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No. 07 of 2022

RODRIGUES

FIFTH REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENTARY

DEBATES

(HANSARD)

(UNREVISED)

TUESDAY 19 JULY 2022

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The Executive Council

(Formed by Mr Johnson Roussety, G.O.S.K.)

Mr Johnson Roussety, G.O.S.K.	Chief Commissioner, Commissioner responsible for Central Administration, Civil Aviation (Administration), Education (Administration), Legal Services, Marine Services (Administration), Registration, Statistics in respect of Rodrigues, State Lands, Town and Country Planning, Cooperatives, Handicraft, Industrial Development, Prisons & Reforms Institutions (Administration), Trade, Commerce and Licensing, Vocational Training, Civil Status, Customs and Excise (Administration), Judicial (Administration), Postal Services (Administration), Marine Parks, Water Resources
Mr Franceau Aubret Grandcourt	Deputy Chief Commissioner, Commissioner responsible for Public Infrastructure including Highways and Roads and Public Buildings and Utilities, Transport, Environment, Community Development, Housing
Mr Louis Ange Perrine	Commissioner responsible for Agriculture, Fisheries, Food Production, Forestry, Plant & Animal Quarantine
Mr Jean Nicolas Volbert	Commissioner responsible for Health (Administration), Social Security (Administration), Fire Services
Miss Marie Christiane Agathe	Commissioner responsible for Women's Affairs, Child Development, Family Welfare, Consumer Protection/Price Fixing
Mr Jean Alain Wong So	Commissioner responsible for Tourism, Employment, Labour and Industrial Relations, Information Technology & Telecommunications
Mr Joseph Varok Ravina	Commissioner responsible for Youth & Sports, Arts and Culture, Museums, Archives, Historical Sites and Buildings, Library Services

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PRINCIPAL OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS

Mr Chairperson - Leopold, Mr Joseph Christian

Deputy Chairperson - Tolbize, Mr Justar

Clerk - Legentil, Miss Marie Lyndia Yannick

Serjeant-at-Arms - Larose, Mr Georges Harold Banwell

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RODRIGUES

Fifth Regional Assembly

Debate No. 07 of 2022

Sitting of Tuesday 19 July 2022

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

The National Anthem was played

(Mr Chairperson in the Chair)

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- (i) PROTOCOL ON CONDUCT – SITTINGS & COMMITTEE MEETINGS/RODRIGUES REGIONAL ASSEMBLY & OTHER PARLIAMENTARY ACTIVITIES AMID THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**
- (ii) REVAMPED RODRIGUES YOUTH PARLIAMENT 2022**
- (iii) REPAIRS – DIGITAL RECORDING SYSTEM**

Mr Chairperson: Yes, Respected Members, I have a few announcements to make. First of all, with regard to the protocol of conduct of sittings and Committee Meetings of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and other parliamentary activities amid the COVID-19 pandemic pursuant to Standing Order 68 (3) of the Standing Orders and Rules of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly made on 03 August 2020 under the hand of the former Chairperson of this House, I wish to inform Members what in the light of the quarantine COVID-19 restrictions regulations 2022, published as Government Notice Number 155 in the legal supplement of the Government Gazette of Mauritius No. 94 of 30 June 2022, wearing of protective mask remains compulsory for every person accessing the Chamber. However, it is optional for any respected Member to wear a protective mask when he or she is giving the floor to take part in the proceedings of the Assembly. The wearing of protective mask is optional outside the Chamber. Respected Members, I am invited to stand governed accordingly.

Secondly, we have in our midst.... some youths who are here to observe our parliamentary democracy in action. These youths will go on to act as promoters among their peers of the revamped Youth Parliament which will be taking place in a few weeks' time. I rely on the collaboration of respected Members to inspire our guests with their irreproachable conduct for the maintenance of the dignity and decorum of this House.

Thirdly, I wish to further inform Members that the IT Department is still working with suppliers to replace the faulty hardware on our recording system. As respected Members already know, the COVID-19 pandemic has been bearing a strong incidence on accessibility to certain goods and services and our staffs are doing their utmost for the prompt resolution of the matter. I am therefore making a plea anew with the respected Members to kindly switch on their microphone each time they are giving leave to address the House and switch same off at the end of their intervention. I thank you.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Mr Chairperson: B/34, please. Member Tolbize?

EARTHMOVING WORKS – BAIE DU NORD

(No. B/34) The Second Island Region Member (Mr J. Tolbize) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the earthmoving works at Baie du Nord, he will state the nature and objectives thereof?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as you are aware, it is the policy of the Regional Government to grant residential sites on lease in favour of persons residing in Rodrigues who are neither owners of freehold land nor property in the Republic of Mauritius. A residential site lease is granted up to a maximum of 600m² where available.

In view of the prevailing conditions worldwide linked to the outbreak of COVID-19 and the 2022 Russo-Ukrainian War which altogether have resulted in sharply rising commodity prices, there is a need to encourage the local population to indulge in farming to reduce reliance on imported food and at the same time ensure food security.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, now is the right time to: *‘produire ce ki nou manzé, manz ce ki nou produire’*.

With a view to reduce food insecure households, improve livelihood and helping to mitigate high food price inflation, it has been decided to introduce a new concept of Residential cum Agricultural lease over a larger area.

It has further been decided to implement the project on a pilot basis at Baie du Nord. In that connection, earthmoving works are at present being undertaken at Baie du Nord to clear the sites accordingly.

The objective of the works is to create an access to potentially good agricultural land in Fond Baie du Nord. The land is lying bare and thus is economically not put to its best uses. The project also makes use of capital, that is, equipment which was formerly lying idle during weekends and public holidays.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, my Regional Government is determined to allocate agricultural land to those who meet the criteria for same and encourage local production and exchange in line with *Economie Sociale et Solidaire* (ESS) concept.

The same project will thereafter be extended to other parts of Rodrigues wherever land is available and the lessees are keen to engage in agriculture.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I wish to highlight that Baie du Nord itself where the earthmoving works are being carried out, used to be a demonstration plot where, for example, coconut seedlings used to be produced. From 1982 onwards, these agricultural plots have been neglected and abandoned. Mr Chairperson, Sir, the ultimate aim of the works at Baie du Nord is to create a number of residential farms where people who meet the criteria will be allocated a residential land and its agricultural farming land around. The objective is also to restore the valley, the watershed which originates upwards in *Dans Limon* uphill and where there is potential for water catchment.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I must underline that for this project, we are using in-house equipment and I wish to put on record the hard work and high motivation of our personnel there. I am planning to move more equipment there. There is an excavator D6 lying idle at Baie Topaze and which has been left there by the former Regional Government. The servicing company is claiming Rs 420,000 as repair cost which has not been paid and we are still tracing where the bills and certifications are. Soon, we project to have a ring road which will go around that valley in Baie du Nord and improve the life of the people willing to work and produce there. Thank you.

Mr Chairperson: So, we move to next question?

SILTATION OF LAGOON

(No. B/35) The Second Island Region Member (Mr J. Tolbize) asked the Commissioner for Fisheries and Others whether, in regard to the siltation of the lagoon, he will state what measures are being identified to ease navigation?

Mr Perrine: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, there are many natural navigational channels in the lagoon which sea users utilize to navigate. I am informed that with the movement of sand, many of these channels have been partly filled with sediments and consequently, obstruct throughout the channels during low tide.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, desiltation of boat passes has been a common practice in view to ease navigation in the lagoon. In our endeavor to facilitate navigation in the lagoon, a provision of Rs 10 m. has been made in Budget 2022/2023 for the desiltation of channels with the view to ease access by boats for navigation.

My Commission is presently identifying silted boat passes for the preparation of the necessary scope of works as well as their specifications to enable further procedures for the desiltation of the identified passes.

An area has already been identified in the Western Region for desiltation namely:

- (i) Pointe Palmiste;
- (ii) Pointe Matourin; and
- (iii) Baie Lascars.

For the information of the House, I am tabling a list of sites which have been identified.

Mr. Chairperson Sir,

1. There are several reasons for the siltation of lagoon. Sea level rise, change in current pattern and erosion of the coastal areas may have a negative impact on the lagoon areas.
2. Siltation of the lagoon may also be due to removal of sand from a nearby location, thus creating a change in current pattern and accumulation of sand in the channels.

An oceanographic survey of the lagoon in Rodrigues is recommended to study the current's speed and direction of current and bathymetry (depths profile) in the lagoon. Such survey could be undertaken by the Mauritius Oceanography Institute (MOI) which has the necessary expertise and experience.

M. le président, concernant l'invasion du lagon, je dois dire que depuis 2015/2016, il y a eu un accord de coopération avec le *Mauritius Oceanography Institute (MOI)* mais malheureusement, rien n'a été fait jusqu'à maintenant. A ce qu'il paraît, il y avait même eu l'idée, l'institut avait même eu l'idée d'ouvrir une branche à Rodrigues pour aider la population surtout, aider Rodrigues dans le secteur *marine conservation*. Mais maintenant, rien n'a été fait et il y a aussi eu un projet incluant le SEMPA justement pour voir l'impact des.... sur le lagon à Rodrigues. Mais malheureusement, jusqu'à présent, rien n'a été fait. En 2005/2006, une organisation locale avec l'aide de *Bangor and Wales University* a fait une étude pour savoir le niveau des sédiments du lagon à Rodrigues. Depuis 2005, rien n'a été fait pendant 10 ans pour faire suite à cette étude. J'ai été en contact directe avec le MOI et très bientôt, il y aura un expert qui va venir à Rodrigues pour faire une étude de l'état de nos lagons, l'invasion et préconiser des recommandations qu'on puisse faire. J'ai l'honneur de dire qu'il y a un patriote,

un Rodriguais qui a un PhD en *Marine Conservation*. C'est lui qui aura la tâche d'entreprendre. C'est important. Projet qui n'a pas été fait par l'ancien gouvernement. Merci.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to ask the Commissioner for Fisheries whether as regard to the scope of work that is under operation, whether the work will be done by machines or by men

Mr Perrine: M. le président, l'étude est en considération. Mais je dois dire pour l'information du membre, autrefois quand j'étais à l'administration, on donnait un contrat pour utiliser les pioches et aussi d'autres moyens mais avec la modernisation etcetera. Bien sûr, nous allons prendre en considération toutes les mesures pour ne pas être impactés sur l'écosystème. Et c'est pourquoi je dis qu'il faudrait que nous ayons les recommandations des experts pour préparer une étude. Mais pour les passes, pour les navigations, ça va être fait très vite mais concernant d'autres projets, il faudrait attendre le rapport des experts pour savoir quel instrument utiliser, quel équipement, s'il faudrait avoir les *assessments* aussi avant de toucher le lagon.

Mr Lisette: Sorry, Mr Chairperson, Sir, I did not hear the last part of the answer.

Mr Perrine: Non, non. M. le président, moi je pense que nous attendons comme j'ai dit, le rapport de l'expert et là où il faut un *EIA Report*, nous allons demander. *EIA Report*, s'il le faut, nous allons demander.

Mrs Gaspard Pierre Louis: M. le président, est-ce que le Commissaire de l'agriculture peut nous dire s'il y a eu des actions récentes par rapport au *siltation* de lagon à Rodrigues?

