expenses for the competition will be met under four related budget items as follows: -

SN	BUDGET ITEM	ITEM
1.	Promotion of Sports Activities	8103-
2.	Indian Ocean Island Games	8103-
3.	Upgrading of Sports Ground	8103-
4.	Regionalisation of Sports	8103-

I am tabling the detailed budget item.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

LATEST EXAMINATION RESULTS – SCHOOL CERTIFICATE

(No. B/128) Mrs M. T. Agathe, PMSM (Third Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner for Education and Others whether, in regard to the latest examination results for the School Certificate, she will, for the benefit of the House, state:

- (a) a complete breakdown of the results;
- (b) the number of students who have been enrolled in Grade 12; and
- (c) study options made available to successful candidates with less than five credits?

Reply: Madam Chairperson, the results for Cambridge School Certificate for academic year 2021 was released on Thursday 12 August 2021 to candidates online. Out of the 785 candidates who were examined, 577 passed, representing an overall pass rate of 73.50% for Rodrigues as compared to 57% in 2019. An increase of 16.50% is noted compared to Cambridge School Certificate 2019. The percentage pass rate of girls compared to boys is 75.68% for girls and 70.67% for boys.

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The School Certificate result at April/May/June Examinations 2021 as submitted by the different secondary schools is as follows: -

	Examined	Passed
Ananias André – Le Chou College	209	175
Maréchal College	174	121
Mont Lubin College	77	66
Grande Montagne College	49	37
Terre Rouge College	44	13
La Ferme College	47	7
Songes College	34	8
Rodrigues College	151	150
Overall	789	577

All colleges have shown an increase in the Cambridge School Certificate pass rate. The Rodrigues College has scored the highest pass rate of 99.34%, followed by Mont Lubin College scoring the highest pass rate of 85.71% since the registration of the school. Grande Montagne College has also achieved the highest progress of the college with a pass rate of 75.51%; representing an increase of 45.66% as compared to the 2019 examinations.

The other REDCO colleges have also achieved an increase in their percentage pass rate as follows: -

- (i) Ananias André – Le Chou College, a pass rate of 83.3% as compared to 75.86% for the 2019 examinations;
- (ii) Maréchal College, a pass rate of 69.54% as compared to 43.86% for the 2019 examinations;
- (iii) Terre rouge College, a pass rate of 29.55% as compared to 13.33% in 2019; and
- (iv) La Ferme College, 14.89% as compared to 12.79% in 2019.

The new college at Songes which was registered in January 2020 has had its first cohort to attempt the Cambridge O Level Examinations in 2021 and has scored 23.53%.

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Madam Chairperson, out of 577 students who have passed the School Certificate (SC) examination 2021, I am informed that a total of 258 students have been enrolled in Grae 12 for this academic 2021/2022. It is to be noted that the eligibility criteria established by the Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology for the promotion in Grade 12 is the obtention of five credits. It has been reported by colleges that 320 students are repeating the School Certificate (SC) this year.

Madam Chairperson, with regard to part (c) of the question, for these students who have obtained less than five credits at the SC examination 2021, the Commission for Training has the following possibilities for post-secondary students willing to continue training locally.

- (i) A series of programmes offered by the MITD Le Chou, such as, Plumbing, Electrical Installation Works, Welding, Agriculture, Automotive Mechanics and Electronic, Wood Technology, Building Construction and Food Production and Restaurant Bar Service. From the programmes offered, 34 students who sat for the SC examination in 2021 have been offered a seat;
- (ii) Certificate in Tourism and Hospitality available for candidates possessing at least three (03) credits at Grade 11 by VATEL Hotel School. Successful candidates will eligible to continue with the Bachelor Degree;
- (iii) Brevet Professionnelle Agricole (BPA) offered by the Lycée Agricole of Saint Gabriel.

Madam Chairperson, I wish to inform the House that the Rodrigues Regional Assembly has established collaboration since years with different institutions in Mauritius in the context of post-secondary studies either in vocational, technical and academic fields in order to facilitate enrolment of Rodriguan students willing to continue further studies in Mauritius for their future career path.

The following institutions offered different training programmes for candidates with less than five credits and willing to pursue their studies in Mauritius: -

- (i) Fashion and Design institute;
- (ii) Lycée Polytechnics Sir Guy Forget (LPSGF) under the aegis of the MITD; eight (08) seats are reserved for Rodriguans candidates;

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- (iii) Other MITD Centres in Mauritius offering NC4 and above in fields not offered at MITD Le Chou, example, tourism, IT, Electronics. Students from Rodrigues have the possibilities to enrol on the programmes offered.
- (iv) Ecole Technique Saint Gabriel in Mauritius offering Brevet d'Etudes Professionnelle (BEP) in Welding, Maintenance Automobile, Mechanics and Electronics;
- (v) Polytechnics Mauritius Ltd.