Mr Perrine: Bien sûr, vous savez, l'invasion de lagon ne date pas quatre mois de cela. Ça date depuis des années, depuis même de... Si vous relisez l'histoire de Rodrigues depuis 1885, il y a eu des rapports concernant l'invasion du lagon et le projet FED a fait construire beaucoup de radiers autour de Rodrigues justement pour adresser ce problème. Il y a aussi plantation des mangroves tout autour de Rodrigues surtout à partir de Baie Diamant jusqu'à Baie Malgache, il y a beaucoup de plantations. Il y a beaucoup d'actions mais il y a aussi des actions qui doivent être prises à Rodrigues.... On land. C'est-à-dire les terrasses et aussi d'autres moyens que nous faisons pour lutter contre l'érosion.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir...

Mr Chairperson: Put your mic on, please.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, we very well know that there has been much work which has been done under the Tourism Alternative Livelihood Scheme for year 2020 and for year 2021 also. May I ask the Commissioner for Fisheries whether since his coming into office, he has made any observation as regard to the work done and any effect as regard to the type that he has been speaking about on the work done by the tourism industry itself?

Mr Perrine: M. le président, ça, ce sont des petites interventions qu'il souligne. Moi, je suis en train de parler d'un projet d'envergure et qui est visible. Mais moi je dois dire que depuis que je suis commissaire, il n'y a rien de tangible que nous avons pu constater pour l'amélioration ou bien qui est adressé concernant l'invasion du lagon. Il y a eu peut-être des petites actions spontanées mais seulement, comme je vous dis, ça ce n'est pas pour régler ce problème d'invasion. Le problème est assez grave. Il faut savoir le niveau de sédimentation de... de sédiment dans le lagon et venir avec des mesures en profondeur correctives et revoir l'impact pas pendant des années mais après quelque temps, il faudrait voir l'impact. Mais comme je vous dis, si vous voyez le lagon de Rodrigues, c'est complètement *silted* et les passes aussi sont obstruées. On doit prendre des actions pour que les bateaux puissent naviguer à travers les passes mais il faudrait aussi prendre des actions urgentes pour régler ce problème d'invasion de lagon.

Mr Chairperson: This is the last question.

Mrs Gaspard Pierre Louis: M. le président, est-ce que le Commissaire de l'agriculture peut nous dire est-ce qu'il est au courant que le recrutement de relief de 300 personnes était justement pour permettre la mise en place des terrasses en amont. Donc, des travaux comme il l'a si bien dit sur la terre pour empêcher l'érosion. Donc, comment compte-t-il faire maintenant pour poursuivre ces projets qui devraient être fait, qui n'ont pas été faits? D'ailleurs, des gens ont été payés pour ne pas travailler.

Mr Perrine: M. le président, je dois rire. Ces personnes qui ont été recrutées, ce sont des personnes qui ne sont pas habilitées à construire ni des terrasses ni des drains. Ces personnes étaient payées, comme la dame a dit, pour rien faire. Et nous, on ne peut pas recruter des gens avec un *scheme of work* et ces personnes ne peuvent rien faire. Alors, moi, je pense les personnes étaient recrutées la veille des élections et nous, nous sommes sérieux. Vous savez, pour être un politicien, *to be a politician, you need to have three qualities: seriousness, competence and honesty*. Je demande à chaque politicien de regarder s'ils ont eu ces trois qualifications. Merci.

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: Okay, go on.

Mr Lisette: I would like to ask the Commissioner for Fisheries being given that in his answer, he has stated that there would be the Mauritius Oceanographic Institute which will be coming for carrying a survey. Can he inform the House when the institute is deemed to come, is deemed to arrive for that survey for our lagoon?

Mr Perrine: M. le président, je viens d'avoir une conversation avec le directeur et aussitôt, le Conseil exécutif va prendre la décision, tout de suite, il y aura la collaboration. Nous allons réactiver le MoU qui a été dormant depuis 2015. Beaucoup de projets auraient pu être faits à Rodrigues. Nous avons pu lutter contre l'invasion de nos lagons. Rien n'a été fait et même, le directeur nous a fait comprendre que le RRA n'a envoyé aucun projet. Il n'y a eu aucune correspondance. Merci.

Mr Chairperson: We move to next question.

The Deputy Chairperson: Mr Chairperson, Sir, B/36.

COFFEE PROCESSING PLANT PROJECT – MON PLAISIR

(No. B/36) The Second Island Region Member (Mr J. Tolbize) asked the Commissioner for Agriculture and Others whether, in regard to the Coffee Processing Plant Project at Mon Plaisir, he will give details about the costs thereof and present state of matters?

Mr Perrine: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as regards to the construction of the Coffee Processing Plant Project at Mont Plaisir, I am informed that the Departmental Bid Committee approved the award of the contract on 28 May 2018 to Contractor E Ltd for a contract price of Rs 17,880,000 exclusive of VAT, that is, Rs 20.5 m.

Moreover, the Commission has approved the variation orders to the tune of Rs 4.4 m. This had led to an increase in the contract value from Rs 20.5 m. to some Rs 24.9 m.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as regard the present state of matters, I must say as printed out in the Audit Report, there was no project write-up or feasibility study prior to the construction of the Coffee Processing Plant. The population may realise that public funds had been spent without taking into consideration any analysis or returns on investment.

I am also informed that just a brief regarding the construction of the Coffee Processing Plant was submitted to the EPMU for discussion and inclusion in the RRA Budget.

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Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the issue of the operationalisation of the infrastructure that is, who will manage and operate the Coffee Processing Plant, was not defined by the previous Regional Government.

During the visit of the Regional Representative of FAO to Rodrigues, the Coffee Processing Plant was lengthily discussed.

It was agreed that FAO will help and will advise on the way forward.

M. le président, je dois dire qu'en étudiant le projet café, j'ai eu beaucoup de réflexion, beaucoup de discussions avec beaucoup de personnes et je dois dire que ce projet, c'est un projet porteur. Il a beaucoup de potentiel mais ça a été mal ficelé. Comme d'habitude, sans tête ni queue. Il va nous falloir tout réorganiser. Et je dois remercier la Chambre de Commerce de l'Agriculture de La Réunion qui nous a envoyé un expert, un expert pas de bureau; un expert de terrain qui connaît la plantation, qui connaît le management et aussi qui connaît le marketing. Nous avons pu trouver l'oiseau rare et il est à Rodrigues. Il va rester quelques temps. Peut-être il va même nous donner un coup de main pour la gestion du *processing plant*.

L'expert, il travaille sur le terrain, rencontre les planteurs et aussi, discussion avec les officiers de la Commission pour qu'on puisse démarrer ce projet sur un bon pied. Vous savez, j'ai eu le bonheur ou bien le malheur d'avoir beaucoup de projets dont les.... bâtiments fermés, des projets bloqués, des projets qui ont démarré pour arrêter en quelques temps. Mais je dois dire que ce projet de café est intéressant dans le sens que Rodrigues se trouve dans la zone qu'on appelle *coffee belt*. *Coffee belt*, c'est là où se trouve les pays qui produisent les meilleurs cafés au monde. Café, ce n'est pas une question de quantité. C'est une question de qualité. Et il faut savoir cultiver, faire le *processing* et aussi le packaging et puis la mise en vente. C'est pourquoi nous avons essayé de trouver le meilleur consultant qu'on puisse avoir. On a pris quelque temps mais je pense que le travail a déjà commencé.

Nous avons à motiver les planteurs qui ont été découragés, qui sont très découragés parce qu'ils ont été promis monts et merveilles qui n'existe pas. On leur a fait comprendre que c'est dans l'effort, des sacrifices qu'il y a le succès; ce n'est pas dans les promesses monts et merveilles comme j'ai dit qu'on va faire démarrer les promesses. *We mean business, professionalism*, pas de petits copains. Et on va essayer de voir où se trouve les terrains qu'on peut utiliser pour produire le café et ces terrains doivent être utilisés par des personnes compétentes, les vrais producteurs de café pour qu'on puisse.... Merci, M. le président.

Mrs Gaspard Pierre Louis: M. le président, le Commissaire de l'agriculture d'un projet fait sans queue ni tête. Donc, moi, je trouve qu'il insulte l'intelligence de feu Frédéric Descroix, un des meilleurs mondial par rapport à la production et *processing* de café. Est-ce que le Commissaire... D'ailleurs, le monsieur qui est venu hier, il a confirmé qu'il connaît M. Descroix qui est un grand dans ce domaine. Est-ce que le Commissaire de l'agriculture peut nous confirmer s'il a vu le business plan travaillé par M. Descroix qui a fait découler tous ces projets?

Mr Perrine: M. le président, moi, je parle des documents que je constate, j'ai vu. Mais moi, je ne parle pas des documents que je ne connais pas ou des discussions que j'ai eues avec des gens. Vous savez, c'est un rapport de l'audit qui parle de ça. Si la dame veut contester le rapport de l'audit, libre à elle. Mais c'est l'audit qui a fait comprendre qu'on a fait un projet sans étude de faisabilité, sans *project write-up*. Je me base dessus. Et à la Commission, il n'y a pas de *project write-up*, pas de rapport. En ce qu'il s'agit de l'expert dont la membre parle, je ne vais pas m'aventurer à parler dessus. Moi, je parle de ce que je sais. C'est simplement demander à la dame de voir qu'est-ce qui s'est passé avec le monsieur, l'expert dont il parle, extraordinaire. Qu'est-ce qui s'est passé, ses relations avec les autorités à La Réunion avant de dire que c'était meilleur au monde? Merci.

Mr Baptiste: I think that much had been done. I saw yesterday a video from the Commissioner. May I know from the Commissioner what is the first impression of the expert who came to visit and to help the Commission for Agriculture for the... not set up but to continue the project he has started in relation to the building, to the cooperative which is in place and also in relation to amenities which are available there?

Mr Perrine: M. le président, l'expert n'a pas donné son rapport jusqu'à maintenant. Je vais demander au *respected Member* d'attendre et on va savoir. Mais il ne faudrait pas être impressionné par le bâtiment. Tout ce qui brille n'est pas l'Or. Il faut savoir qu'est-ce qu'on fait avec le bâtiment. Est-ce que les Rodriguais vont prendre avantage de ça? Et je répète, mon ami qui est derrière moi m'a fait comprendre ça, pour moi, *public interest is above all interest*. Si ce n'est pas dans l'avantage de Rodrigues, si ce n'est pas dans l'avantage du planteur, même quand vous allez bâtir un château, je vais vous dire que ce n'est pas un bon projet. Merci.

Mrs Gaspard Pierre Louis: M. le président, est-ce que le Commissaire de l'agriculture peut nous confirmer si le projet va se poursuivre dans ce château justement qu'on a fait à Mont Plaisir?

Mr Perrine: M. le président, c'est un château avec beaucoup de vent, vide. Il n'y a que du vent comme le projet. Il n'y a que du vent. Mais nous allons le faire devenir habitable réorganiser, relancer ce projet et que toute la population peut juger. *We work and we do not talk.* Important. Merci.

Mr Baptiste: I would like to know, as the Commissioner rightly mentioned, the main partner will be the farmers, the planters. I would like to know whether, he met these planters, these cooperatives and if so, when and what was their or what the Government promised to them and has not been....?

Mr Perrine: M. le président, nous sommes là depuis cinq mois. Vous savez, ce bâtiment... Quatre mois. Ce bâtiment est là depuis deux ans. Comme je vous dis, il n'y a que le vent dedans. C'est comme si un château abandonné. Bon, nous n'allons pas entrer dans les polémiques. Mais je rassure le membre que tout va être fait avec les planteurs. Notre politique, c'est suivre ce que les Nations Unies est en train de propager en ce moment-ci: «*Talk to us but not for us.*» *Talk to us; not for us* – ce que nous allons faire. *We talk to them* mais c'est eux qui vont décider. Et je pense que l'ancien gouvernement doit faire une petite réflexion dessus. Merci.

Mr Baptiste: I think that my question has not been answered. I asked the Commissioner whether he met the planters and the cooperatives and if so, when and what are the outcomes of the meeting.

Mr Perrine: Okay, M. le président, exactement. C'est-à-dire, l'expert va rencontrer les coopératives et hier, ils étaient là, le président et le secrétaire. Et demain, il y a une grande rencontre avec tous les planteurs de café à Rodrigues. Bien sûr, les rencontres vont continuer et nous allons travailler en collaboration. Si nous n'avons pas la collaboration de tous les partenaires, le projet ne va pas réussir. Ce n'est pas un projet de la commission ou bien de Perrine etcetera. C'est un projet de Rodrigues et tous les Rodriguais doivent être *involved* dedans.

Mr Chairperson: I allow one last question. Go on.

Mr Lisette: I would like to ask the Commissioner.... *qu'on avait promis monts et merveilles* but the cooperatives, operators have been left like abandoned. I would like to know what were these promises which were made and which were not given to these planters so that they become more efficient.

Mr Perrine: M. le président...

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(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: Order, please!

Mr Perrine: Je vous donne un petit exemple. Vous savez...

Mr Chairperson: Order, please!

Mr Perrine: Stupid people must listen well. I am telling you one thing.

(Interruptions)

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, point of order.

Mr Chairperson: Yes.

Mr Lisette: The respected Commissioner for Agriculture has mentioned ‘stupid people’ and we were talking, meaning that he is addressing that to us. I would like that you ask him to withdraw the words he put.

Mr Chairperson: Mr Perrine, you are a senior. Just withdraw.

Mr Perrine: Il faut répondre, là? Non, ce n’était pas adressé au membre.

Mr Chairperson: Did you withdraw, Mr Perrine? I did not hear you.

Mr Perrine: Non, ce n’était pas adressé au membre.

Mr Chairperson: No, I said you should remove the word ‘stupid’. That is all.

Mr Perrine: I withdraw.

Mr Chairperson: You’re a gentleman. He has removed, okay. Carry on with the answer, now.

Mr Perrine: Non, ce que, M. le président, je voulais faire ressortir, c’est qu’il y a je prends beaucoup de temps à lire le rapport. Je vois que les planteurs ont dit...

(Interruptions)

Mr Perrine: Non, non. Laissez-moi finir, s’il vous plait. C’est-à-dire, on dit dans le rapport que...

Mr Chairperson: Let us hear the Commission. You do not need the answer?

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: I have no control of the answer. Let the Commissioner answer the question.

Mr Perrine: Non mais, M. le président, s'il pose des questions et quand je réponds, ils fond du tapage mais je m'assois.

(Interruptions)

Mr Perrine: *Penan okene promes.*

Mr Chairperson: Order, please.

Mr Perrine: Vous savez, je ne voulais pas entrer dans les détails parce que moi, je regarde les faits et pas les détails mais seulement moi, ce que je suis en train de dire, c'est que ces planteurs, les planteurs qui travaillent, produisent le café, j'ai regardé leur production. Ils devaient produire 1200 tonnes mais ils ont produit 70 kilos. En ce moment-ci, là... Laissez-moi terminer. Mais maintenant, leur réponse, c'est qu'il y a eu cyclone. Mais le cyclone, vous autres, ça n'affecte pas le café. Le plant peut être... Non, moi...

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: I said order. Talk to me.

Mr Perrine: It is better to talk to you. So, vous savez, il faut être.... *It is better to talk to you.* So, le café, quand il y a un cyclone, la plante se met à coucher et quelque part, on a un redresse... D'après l'expert, et c'est à peu près 80%... même pas 10% est affecté. Mais à Rodrigues, peut-être COVID, je pense mais le cyclone... Non, là, vous allez là-bas, vous allez voir il n'y a que des plantes sèches. Je ne sais pas ce qui s'est passé. Il faut savoir mais comme aide pour les planteurs, bien sûr, mais seulement on va donner l'assistance to *genuine farmers*, les gens qui travaillent, qui produisent mais pas les gens qui ont eu un terrain je ne sais pas quel moyen et le terrain est là, il y a quatre '*piés*' café dessus et vous dites ce sont des producteurs de café. Comme j'ai dit dans ma réponse, nous allons voir les endroits à Rodrigues où on peut cultiver le café. Il faudrait voir l'altitude aussi. Et les gens à qui on a donné permis pour produire du café doivent être des gens sérieux et qui travaillent et qui produisent et non pas les gens qui sont les petits copains ou bien les agents politiques et qui ne foutent rien du tout. Excusez-moi. En tout cas, ça va être appliqué. Je pense que vous voyez ce que je suis en train de faire. Avec moi, c'est *business or go out. Thank you.*

Mr Chairperson: Okay, this was the last question. Next question, please.

The Deputy Chairperson: Mr Chairperson, Sir, B/37.

FIVE FIBRE GLASS BOATS & SIX OUTER LAGOON FISHING BOATS

(No. B/37) The Second Island Region Member (Mr J. Tolbize) asked the Commissioner for Fisheries and Others whether, in regard to the five fibre glass boats and the six outer lagoon fishing boats, he will state if any has been repossessed lately by his Commission and, if so, to provide the reasons therefor, together with the intended purpose(s) thereof?

Mr Perrine: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as regards the IFAD Financed Boats, procedure for the repossession of the five fibre glass boats was initiated in October 2021 following a decision of the then Executive Council. I am informed that the repossession exercise was not fully executed as the beneficiary Cooperative Societies requested for an extension of time to resume the outer lagoon fishing activities.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as regards the six outer lagoon fishing boats, for unknown reason, only five of the DCP Financed boat were repossessed following a decision taken by the Executive Council in September 2017.

Upon my tenure of office, in March 2022, my Commission took the decision to hire a Marine Mechanics to survey all the state owned boats. Based on the report, the sixth financed boat which was not repossessed, was found to be not seaworthy. My Commission took the decision to repossess the boat for security reason.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, on the basis of the report of the Marine Mechanics, tender document is presently under preparation for the repairs of the boats to render them seaworthy.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, we have received a mandate from the population to develop the fishing sector and produce more fish for the population so that fishermen can improve their living condition and that of their families. Mr Chairperson, Sir, when I assumed office, I was shocked to find that though these boats were acquired to help fishermen, improve their living condition and to encourage others to invest in outer lagoon fishing, there was no will, no political will to help them. After all, the fishermen are not expert in management. Unfortunately, our evaluation of the situation has revealed that despite the feasibility study initially prepared by IFAD Consultant showed that the project is viable, the desired outcome has not been attained.

A quick evaluation of the project is being carried out and meeting with members of the five cooperative societies revealed that they had several difficulties to take off. An adequate support was not really obtained by the fishermen. Let me cite some of their statement. There

were long delays up to three days for them to get the permit to leave the port. They were not provided with enough support when they face difficulties. In many stances, they felt abandoned. They had to borrow cash from other society to go fishing and their insurance was not accepted by the then Commission of fisheries. Mr Chairperson, Sir, we may agree that the boat has not been used to its optimal and the output delivery level was not fair. Mr Chairperson, Sir, my Commission is now working on a programme with three objectives:

- (1) To have the vessel ready for fishing at the earliest possible;
- (2) To increase the number of fishing trip;
- (3) To increase the fish cage.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

Mrs Gaspard Pierre Louis: Mr Chairperson, Sir, can the Commissioner for Fisheries inform the House about the amount of money and facilities that the previous Government invested in the different cooperatives for these boats?

Mr Perrine: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I have to seek the information from the concerned officers or sectors and I will inform the House accordingly.

Mrs Gaspard Pierre Louis: Mr Chairperson, Sir, is the Commissioner aware that with regard to the facilities given to the fishers using these boats, we have been paying for the electricity, we have been giving, installing photovoltaic to reduce their consumption. We have been paying for the insurance amongst others. Can he confirm that everything has been done to help these fishers?

Mr Perrine: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I will not say that this has not been done but the true reality is that the five boats have been staying at Pointe Monier for four years. What action has the Commission of fisheries taken? You have five boats which have been purchased for an amount of Rs 54 m. and these boats are lying dormant for four years at Pointe Monier and people in Rodrigues are importing fish from Mauritius and the *Maison Pêcheurs* is closed. There is no debate on that. We look at the end result. We do not talk about what we have done. If you have failed, you must agree that you have failed and in this field, the ancient government has failed because he has not taken appropriate action to help these fishermen to make the *Maison des Pêcheurs* operational, functioning and also, to make the boat, fishing boat going at sea. Boat is being used to go to fish, to be outside the lagoon for fishing and not to stay at Pointe Monier for sightseeing. Thank you.

Dr Agathe: Je crois que quand même, il faut reconnaître que tout a été fait pour aider ces pêcheurs à rentabiliser ces bateaux. Malheureusement, ça n'a pas fonctionné. Je crois qu'il ne faut pas dire que le gouvernement n'a rien fait comme vous l'avez dit. C'est plus une question que ça n'a pas marché. Il ne faut pas dire qu'on n'a pas fait. On a fait beaucoup de choses. On leur a donné des équipements. On leur a donné des machines à glace.

Mr Chairperson: Put your question, please. It is question time.

Dr Agathe: Donc, je crois qu'il y a un problème. Le gouvernement quand même a essayé de tout faire pour que ça marche.

Mr Chairperson: Put your question. What is your question?

Dr Agathe: Donc, est-ce que le Commissaire est au courant de tout ce que le gouvernement passé a fait ? D'ailleurs, on pourrait même demander quand est-ce que le projet a commencé et je crois que le projet avait commencé en 2010. Quand est-ce que le projet a commencé et tout ce qui a été fait pour aider les pêcheurs à rentabiliser le projet?

Mr Chairperson: If the Commissioner wants to answer but this question is not in order with what was asking....

Mr Baptiste: But he has said that the previous government has failed. I think that so many things have been done and we all know that cooperatives are not owned by the government. Now, being given that the cooperatives have not been able to produce the expected result and the Commissioner is blaming the previous government, I would like to know exactly and concretely what he intends to do to revive all these cooperatives and *Maison des Pêcheurs*?

Mr Perrine: *M. le président, je viens de dire:* we do not talk; we work. The respected Member has to wait and he will see the difference. Give me up to December, he will see. And, as regard the question of investment by the ancient government, we will have a report and I will let Members of the opposition have a copy of the report of the expert concerning the role, the assistance that ancient government has brought and should have given to the cooperatives whatever they are saying and for it to function. As I have said, we have to look at the end result. Si vous prenez part à un examen, vous avez failli, vous pouvez dire maintenant: *professeur pas ti bon*, telle affaire, telle affaire.

Ça, this is discussion but the reality is that the cooperative, *La Maison des Pêcheurs*, all the project has been a failure. And in spite, IFAD Consultant has made a feasibility study and it gives inch the way forward what to do. And, they even have promised support, technical

support from IFAD. For instance, to employ a master fisherman to oversee the project. All this has not been accepted and time will tell and I will come with statement of this project to prove that what should have been done by the ancient government to make the project viable and to help fishermen. Thank you.

Mr Chairperson: I allow one last question. So, you choose.

Mr Lisette: Maybe to site what was stated in this Assembly, for the knowledge of the Commissioner for Fisheries, and then allow me, Mr Chairperson, Sir, to introduce so that I can ask my question in relation thereto.

Mr Chairperson: Mister, sit down. You are a senior, here. You are on question time. You know all the mechanism that the Standing Order provides you. If you want to at the end of adjournment, you want to make a statement, make a statement but you are not allowed, here. You ask your question directly.