Madam Chairperson, the Polytechnics Mauritius Ltd has opened a branch at Citron Donis Rodrigues and same will be operational as from October 2021 in Rodrigues. The institution will be offering the following training courses for candidates of at least three (03) credits at Grade II:-

- (a) Diploma in Leisure Management;
- (b) Diploma in Logistics;
- (c) Diploma in Cyber Security;
- (d) Diploma in Interactive and Digital Media.

The different training offers by the Polytechnics Mauritius Ltd in Rodrigues as from this October will provide training opportunity for some 125 students wishing to continue their studies in Rodrigues for these particular training course.

Madam Chairperson, my Commission also provides private coaching sessions for those students who are not satisfied with their SC results and are willing to sit for their SC examinations as a private candidate in view to improve their results.

As at date, for the coaching sessions for private candidates, 36 applications have been received for coaching sessions for GCE 'O' level and 13 applications have been received for GCE 'A' level.

The coaching sessions are expected to start on Monday 20 September 2020.

UPGRADE – RUBBISH DUMP/ROCHE BON DIEU

(No. B/129) Mrs M. T. Agathe, PMSM (Third Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner for Environment and Others whether he will inform the House on where matters stand as at date in regard to the upgrade of the rubbish dump at Roche Bon Dieu?

Reply: Madam Chairperson, a request was made to the Minister of Environment Honourable Ramano in December last year, for the Solid Waste Management Division of his Ministry to provide technical assistance in the elaboration of an action plan regarding solid waste management at the Roche Bon Dieu dumping site and for Rodrigues in general. In that context two experienced engineers of the Waste Management Division of the Ministry for Environment; were on mission in Rodrigues in February 2021.

A report was submitted to my office wherein the scope of works for the upgrading of the Roche Bon Dieu Dumping Site were proposed and includes the construction of an access road to allow scavenger lorries to reach on higher part of the dumping ground for better management of waste disposal and construction of a platform from there the scavenger lorries can tip their waste.

In addition, the reprofiling of the waste mass on the roadside for stability purposes and subsequently capping the waste mass with soil and grass planting/embellishment will be carried out; and the damaged wall will be reconstructed.

Madam Chairperson, a Works Order has been issued to the contractor Transinvest Construction Ltd for the construction of the access road and tipping platform to the tune of Rs 2,787,766.52 including of VAT. It is expected to be completed by next month.

RE-POSSESSION/SIX OUTER LAGOON FISHING VESSELS

(No. B/130) Mr J. R. Augustin (Fourth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner for Fisheries and Others whether, in regard to the re-possession of the six outer lagoon fishing vessels that were previously managed by six different operators under the promotion of the Outer Lagoon Scheme, he will, for the benefit of the House, state where matters stand as to date, indicating: -

- (a) the re-possession process and the reason therefor;
- (b) if a survey has been carried out and to table the outcome thereof; and
- (c) if all equipment/fishing equipment granted by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly for the operation thereof have also been re-possessioned?

Reply: Madam Chairperson, with the aim to boost the off-lagoon fishery development in Rodrigues, decision was taken to provide the six state owned out lagoon fishing boats to off-lagoon fishers. The six outer-lagoon fishing boats to off-lagoon fishers. The six outer-lagoon fishing boats were allocated to individual/company through an expression of interest. The

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agreements were signed between the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and each party, on 11 March 2015. The names of the beneficiaries of the six boats are: -

SN	Name of Beneficiary	Boat Name	Address
1	Mr J.M.C.	Maman Rouge	Camp du Roi
2	Mr E.C.	Dorade	Camp du Roi
3	Mr J.P.F.	Becune	Grand La Fouche Mangue
4	Mr C.R.	Vacoas	English Bay
5	Mr J.C.A.	Vivano	Hauteur Accacia
6	Mr L.G.R.	Sacré Chien	Fond la Digue

The Fisheries Research and Training Unit (FRTU) of the Commission was given the task to monitor the fishing activities of the boats and report to the Commission to make sure that the boats were used to their optimum.

Unfortunately, Madam Chairperson, it was noticed that out of the six outer-lagoon fishing boats, only one was regularly operating and the Rodrigues Regional Assembly decided to repossess the other five outer-lagoon fishing boats due to non-utilisation and non-performance.

Madam Chairperson, I wish to remind the House that as per paragraph 13.0 in the Agreement signed with the parties above, it is stipulated that:

The Rodrigues Regional Assembly will rescind this agreement if: -

- (a) The boat is not used for the purpose of off-lagoon fishing and I an efficient and profitable manner;
- (b) The overall performance of the company is poor; and
- (c) The company breaches one or more of the terms of this agreement.

Madam Chairperson, a Departmental Committee was set up on 02 April 2021 in a view to repossess the five state owned outer-lagoon fishing boats due to non-performance and non-utilisation. The Committee started procedures to repossess the five state owned outer-lagoon fishing boats as from 15 April 2021 and the exercise was completed on 19 April 2021.

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Madam Chairperson, as regards to part (c) of the question, I am informed that all equipment granted to the beneficiaries have been re-possessed.