Mr Lisette: My question, Mr Chairperson, Sir, okay, following the facilities that has been provided by the previous government in terms of:

- (1) Electric wheels and fishing equipment;
- (2) Satellite phones;
- (3) Life rafts for expired spares, even for training under the control of the acting control of fisheries in Seychelles.

Mr Chairperson: Your question, please.

Mr Lisette: Yes, my question is following this...

Mr Chairperson: Yes.

Mr Lisette: All these facilities that have been provided plus duty-free prices for.... fuel....

Mr Chairperson: Okay.

Mr Lisette: I would like to ask the Commissioner...

Mr Chairperson: I am on my feet.

Mr Lisette: What additional amenities...

Mr Chairperson: I am on my feet. Okay? I give you an attitude to ask your question but you are still coming with a statement. If this is so, I will not allow this question because I do not see the end of your question. A straightforward question related to the question, here.

Mr Lisette: I would like to ask the Commissioner following all the facilities that have been provided by the previous government, what additional facilities will be provided to these cooperatives?

Mr Perrine: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I have just said that we are working for the project...

(Interruptions)

Mr Perrine: But the answer will be before December, the *Maison Pêcheur* will be functioning and all the boats will be at sea; not at Pointe Monier. Thank you.

Mr Chairperson: Okay, next question.

FINANCIAL YEAR 2021-2022 – RE-ALLOCATIONS/VIREMENT

(No. B/38) The Minority Leader (Mrs R. M. F. Gaspard Pierre Louis, C.S.K) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the financial year 2021-2022, he will state and table the different re-allocations/virement, if any, with respect to the capital budget and the reasons thereof?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I would like to inform the house that, as a result of circumstances which cannot be foreseen at the time the annual estimates are framed, additional provisions are usually being required on both capital and recurrent items to meet the financial commitments of Commissions during the course of a financial year. In that connection, on one hand, funds are transferred within those Capital items from which there are savings to those where there is a shortfall and on other hand from the Capital Budget to the Recurrent Budget to meet shortfall at the end of the financial year.

In that respect, a total of 16 re-allocation/*virement* have been carried out within the capital expenditure vote items during the financial year 2021-2022.

Furthermore, over and above the re-allocation within the Capital Budget and upon approval of the Prime Minister's Office (Rodrigues, Outer Islands & Territorial Integrity Division) and the Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development, *virement* for a total amount of Rs 240 m. was also made from the Capital Budget to meet the shortfall under the Recurrent Budget arising from changes in Salaries and Allowances with respect to the recommendations of the PRB report 2021 as well as the increase in allowance payable to

professional fishermen as announced in the National Budget 2021/2022 for which no provision was made in the 2021/2022 RRA Budget.

The different re-allocations/*Virements* are being tabled for the information of the House. Thank you.

Mr Chairperson: No supplementary questions? Madam Minority Leader, you have a supplementary question? But I cannot allow you to read the whole document here. You know the procedure. Now question time. Anyway, if you are taking your time, our time will be the same according to the Standing Order.

Mrs Gaspard Pierre Louis: Mr Chairperson, Sir, can the Chief Commissioner confirm whether there has been a reallocation from the Item Budget Housing?

The Chief Commissioner: Yes, Mr Chairperson, Sir, of course, I will need time to find the information because the question was not on housing itself. Also, if you would laugh at me, I will not answer.

Mr Chairperson: Okay. We move to next question.

SUPPLY OF CONTROLLED COMMODITIES/SHORTAGE-MEASURES ACTION

(No. B/39) Mr L.D. Baptiste (Second Local Region Member for Grande Montagne) asked the Commissioner for Consumer Protection and Others whether, in regard to the supply of controlled commodities in Rodrigues, she will, for the benefit of the House, state:

- (a) if there is or has been any shortage thereof of commodity in the island recently, and if so, to give the reasons therefor;
- (b) the measures she proposes to take in view of ensuring a fair distribution of such products in villages, and
- (c) the actions she envisages to take to alleviate the burden of the significant increase in prices on the consumers?

The Commissioner for Consumer Protection and Others (Ms M. C. Agathe): Mr Chairperson, Sir, based on Public Notice No. 19 of 2021, as from 19 July 2021, 30 items with different brands were placed on the list of controlled commodities for Rodrigues among which seven essential products, namely canned fish, canned tomatoes, cheese, edible oil, margarine, milk powder, pulses which were placed under Price Control Regulations for

Essential Goods, effective in Mauritius as from 12 July 2021 and in Rodrigues as from 19 July 2021, by the central government in a view to improve the purchasing power of consumers in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and the considerable increase in freight charges on the international market. In addition, a government subsidy was provided on brands and trademarks of the seven essential commodities.

The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Maximum Price of Essential Goods) Regulations 2021 have been revoked with effect from 01 July 2022 and the seven essential products which were controlled under the Regulations were placed under price control under the maximum price regime for Rodrigues.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, I would not say that there has been shortage of controlled commodities as such in the island of Rodrigues, however there has been a lack or unavailability of some controlled commodities in retail outlets in villages, due to the fact that the local importers of these commodities could not sustain the delivery of certain commodities island wide, consequence of the continued increase in prices of some of the controlled commodities from abroad even though the local importers were benefitting from assistance from the Rodrigues Regional Assembly to top up with the subsidy from Mauritius, such as, refund of shipping and transport cost on the seven essential commodities. An additional subsidy of Rs 3 per litre of oil was also provided to Moroil.

It is to be noted that following the coming into applications of the Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Maximum Price of Essential Goods) Regulations 2021, only the maximum retail prices were fixed, thus impacting on the delivery of the seven essential commodities in the different retail outlets in Rodrigues. I am however informed that the commodities were available in Rodrigues in supermarkets at Port Mathurin and at La Ferme.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, some controlled products, such as canned tuna, were also not available on the shelves of retail outlets for a specific period of time due to delay in the fixing of prices of the commodities. We have also witnessed, that upon the announcement of the removal of the subsidy on the seven essential commodities effective as from 01 July 2021, consumers fearing a rapid rise in prices of these commodities have adopted behaviours of panic buying of certain essential goods like edible oil and milk thus causing their unavailability in certain retail outlets and supermarkets.

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Mr Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (b) of the question, I wish to inform the House that in order to minimise disruption in the distribution of essential commodities during the transition period of the removal of subsidy on the seven essential commodities and the fixing of new controlled price, my Commission, jointly with the Commission for Commerce, prior to 01 July 2022, have had a meeting with importers in Rodrigues to inform of the situation and to discuss on ways and means to ensure that there is no major disruption in the distribution of these controlled commodities. During the said meeting, the importers were solicited to submit their return of cost for these essential commodities as per their last consignment imported in June 2022. The officers of the Price Fixing Unit of my Commission have also worked on a fast track basis to ensure that there is no delay in the fixing of prices in order not to penalise the distributors and retailers. The Consumer Affairs Unit of my Commission has reminded importers on the risks they exposed themselves in case of hoarding of stock of commodities and informed that the officers of the Consumer Affairs Unit will monitor closely the situation and will establish contravention in case of non-compliance with the law.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I wish also to assure the House that with the revocation of the Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Maximum Price of Essential Goods) Regulations 2021 as from 01 July 2022, the seven essential goods which were controlled or fixed under the regulations have been placed under price control under the maximum price regime. The price structure has therefore been restored, that is, there will be both wholesale prices and retail prices. This will enable importers to effect delivery of controlled goods in the different villages of the island of Rodrigues. A new price list of commodities which were previously controlled under the Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Maximum Price of Essential Goods) Regulations 2021 was issued on 07 July 2022. Officers of the Consumer Affairs Unit will monitor closely the importation of controlled commodities and also ensure fair distribution of same in villages.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I wish to further inform the House that my Commission is working on the restructuration of the Price Fixing Unit by reinforcing the staff posted at the unit, as well as working towards the computerisation of the unit. A new staff has already been posted at the unit in replacement of the staff in charge of the unit, who was formerly posted there and was shouldering additional duties to that of the Price Fixing Unit. The services of the Trade Analyst are also being extended to the unit as and when required. The restructuration will definitely improve service delivery at the Price Fixing Unit and resolve the problem of delay in the fixing of prices of controlled commodities that have occasionally occurred in the past. Positive

changes have already been noted in the time taken by the unit to process returns from importers and submission of costing to Mauritius.

I wish also to inform the House that my Commission is working towards the long awaiting policy measure which has started with the former Regional Government that will benefit both the importers and consumers in Rodrigues, that is the fixing of prices of controlled commodities in Rodrigues by way of regulations by the Commissioner for Consumer Protection and Price Fixing instead of the Minister of Commerce and Consumer Protection in Mauritius.

My Commission is also working on the amendments to be brought in the Price Control Regulations passed in 2016...

(Interruptions)

Mr Baptiste: On a point of order. I think that it is question time. We need also a reply which will enable us to question. It looks like a statement.

Mr Chairperson: Respected Members, as you are all well aware, you know the Standing Orders. I have control on your questions but I do not have control on answers. Please, the Commissioner, let be brief and give the essential. You canvassed the point.

Ms Agathe: I will soon bring the new regulations at the Regional Assembly.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (c) of the question, as the Respected Members Baptiste may know, the high food price inflation is not only a local issue, but a global crisis impacting on the cost of living of families all over the world. Subsidies in the near term may help but many governments will not be able to sustain such subsidies as it is the case for the government of Mauritius whose finances have been severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The central government has announced a series of budgetary measures for 2022/2023 that will benefit the customers of Rodrigues as well and will contribute to alleviate the burden of the significant increase in prices on the consumers namely increase of basic retirement pension, the maintain of the price of “*pain maison*” at Rs 2.60 via a subsidy on flour to bakers, maintain of the price of 12 kg cylinder of cooking gas at Rs 240 with a subsidy of 60% per cylinder, earmarking of Rs 500 million to the State Trading Corporation for it to supply products such as milk, edible oil and pulses at a subsidised rate among others.

The payment of social contribution (CSG) income allowance of Rs 1,000...

The Minority Leader: On a point of order. The question is that it seems that the Commissioner has very long to go while we have question. So, I think that she can come with a statement.

Mr Chairperson: As I have told you, she has terminated part (c). If I understand, you are answering part (c)? So, finish your question.

Ms Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the payment of Social Contribution income allowance of Rs 1,000 to eligible employees and self-employed individuals, as announced in the budget speech 2022/2023 has already been introduced.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, at the level of my Commission which is responsible for Consumer Protection and Price Fixing, emphasis will be laid on the education and sensitisation of consumers to adapt their consumption habits to the actual economic crisis and increase in prices. There will be regular control and monitoring by officers of the Consumer Affairs Unit to ensure the protection of the consumers against unfair practices in the market place.

My Commission will also ensure the timely processing of price fixing for controlled commodities to prevent disruption in supply of commodities and this will expedite matters for the introduction of new price control regulations which will enable the fixing of prices in Rodrigues.

My Commission will also work in collaboration with other Commissions to promote local productions through incentives to the population. Various incentives already exist and need to be further vulgarised among the population. Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

Mr Baptiste: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Commissioner has enumerated a list of measures that has been taken by the Central Government. My question is whether, the Commissioner intends to take additional measures for Rodrigues to further alleviate the burden on customers in relation to the significant increase in prices?

Ms Agathe: M. le président, comme le cher Membre Baptiste sait, c'est que les sept produits essentiels ont été mis sur la liste et ils ont maintenant un *wholesale price* et un *retail price* qui va permettre aux importateurs de pouvoir distribuer dans les dans les différents villages. Ça aussi va aider à réduire le *cost*. Merci.

Mr Baptiste: I think that may be the Commissioner is not aware but I am the Commissioner who added all these products on the list until... but I would like to know whether, she intends, for example, to add some additional essential commodities on the list so

as to further alleviate the burden. For example, for animal feed, what we did, it was not a controlled product, so we added this as a controlled product and the same time we gave additional subsidies to farmers. That is why the prices is better than in Mauritius. In view, of the high cost of living with the trendy continuous increase in prices, I would like to know what is the policy of the Commissioner whether, she will add additional products on the list to have a better control?

Ms Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, this is the new policy of this government and we will add any goods if it will be benefit for the population.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, in her answer, the respected Commissioner stated no shortage but there was a lack. Does not that amount to holding and, if yes, has there been any inspection made by her Commission?

Ms Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, yes, the officers of the Consumer Affairs have already done all the check at the sellers' place and there has also been contravention. And, if the Members want to have these information, I will hand it to them later. Thank you.

The Minority Leader: So, it means that, at this point in time where we are talking about a serious matter the Commissioner for Consumer Protection cannot inform the House about the number of contraventions or the number of visits in these wholesale businesses?

Mr Chairperson: But sorry, the question is not about that. I think that you should come with a substantiate question, the Commissioner will make a pleasure to answer. When you look at your answer there is no such matter in your answer. You have not asked to give the number of contravention. If the Commissioner wants to reply, she can reply but if does not want I cannot do anything.

Ms Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I will invite them to come with a substantive question next time. Thank you.

Mr Baptiste: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Commissioner mentioned that there has been delay in the fixing of prices for canned tuna fish. And, obviously there was a shortage of canned tuna fish for the whole month of April and May. May I know why such a delay in the fixing of prices at the level of her Commission?

Ms Agathe: M. le président, c'est juste pour faire ressortir avec le respecté membre Baptiste qu'il sait déjà qu'il y avait des *backlog* à faire payer sur les *refunds* pour les *subsidy* et il y a beaucoup de gens qui sont venus me voir à la commission parce qu'il y avait des

backlogs depuis novembre qui n'ont pas étaient payés et la commission font tout ça - les refunds, et puis, on travaille sur le *costing* pour les prix. Merci.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I do not know if the respected Member has listened to the answer given by the Minister for Commerce in Mauritius regarding the efficiency of subsidy in the long term which is not economically viable.

Mr Chairperson: So, what is your question?

Mr Lisette: My question is. View the fact this policy of subsidy is not viable in the long term and most probably it is the rodriguan who is going to be more affected when this is going to be removed from Mauritius. I would like to know from the Commissioner for Commerce whether there has been discussion made either to the Ministry of Finance or to the other ministries in Mauritius so that we can curve down that effect of priority of price increase in Rodrigues especially as regards to the freight when coming to Rodrigues?

Ms Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, we will look into the matter. Thank you.

Mr Chairperson: I will allow one last supplementary question.

Mr Baptiste: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to ask the Commissioner as regards to the distribution of these essential commodities in villages, I would like to know what she envisages to take because *là au moment où je vous parle dans la plupart des commerces, dans la campagne*, oil, milk and the things like, cheese and butter are not available. May I know whether any inspection has taken place, any assessment of the situation and what will be done to avoid people from displacing from the villages around Rodrigues to come to Port Mathurin. *Si vous allez, juste à côté, chez Moroil au moment même où je vous parle, vous allez vois* people queuing up with their galloons to try to get some oil. What does the Commissioner take concretely to solve this problem?

Ms Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, this is to inform the House that the officers from the Consumer Affairs is still doing check in different villages to ensure that these products are available in Rodrigues.

Mr Chairperson: Next question.

WATER PRODUCTION & DISTRIBUTION

(No. B/40) Mr N. Lisette (First Local Region Member for Baie aux Huitres) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to water production and distribution in Rodrigues, he will, for the benefit of the House, state and table the:

- (a) daily production of surface, underground and desalination water;
- (b) water distribution frequency from March 2022, and
- (c) number of outstanding complaints in each section of the Water Unit, respectively?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that the water production figures as per last report for the different water sources are as follows:-

Source	Daily Production (m ³ /day)
Surface	2150
Underground	2424
Desalination	954
Total	5528

In regard to part (b), distribution frequency of water since the month of March 2022 to date, the information is being tabled.

With regard to part (c), Mr Chairperson, Sir, I must say that complaints are not computed per say at the offices of the Water Unit. People called in or telephoned to request water because of the failure of the system which we have inherited.

The Member asking this question was until recently Commissioner for Water Resources and, he has according to me, utterly failed in his promise to deliver water once weekly to the people of Rodrigues. Out of the hundreds of millions of rupees invested in the desalination unit, for example, out of five, only one and a half is working.

Mr Lisette: I would like to ask the Chief Commissioner, with respect to part (c) of the question, how his Commission is attending to the complaints of the different sections?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, we have set up a line, a hotline for all, free, toll-free (people do not pay when they call on it) at the level of the Commission. And, at the level of the Commission, people are suffering - because of their lack of responsibility towards the people of Rodrigues in their mandate 2012 to 2022. People makes their complaints. These complaints are recorded there. And, as far as we can, given that we do not have enough water, most of the desalination plants are not working because they bought cheap desalination plants which are all rusted and out of order and people, of course, are suffering. And, I am saying we have this situation in heritage. We have inherited this situation. So, we have set up hotline – 178. We have received on this hotline, 156 complaints. They are essentially complaints that have been made at respective water unit sections. The people calling on the hotline want my Commission to make a follow-up on their request for water or they find that the waiting time is long and they want a quick response. All complaints received on the hotline are forwarded to the respective Inspector and the water unit for the sections east, north, south and central region.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards to the hotline that has been mentioned by the Chief Commissioner, the hotline - 178, which has become a call line these days, I would like to know from him why such a service is a paid service and whether, the service is on a 24-hour basis?

The Chief Commissioner: The service should normally not be paid. I requested that the line be toll-free. Unfortunately, I see that it is not. We will make it toll-free after consultation with the operator, of course, if this could be made in Rodrigues. And, the hotline operating during working hours from 08.00 o'clock to 15.15 with 30 minutes for lunch break between 12.00 to 12.30. If the Commissioner would volunteer to operate the line after office hours, I will arrange for this. Not Commissioner, if the Member. The former Commissioner would volunteer to or any Member on the other side volunteer. Because we know they are very active on the *terrain* doing lives and everything, they will have something to do. I will put the office and the telephone 178 at their disposal so that they can note the complaints and then Water Unit will do the needful on the day after.

Mr Lisette: I would like to ask the Chief Commissioner whether with regard to complaints that are received from the public, whether these complaints are channelled through the different water unit or there is a parallel system that is operating next to the different water units?

The Chief Commissioner: There is no parallel system, Mr Chairperson, Sir. The situation as I have highlighted with all the Commissioners, about one month ago, is that we are in a situation of emergency. I have met the Prime Minister one month ago together with my colleagues, Commissioners Wong So and Perrine and we have put to the Prime Minister that there is an emergency in water in Rodrigues because of the incompetency and the irresponsible decisions which have not been made in the mandate 2012 to 2022, which I consider as ten lost years. Not only ten lost years but billions of rupees have been lost, been put in the water sector. And, the person who is responsible for this situation today is the Member asking question now. He is the person who had the policy. He is the person who puts Krhoda Report, Mr Chairperson, Sir – Professor Krhoda came to Rodrigues under assistance that we have with donors. Professor Krhoda in 2012 made a comprehensive report about what needs to be done to improve and solve the water sector. They are the people in 2012, Mr Chairperson, Sir, who shut down the Water Company. They shut down the Water Company? And, they laid off all these young people, dynamic people and they dismantled all the reforms which were ongoing. And, today *ils ont le culot de venir dire – le problème d’eau c’est le gouvernement. On est là depuis cinq mois. Et, ils veulent organiser des manifestations. Le problème d’eau de Rodrigues a empiré depuis les derniers dix ans à cause de l’irresponsabilité du dernier gouvernement régional. Et, celui qui doit porter le chapeau, clairement, M. le président, est bien le membre Lisette qui était commissaire de l’Eau et qui avait dit - on a vu les vidéos dans la campagne électorale – qu’il va donner l’eau une fois par semaine. Quand vous avez pris votre retraite, vous avez quitté la commission où était votre promesse de faire de donner l’eau une fois par semaine ?* Fail, Mr Chairperson, Sir!

Mr Baptiste: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I think that we are facing the worst period of water problem/crisis in Rodrigues since autonomy. And, the Chief Commissioner is criticising the previous government. I just want to remind him that in the budget speech he pronounced here in this Assembly 2007-2008, he mentioned that the water problem will be something of the past in the next five years as the water production capacity will increase from 5,000 m³ daily to 10,000 m³. And, he failed to do it also! May I know what he concretely intends to do now? Being given that he is now in power and he is the Chief Commissioner, he is responsible for Finance and Water, what will he do to alleviate the actual burden which is the worst of all the time since we got autonomy, what he intends to do?

The Chief Commissioner: We are standing on our feet, we are putting back the reforms we have found in the drawers, in the files of government, in the files of Commissions,

we have discovered Krhoda Report. And, if Mr Lisette has at least in 2012, read and implemented Krhoda Report, we would not be here today. This is the failure. They dismantled the Water Company. They decided to go against the report of Mr Chéné. Mr Chéné who is an expert on water reforms who was sent to Rodrigues...

Mr Baptiste: On a point of order, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

(Interruptions)

I understand that...

Mr Chairperson: Sorry, you are making a point of order. So, go on.

Mr Baptiste: I do not know whether our friend is understanding what the Chief Commissioner is saying. I think this is a serious problem. We want to hear the answer calmly so that we can really find solutions.

Mr Chairperson: As I told you, Mr Baptiste, which Standing Order are you referring to? This was not a point of order.

The Chief Commissioner: M. le président, je ne suis pas là pour faire cadeau ni à monsieur Lisette, ni à monsieur Baptiste, ni à l'OPR, ni à quiconque qui sont de l'autre côté.

I have my style and I will stand to my style as long as I am not infringing the Standing Orders. As far as I know, there is nothing about tone in the Standing Orders. If you can see something about tone in the Standing Orders, you raised your Standing Orders.

But what I am saying now is that they are the responsible people who has jeopardised the reforms. In 2010, Mr Chéné from the United Nations Department of Economics and Social Affairs (UNDESA) came to Rodrigues and in his report, he said: *"We should go for a 10,000 m³ desalination plant at Grenade."* Grenade was the place chosen because there is already a good potential for wind energy. France EFD would finance wind power energy to run the desalination plant 4,000 m³ and then there is the proximity of the high sea (*la mer dehors*) to direct the brine out into the high sea through diffusion. He did not read the report of Chéné. If they had gone with that 4,000 m³ desalination plant which water would be sent to Ti Brulé and from Ti Brulé to else. They are telling me what I am doing. They are telling me, I am shouting. Yes, we are shouting because we are doing what needs to be done. We are doing a master plan on the water sector, Mr Chairperson, Sir. We are doing a master plan. If Mr Lisette had read Krhoda, he would know the impact of climate change. He would know that rainfall

would be more heavy and would be less frequent. He has not read Krhoda. If he has read Krhoda, Mr Chairperson, Sir, he would have understood. They are guilty of this situation.

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: Order, please!

The Chief Commissioner: They are the responsible...

Mr Chairperson: Can this Assembly cool down? You are cooling down? Okay, thank you. As you are aware, we have a lot of visitors today. So, respect the decorum of the House.

The Chief Commissioner: *Yes, thank you, Mr Chairperson, Sir. So, qu'est-ce qu'ils ont fait, M. le président ? Je continue de les répondre. La vérité blesse, la vérité supporter par les faits – qu'est-ce qu'ils ont fait ? Ils arrivent en 2012, ils décident, okay - dessalement – ils sont des experts en dessalement – ils décident de ne pas suivre les recommandations de M. Chéné, qui est un expert dans la réforme de l'eau. Qu'est-ce qu'ils font ? Ils décident d'aller construire quatre unités de dessalement – un à Anse Aux Anglais, qui est pourri, qui ne fonctionne pas. Ils n'ont pas eu l'eau là où il devait avoir. Ils sont allés chercher l'eau jusqu'à dans le cimetière. Okay, pour avoir un borehole et le borehole ne fonctionne pas correctement – n'arrive pas à fournir les 500 m³ – cela veut dire si on dessale 500 m³, il faudra peut-être 1,500 m³ d'eau de la mer dans le borehole par jour pour que l'unité fonctionne. L'unité, allez visiter, M. le président, j'invite les Membres, le publique aller visiter. C'est pourri, tout est rouillé et c'est le consultant... Il y a une autre question là-dessus. Profile le consultant a dit : « We must scrap this unit. » This was put in place by them. Everything ... Ils sont partis à Baie Malgache, à Anse Goeland. Pareil ! Ils ont massacré une plage et ils n'ont jamais trouvés l'eau nécessaire pour renvoyer dans le dessalement. Ils ont construit un pipeline de Baie Malgache jusqu'au réservoir Mont Limon/Mte du Sable. Ce pipeline ne sert à rien. Combien de million de roupie ils ont investis à Baie Malgache. Et Baie Malgache encore, il n'y a pas d'eau pour alimenter l'unité de dessalement. Et, ils ont mis des câbles électriques dans la mer. Des câbles électriques dans la mer ! Et, les consultants nous disent – pour fixer cela il faut Rs 6 millions et qu'il n'est pas certain qu'on va trouver l'eau et qu'on va pouvoir opérationnaliser l'unité de dessalement. Ils nous recommandent de démonter l'unité de dessalement et de l'installer à Anse Aux Anglais et de l'installer à Songes - Caverne Bouteille. Caverne Bouteille – pareil. L'unité est morte. L'unité qu'ils avaient installée est morte. Ils ont une unité osmosen. Ils ont des panneaux solaires, le projet est joli et puis, ils ont une petite unité de dessalement. Mais les panneaux ne marchent pas, M. le président. Qu'est-ce qu'on fait après ? Ils ont fait*

à Pointe Coton. A Pointe Coton 50% ne fonctionne pas. Et vous venez nous dire, que c'est nous. Si vous aviez lu Krhoda, vous auriez pris des mesures contre le changement climatique. Vous auriez vu que Krhoda a dit que 40% des espèces d'arbres dans nos forêts sont des espèces qui boivent l'eau comme l'Eucalyptus, ça puise l'eau. Et, vous auriez pris des mesures pour enlever l'Eucalyptus et toutes ces plantes qui boivent l'eau de nos forêts et de nos rivières. Mais qu'est-ce qu'il a fait lui ? Qu'est-ce qu'il a fait ? Water Company ils ont fermé. Aujourd'hui, qu'est-ce qu'on a à Gravières ? J'ai demandé un Internal Control – à Gravières il y a deux femmes, elles ne sont jamais sur le travail. A Soupir, il y a une femme, elle dit au consommateur de l'eau – vous avez voté pour l'alliance *ale get l'allians pou gagne delo*. M. le président, c'est ce qu'ils ont dit. Donc, voilà la situation.

Mr Chairperson: Any more question?

Mr Baptiste: So, my question is simple as I look at these figures here. So, despite all that he has made, prior to February 2012, it has never happened that in the region of Coromandel, people get water at a frequency of more than 60 days, as it is here. May I know from the Chief Commissioner why this situation is happening now because it has never happened before. The maximum days has been 45. Why just now, all around Rodrigues I hear people crying and facing the biggest water problem here? Why just now, not before?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, we have raised an emergency. I have not only seen the Prime Minister, but Minister Lesjongard who is coming this week. We are thinking about procuring emergency desalination unit in containers, good ones to alleviate the burden of the people. Has the former Commissioner read about climate change and the impact of water availability? Yesterday, Mr Chairperson, Sir, in the UK, in England, the temperature reached for the first time 40°. Is it me? You are saying you are not getting water. How many days in Coromandel? 60 days. Some people has not got water for three months – *laba dan corail laba*. What do we do? We are meeting with the people that we have at the Water Unit. We were planning to divert water from the east to the west on a basis of equality. Because, for example, in Anse Enfer some people are having water every eight days. In Port Sud Est every eight days. And, there is a direct line from the reservoir of Mourouk to ... hotel. So, they are getting plenty of water. So, we are trying to redistribute on solidarity, the water. But the workers, the technicians, they have said we cannot do this. And, when we have examined the figures last Monday, Monday before, we have seen that yes, we cannot do this. So, we have a ... day system which is technically faulty and we are in the way of climate change. So, less water from natural sources, less water from boreholes and it happens that the previous

government has given to us broken down desalination unit. So, what do we expect? What does Mr Baptiste expect? We will make magic? In three months, in four months, we will do magic? Does he know that the lead time to make a desalination plant deliver in Rodrigues, is 18 months? 18 months! The lead time for containerise desalination plant is six months. If Mr Lisette had read the report he would know that Krhoda is warning that the 1976-1979 drought may come again, will come again and it may be the beginning of it. You promoted *dessalement*! Not me!

The Minority Leader: Mr Chairperson, Sir, *justement par rapport à ça, on a entendu – poisson boir délo dou, dimune boir délo salé*. I want the Chief Commissioner to confirm today whether his government will continue to invest in desalination plant to alleviate the water problem?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, as I have said – they have failed. We are on the path of success because we know what we are doing. They have been doing thing with an amateurism, irresponsible and technically unsound manner. We are starting with the foundation which will be a master plan for water. We have contacted, for example, the Indian High Commission. There is the WAPCOS from India, experts from India. He is listening, he knows what I mean. They submitted a proposal to do the master plan for water for Rodrigues. What have they done? They put it in the drawer. And when we came, we say WAPCOS - they already said they want to do a master plan for water for Rodrigues.

To answer the question. We do not want desalination to be the main supply of water for Rodrigues. As far as possible, we want the natural sources. Where are the workers? At the Water Unit, I have requested that tenders be made, for pipes to be laid, the *réseau* to be rehabilitated for Mte Charlot from La Fouche Castor. They are working on it but they do not have the capacity. This is why we are operationalising the Rodrigues Public Utilities Corporation. They closed the Water Company in 2012 and in 2021 they reopened another thing. Rodrigues Public Utilities Corporation. Why did you close the Water Company? Today we have a strong man, a patriot, Mr Claude Wong So, who has accepted to be the Chairman. And, the board has just been constituted. And, we are going ahead – Rodrigues Public Utilities will have a trade mark Rodrigues water to manage the water sector in Rodrigues. And, we will be recruiting workers, engineers, experts, people who can repair pumps, people who understand boreholes. In the master plan, we will re-explore the resources. Because he would know if he had read the report that Krhoda says that the underground water in Rodrigues, even BRLE says

that there is untapped potential in the borehole in Rodrigues. But he has not read. He has not done his homework. And, today he is laughing.

Mr Chairperson: I will allow you with your supplementary question and one last for the mover of the question.

Mr Ramdally: Merci, M. le président. Puis-je demander au Chef commissaire s'il y a un problème au niveau de la digue de Petit Gabriel parce que ces derniers temps on voit beaucoup d'eau sur la route. Est-ce qu'il y a un problème avec ce réservoir ?

The Chief Commissioner: I do not know, Mr Chairperson, Sir. As a Commissioner, I do not deal with operational matters. This is a substantive question but I will look into it. Everywhere it is the same situation. Everywhere we have inherited the same situation. Indiscipline workers in the Water Unit, their agents. Because if you look at the...

Mr Baptiste: On a point of order. I think that we are putting some motives saying that our agent or something like that. I think this is not correct.

Mr Chairperson: As I always asked the House, be nice to each other. And so, the Chief Commissioner there is a last question from Mr Lisette.

Mr Lisette: My question to the Chief Commissioner. I am looking at the papers that he has tabled, I can observe that there have been drastic changes in distribution even in places where the production has been the same and, I am taking as example, the place where I live at Fond La Bonté serve by Reservoir *Teindoil* and the production has remained the same and, the frequency has changed from eight to twenty days. Can he explain this to the House or is it a bad management from his part?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, some days before they were ousted, fortunately, for Rodrigues, from power in March last, what did they go to do in Pavé La Bonté, for example, where he is speaking?

(Interruptions)

They sent machines to cut a road which did not exist, which do not have planning clearance, to cut an earth road across the hill. And, today what we are having at Pavé La Bonté? When there is heavy rain all the muds come into Pavé La Bonté and the Water Unit there, the inspector, etc., they cannot pump water to Allée Tamarin because it is muddy water. So, I regret for him. If he is not having water at his place as it used to be, it seems that it is his own fault, Mr Chairperson, Sir. And, the only person to be blamed is himself, Mr Chairperson, Sir. The

former Regional Government and the OPR. I did not create the Water Unit in 1982 as a house for their agents. They created the Water Unit and the Housing Unit as a house for their agents.

The Minority Leader: Sir, I have a point of order.

The Chief Commissioner: There is no point of order. What is the point of order? Every time because I am speaking the truth you want to stop me.

Mr Chairperson: Chief Commissioner! What is your point of order?

The Minority Leader: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Chief Commissioner cannot continuously and repetitively be imputing motives. I think he should stop saying these things. This is not allowed here, I suppose.

Mr Chairperson: This is why we are going to the next question. Next question, please. Did you move for the question, Mr Lisette? I did not hear you. Mr Lisette, I am very sorry, each time I have to tell you about the microphone. You used to be very nice when you were a former student. We have a hardware problem here. You used to, but we are having problem over hardware here.

RAIN WATER HARVESTING SCHEME

(No. B/41) Mr N. Lisette (First Local Region Member for Baie aux Huitres) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the RainWater Harvesting Scheme Announced in the budget speech 2020-2021 and available at his Commision, he will state on the modalities established therefor, indicating:

- (a) the number of beneficiaries who have completed their projects thereunder, and
- (b) if any new modalities have been set up in relation thereto and, if so, to give details?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (a), the existing modalities as stated for financial year 2020-2021 for Rain Water Harvesting Scheme involving the construction of water tank of storage capacity 10 m³ was classified into three categories as detailed below:-

Sn.	Categories of Beneficiaries	Grant
1.	Those registered in the SRM	90% of total cost of construction: Rs 27,000

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2.	Household with income from Rs 10,000 to Rs 15,000	75% of total cost of construction: Rs 22,500
3.	Household with income from Rs 15,001 to Rs 20,000	50% of total cost of construction: Rs 15,000

The scheme was subject to the following conditions:-

- (i) time frame for implementation: four months as from the date of delivery of materials;
- (ii) refund of labour cost will be effected upon satisfactory completion of the water tank certified by Officers of the Commission upon presentation of claim from the contractor by the beneficiary;
- (iii) the water tank should be constructed according to the plan provided, and
- (iv) applicant should not possess a water tank of more than 2 m³.

All applicants should not possess a water tank of more than 2 m³.

The Commission reserved the right to repossess all materials should the beneficiary fails to complete the water tank within the agreed timeframe.

An agreement containing the above modalities and conditions was signed between the Commission and the beneficiary.

The number of beneficiaries who have completed their projects under this scheme on the existing modalities:

There have been 53 beneficiaries, out of whom:

- 36 beneficiaries had completed their water tanks as per drawing;
- 9 beneficiaries had completed their water tanks with some deviations in storage capacity;
- 6 beneficiaries have started construction with casting of slab outstanding, and
- 2 beneficiaries have not yet started construction of the water tank.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (c), the modalities for new Rainwater Harvesting Scheme are being defined for implementation during financial year 2022-2023. A

sum of Rs 22.5 m. is available under item subhead Water Production – Rain Water Harvesting Scheme, which we will work out and publicise shortly.

Mr Chairperson: So, we move to next question.

**SOCIAL HOUSING MEASURES FINANCIAL YEAR 2021-2022
– BUDGET EARMARKED/AMOUNT DISBURSED**

(No. B/42) Mr L. D. Baptiste (Second Local Region Member for Grande Montagne) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to social housing measures for the financial year 2021–2022, he will inform the House of the budget earmarked and the amount disbursed therefor, indicating if there was any shortfall in relation thereto?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner (Mr A. F. Grandcourt): Mr. Chairperson Sir, with regard to the social housing measures for the financial year 2021-2022, a budget of Rs 110 m. was earmarked under the Housing and Rehabilitation Programme.

At the end of the financial year 2021-2022 total expenditure as at June 2022 amounted to Rs 100,468,009.11 for this item. And, the remaining plus Rs 9.5 m. was reallocated to pay allowances.

Mr Baptiste: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I would like to know whether all the contractors have been paid their dues during the financial year for works carried out?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, most of them were paid but at times there were delays in the certification of claims and thus, of payment.

Mr Baptiste: Can the Commissioner inform the House about the amount which still stands due to contractors?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I think that the respected Member, should include that part of... because I do not have the figures. So, he should include this in his question.

Mr Baptiste: Yes, but I would like to know whether there was still money available at the level of his Commission for housing when he took office in March?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the answer is, yes.

Mr Baptiste: I would like to know why then in an interview given, you have mentioned that money was not available?

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The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, on a point of order. Questions should not address to things which have been published in the press.

Mr Chairperson: Mr Baptiste, you already know. If you do not have more question, we move to next question. Next question.

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: We are on B/43, please. Silent!

DESALINATION PLANTS AROUND RODRIGUES – REPORT/CONCLUSIONS

(No. B/43) Mrs M. A. L. Allas (Fifth Island Region Member) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to desalination plants around Rodrigues, he will inform the House on if there has been any report thereon recently and, if so, to provide the conclusions thereof?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, when we took office, we have to say that the desalination plants were not working and were not fulfilling their mission for the money, for the fund which have been invested in them. So, we requested the consultants Luxconsult operating under the Global Consultancy Services contract with the Deputy Chief Commissioner's Office to make an assessment and submit a report on desalination plants in Rodrigues, dated April 2022. The purpose of the assignment was to conduct surveys on the existing desalination plants at Pointe Coton, Caverne Bouteille, Pointe Venus, Songes and Baie Malgache to assess their status and formulate recommendations with cost implications accordingly.

The key observations with respect to each desalination plant are as follows:

Desalination plants report from pro-five		
SN	Region	Observations
1	Baie Malgache	The desalination plant is not in operation. Missing parts are observed: membranes, pressure exchanger isodarix (sent to Mauritius for repair), booster pump. Manometer damaged. The SCADA system is not in operation. Signs of rust and corrosion.

Desalination plants report from pro-five		
SN	Region	Observations
2	Songes	The desalination has only one train, and is in operation. Leakages and general corrosion were observed. The communication system to control the borehole is not operational, the borehole is in constant ON state resulting in gross power wastage. Dosing equipment out of order. One raw water feed pump dismantled. Chemical spilled all over in the store room. SCADA system is out of order.
3	Pointe Coton	One train is in operation with several visible leakages. The second train is not in operation due to several issues (sand filter clogg, electro valve damaged, isobarix damaged). Important leakage on the sand filter. Generalised corrosion and rust observed everywhere. One raw feed pump missing. SCADA system out of order
4	Caverne Bouteille	The old 400 m ³ reverse osmosis unit is found to be out of order with missing items. New 240 m ³ solar powered reverse osmosis unit was in operation operating on CEB grid due to issues on the solar system. The old reverse osmosis is to be scrapped.
5	Pointe Venus	Reverse osmosis unit was found to be out of order. Rust and corrosion are observed. All equipment and reverse osmosis unit is to be scrapped a Pointe Venus.

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Mr Chairperson, Sir, the conclusions are as follows:-

Out of the five existing desalination plants in Rodrigues Island, the conditions of the facilities situated at Baie Malgache, Pointe Coton and Songes allow for the rapid refurbishment and re-commissioning of existing equipment. This in turn shall allow for the production of potable water to their respective design capacities of 1,000, 1,000 and 500 m³/day respectively.

As for the desalination plants at Caverne Bouteille and Pointe Venus, the following would need to be done:

Caverne Bouteille

- (i) Repairs so as to revert back the solar powered unit to operate on solar power generated on site.
- (ii) Scrapping and carting-away of existing 400 m³ reverse osmosis unit which is out of order and its replacement by a new 500 m³ unit, if we decide to put it there

Pointe Venus

- (i) Scrapping and carting-away of existing 400 m³ reverse osmosis unit which is out of order.
- (ii) Carry out civil works' modifications and repairs to the station to accommodate two new 500 m³ reverse osmosis units.

By the end of the project, the five desalination plants shall be able to produce a total of above 5,000 m³ per day for the daily water needs in Rodrigues Island. We are yet to decide what to do and is the way forward.

The total budget for the total project has been estimated to be Rs 1,254,000,000.

Upon receipt of the report, my Commission has initiated actions to implement the recommendations as far as possible. In particular, necessary actions have been taken to replace the reverse osmosis unit at Pointe Venus and Caverne Bouteille by those available at Baie Malgache - we will relocate Baie Malgache, which cannot be used in anyway - which has major water intake issues as I have explained and to repair the trail, which is not operating at Pointe Coton.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, amateurism and lack of political leadership has characterised the desalination projects from 2012 onwards. The previous Regional Government choose to build a desalination plant at Baie Malgache where afterwards they could not find the appropriate water from underground well. It is a pity to read today from consultant that the best things to do is to abandon the whole facility and thus loose the hundred millions of rupees already invested there. This is why we are prudent and we are commissioning a master plan for the Water Sector which will include a chapter on desalination shortly and which together with the Rodrigues Water under the Rodrigues Public Utility Corporation will come to improve the hardship being faced by the population.

The Chéné report of 2010 highlighted the project of a 4,000 m³ desalination facility at Grenade which together with solar energy would have improved the situation. The project would have been financed by European Union AFD. The Regional Government which took over in 2012 decided to bury these experts' proposals and go ahead with four desalination units catered at four different locations which have been as you are aware a blatant failure inasmuch as cost are multiplied by four, investments are higher, example, four pipelines need to be built and four technical teams were required. It is a pity to look at these desalination plants today and how irresponsible politicians have failed the water sector during the ten previous years. Thank you.

Mr Chairperson: No question. So, we move to next question.

**INVESTMENT/RODRIGUES REGIONAL ASSEMBLY
– COMPANY OR PRIVATE ENTITY/TOURISM**

(No. B/44) Mrs M. A. L. Allas (Fifth Island Region Member) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, he will inform the House on any investment by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly in any company or private entity to run tourism related courses in Rodrigues and, in the affirmative, to provide the details thereof?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, with regard to question B/44, I am informed of the following:

- The Commission for Vocational Training launched an Expression of Interest on 11 April 2017 for the setting up of a hotel school in Rodrigues. Two bidders submitted their proposals for the setting up of a hotel school in Rodrigues.
- After an evaluation exercise, the offer from Trianon Hotel Tourism Management Centre (THTMC) Ltd, known as VATEL Mauritius was retained

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in January 2018. It was agreed that a private company - they launched a tender and it ended up into a private company - will be set up to facilitate the operation of the school.

- The then Executive Council at its meeting held on 02 March 2018, has approved that the Rodrigues Tourism Development and Co. (RTDC) Ltd be incorporated as a Private Company with the Rodrigues Regional Assembly holding 51% of the shareholding and curiously, Trianon Hotel Tourism Management Centre (THTMC) Ltd having a stake of 49% for the setting up of a Hotel Tourism and Business School at Contour Oblass.
- Further to a letter dated 16 October 2018 from the Island Chief Executive, approval was obtained from the Ministry of Defence and Rodrigues, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development and the then Executive Council that an amount of Rs 5 m. be transferred from the Rodrigues Consolidated Fund (RCF) to the Rodrigues Tourism Development Co. Ltd. Thus, an amount of Rs 5.1 m. representing 51% of the shares was incorporated in the company as Rodrigues Regional Assembly's shareholding participation while the Trianon Hotel Tourism Management Centre Ltd has to contribute Rs 4.9 m. representing 49% the shares.
- A lease agreement was signed on 30 May 2018 between the Rodrigues Regional Assembly (Lessor) and the Rodrigues Tourism Development and Co. Ltd (Lessee) for the lease of one concrete building situated at Contour Oblass at a yearly nominal rent of Rs 100 for an initial period of five years. The lessee shall use the spaces of the above building for the setting up of a hotel school and exclusively for training purposes.

Additionally, in line with the then Executive Council's decision at its meeting held on Friday 31 January 2020, the Rodrigues Tourism Development and Co. Ltd has sublet the spaces of the building at Contour Oblass to Trianon Hotel Tourism Management Centre Ltd to operate as a training institution, restaurant and guest house with effect from April 2019 as from the official date of the launching of the hotel school for a monthly rental fee of Rs 60,000. However, to date despite the Memorandum of Understanding signed in April 2020 with the Trianon Hotel Tourism Management Centre Ltd, no fee has been paid yet to the Rodrigues Tourism Development and Co. Ltd.

It was expected that the amount to be recovered from Trianon Hotel Tourism Management Centre Ltd will be used for payment of fees to Directors, Secretary fees, Auditor's fees and other operational cost.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, the then Executive Council at its meeting held on 27 November 2020 was informed of the major shortcomings with respect to the financial operations of the company due to lack of information about its activities and lack of corroborating invoices.

It was subsequently, decided that the services of a team comprising an external Accountant and the Acting Principal Finance Officer of the Commission be retained to work out a progress report pertaining to the financial operations of the Rodrigues Tourism Development Co. Ltd. The latter notified that the financial operations of the Rodrigues Tourism Development Co. Ltd were not transparent and they could not prepare the accounts due to lack of information, non-corroborating invoices and possible misuse of fund.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, the new Executive Council, at its meeting held on Friday 18 March 2022 was apprised that the financial affairs of the company have not been settled yet. It was hence agreed to have recourse to the services of auditors to carry out a special audit of the Rodrigues Tourism Development Company Ltd.

Subsequently, the Chairperson of the Rodrigues Tourism Development Co. Ltd made a request to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly for the conduct of an internal audit based on the outcome of the report of the external Accountant. The services of the Manager, Internal Control were then retained to carry out a special audit of the company from 15 to 24 June 2022.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Executive Summary of the Internal Audit Report is as follows:

- (i) As at date, the Trianon Hotel and Tourism Management Centre Ltd has not contributed its share capital of Rs 4.9 m. in cash consideration as agreed in 2018 and in compliance with Consent of Shareholder filed at the Corporate Business Registration Department;
- (ii) On 13 August 2018, Trianon Hotel Tourism Management Centre Ltd transferred all its shares held at the Rodrigues Tourism Development and Co. Ltd to Trianon Business Development Ltd without informing the Rodrigues Regional Assembly having pre-emptive rights in Rodrigues Tourism Development and Co. Ltd in breach of Companies Act 2001;
- (iii) The Internal Audit review indicated that the Trianon Hotel Tourism Management Centre Ltd deliberately caused share capital injected by the

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Rodrigues Regional Assembly (that is, the Rs 5.1 m.) to be diverted into various unauthorised expenditures. There was no control over the expenditures incurred by Trianon Hotel Tourism Management Centre Ltd on behalf of the Rodrigues Tourism Development and Co. Ltd;

- (iv) The Trianon Hotel Tourism Management Centre Ltd has also masked the malpractices with erroneous payment vouchers and invoices drawn in the name of Trianon Hotel Tourism Management Centre Ltd to such an extent that a payment of Rs 3,636,567.69 was made to Trianon Hotel Tourism Management Centre Ltd, that is, VATEL, without due diligence;
- (v) The Internal Control concludes that these were dishonest acts by Directors of Trianon Hotel Tourism Management Centre Ltd with fiduciary responsibilities with an intention to misappropriate funds and mislead Rodrigues Tourism Development and Co. Ltd;
- (vi) There was no control and justification over the expenditure which exceeded the share capital of Rs 10 m.;
- (vii) The review uncovered improper practices related to the renovation of the building at Contour Oblass whereby there were non-competitive and non-transparent selection of service providers;
- (viii) To date, the Rodrigues Tourism Development and Co. Ltd has not submitted any statutory returns as regards Financial Summary to Companies Business Registration Department, annual return to Mauritius Revenue Authority and VAT returns, and
- (ix) The facts of this case also suggest that there was weak oversight by the Representatives of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly of the other shareholder with limited ability of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly to identify significant misuse of fund and non-compliances.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, in light of the findings of the Internal Audit, the Executive Council has decided at its meeting held on 01 July 2022 to refer the case of alleged malpractices as reported in the special audit report on the Rodrigues Tourism Development Co. Ltd to the relevant authorities for enquiry. Thank you.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, est-ce que je peux savoir du Chef commissaire étant donné qu'il a eu le rapport en main, la décision a été prise, pourquoi il met tant de temps pour avoir recours aux institutions approprier pour donner suite à cette affaire parce que

justement, comme il l'a bien dit, il y a eu mauvaise intention du partenaire. Quand c'est dans son cas, il n'est pas responsable des *operational matters*. Loin de moi l'intention de jeter les blâmes sur les fonctionnaires, je pense que et moi j'encourage le Chef commissaire au plus vite que possible dans l'intérêt de l'Assemblée Régionale d'avoir recours à ces institutions pour faire la lumière dessus.

The Chief Commissioner: I am sure, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, she will be called may be during the enquiry because it is her, the present Minority Leader, who was then, I think, Deputy Chief Commissioner and who has not exercised general policy direction on that company that she created with VATEL to siphon money from the Regional Assembly. Rs 5.1 m. missing. And, to reply to her question. When we took office, we came aware of a file, Rodrigues Tourism Development Company and we immediately saw that there was misappropriation of funds. But we cannot just refer it to the ICAC or to the CID for enquiry, we needed to carry out our own internal investigation. And, this investigation was carried out by the internal audit of the Regional Assembly with someone that we hired and as I have said on 01 July, the Executive Council took the decision to refer the matter to the ICAC and to the Police for further enquiry and it is in their hands. But it is a pity, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, that a company falls under a Commissioner. It is the Commissioner who is responsible for the proper direction, for the probe to see that the company is not siphoning funds. And, it is a pity that under her Commission, a company that she created with VATEL – and there are some things that we cannot say here Rs 5.1 m. have gone into the bush, Mr. Chairperson, Sir.

The Minority Leader: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Chief Commissioner, as I just told, to go to seek concurrence, to go to the appropriate authorities and I will be the first one to go there, if there is the need to.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I will not pre-emp on any inquiry. I would leave those who have the power and the responsibility to make enquiries to carry out their enquiries. This is not the first thing we have referred to the Police and to the ICAC, there are other things, many other things. For example, on the relocation of Sainte Marie, in the contracts it says two houses for some people and on site there are three houses. So, they can do magic.

Mr Chairperson: We will move to next question.

**TRANSFER/PATIENTS TO MAURITIUS AND/OR ABROAD
– FURTHER MEDICAL TREATMENT**

(No. B/45) The First Local Region Member of Saint Gabriel (Mr J. R. Ramdally) asked the Commissioner for Health and Others whether, in regard to the protocol for the transfer of patients to Mauritius and/or abroad for further medical treatment, he will enlighten the House as to the different provisions thereof, detailing on major changes, if any, that have been brought, or he is contemplating to bring, to the existing one?

Mr Volbert: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the protocol for the transfer of patients to Mauritius and abroad was signed on the 16 May 2008 by the then MR Regional Government. Following several difficulties encountered by several patients, the following facilities were added by the OPR Regional Government:

- (1) A one-off grant of Rs 25,000 for the patients transferred overseas for treatment in addition to financial assistance of up to a maximum of Rs 1 m. offered by the Ministry of Health and Wellness;
- (2) A one-off grant of Rs 1,500 plus Rs 300 per day during the stay for admission in hospital for patients transferred to Mauritius for treatment, and
- (3) Accommodation during the stay in Mauritius at Sikamifer Hotel for all patients and relatives transferred to Mauritius.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Executive Council at its meeting held on 24 June 2022 has approved a new protocol for financial assistance to patients seeking medical treatment for Mauritius and abroad as follows:

- (a) Patient seeking treatment in private institution in Mauritius. The Commission may provide financial assistance to patient who seeks medical treatment in Mauritius up to a maximum of Rs 200,000 provided that the Commission has conveyed its prior approval on the basis of a certificate or a Government Medical Officer to the effect that such treatment is not available in Rodrigues, and
- (b) For treatment abroad, where treatment cost for specialised medical treatment abroad exceeds the grant provided by the Ministry of Health and Wellness, the Commission for Health may grant a topping-up through the ministry.

Mr Ramdally: Mr Chairperson, Sir, can I ask the Commissioner, as he has said, such treatment is not available in Rodrigues? *Donc*, does it mean that even if the treatment is

available in Mauritius, in the hospital of Mauritius, these persons may go to any private institution and have this, on approval *bien sûr*, this amount of Rs 200,000?

Mr Volbert: M. le président, laissez-moi expliquer. Si une personne qui part en vacances à Maurice (je donne un exemple) et cette personne-là est tombée malade à Maurice, on ne peut pas référer la personne à Rodrigues pour ensuite retransférer à Maurice et c'est là que la personne peut, pour sauver sa vie, aller dans une institution et à ce moment-là, on va *refund the sum up to Rs 21,000. And, if the treatment is not available in Rodrigues as you said it, yes, the person may go to Mauritius and the sum may be refunded to him.*

Mr Lisette: Let us go again to upon what the Commissioner has just said. A person on vacation in Mauritius who happens to get sick but his first point, his first reflex should be to attend a government hospital there. How will the Commission in this case account for the lack of facilities in Mauritius given that he is not in Rodrigues?

Mr Volbert: Etant donné que si une personne est tombée malade à Maurice, il peut aller dans des institutions publiques, c'est vrai, et si la personne trouve et voit que ça prend du temps parce qu'à Maurice, on a déjà une liste établie et la personne peut aller à une institution privée si c'est pour sauver sa vie.

Mr Lisette: I want to be clear about the protocol. The protocol is so that everybody in Rodrigues knows what is being done. Will it not be the duty in this case, Mr Chairperson, Sir, for the institution that he has attended in Mauritius to issue a letter of clearance to say that such facilities are not available in Mauritius?

Mr Volbert: They may be discussed at the Executive Council on a case-to-case basis if ever this arises.

Mrs Gaspard Pierre Louis: M. le président, dans le passé, on a eu des cas. Justement, un *case-to-case basis*, on a déjà apporté des aides. Il y a des personnes dans cette situation. Bien sûr, comme vous dites, vérifions d'abord que le service n'est pas disponible dans le service public. Est-ce que je peux savoir quel est le mécanisme déjà en place pour qu'une personne puisse bénéficier de ça étant donné que le Conseil a déjà approuvé ?

Mr Volbert: La personne peut faire une application, une demande et soumettre tous ses documents, les certificats médicaux et le montant payé. Puis, on va discuter de ça au *Executive Council* et il se peut que la personne n'ait pas la totalité de la somme demandée. Mais tout de même, on rembourse en partie la somme demandée.

Mr Ramdally: M. le président, je n'ai pas entendu la somme que le Commissaire a mentionnée concernant le *top-up*. Le *top-up* pour les patients qui vont à l'extérieur.

Mr Volbert: Ça dépend de la somme. Le Rs1 million qui a été donné par le ministère, ça a dépassé le Rs 1 million, à ce moment-là, on va voir si ça arrive Rs 1.5 millions/Rs 1.4 millions et on va *top-up* les Rs 400,000 ou les Rs 500,000 dépendant de la quantité.

Mr Ramdally: Si je comprends bien, c'est dans le cas où la somme pour le traitement est supérieure à Rs 1 million. C'est ce que vous dites là.

Mr Volbert: Bien sûr parce qu'il y a déjà Rs 1 million qui est offert par le ministère. Donc, il faudra que ça soit utilisé. Et, de toute façon, on ne donne pas l'argent dans les mains. On passe à travers le ministère pour remettre la différence.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, est-ce que j'ai bien compris ce que le Commissaire a répondu. Est-ce que la personne fait sa demande et c'est le Conseil Exécutif qui tranche ou bien y-a-t-il un *Technical Committee* avant pour vraiment évaluer la demande de cette personne ?

Mr Volbert: Pour le moment, c'est... Enfin, auparavant, c'était le Conseil exécutif. Maintenant, on va *set up a body to enquire*. *There should be an enquiry rather than to go and disburse the sum to anyone coming and ask for a reimbursement*.

Mr Lisette: I would like to know from the Commissioner being given that.... whether there has been any reimbursement placed on the new policy that has been taken as regards to this issue?

Mr Volbert: Not yet, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

Mr Ramdally: Je peux demander au Commissaire quels sont les services, les traitements qui vont être couverts par ce *scheme*? Est-ce qu'une personne, par exemple, qui veut faire de la chirurgie esthétique, je ne sais pas moi, la personne veut aller à l'extérieur, est-ce qu'il va bénéficier de ce *scheme* ou...?

Mr Volbert: Si pour vous, la chirurgie esthétique est un traitement, *okay*. Moi, pour moi, c'est un traitement, quelqu'un qui est malade. Et la chirurgie esthétique n'est pas quelqu'un qui est malade.

Mr Ramdally: Pourquoi? C'est une maladie. Il y a une personne qui ne se sent pas bien dans sa peau, il veut changer, je ne sais pas. C'est une maladie.

Mr Volbert: On va voir. Si dans ce cas-là, on va voir. Si vous avez quelqu'un, envoyez nous la personne, on va voir.

Mr Chairperson: One last question.

(Interruptions)

The Minority Leader: M. le président, en parlant du protocole de transfert des patients...

Mr Chairperson: No cross-talking, please.

The Minority Leader: Si c'est vrai que la question d'argent est très important, donc, l'expérience nous a démontré. D'ailleurs, on continue à voir qu'il faut continuellement discuter, rediscuter avec le ministère de la Santé par rapport au transfert des patients même de nos hôpitaux ici pour aller à Maurice. Est-il au courant qu'il y a des gens, par exemple, qui partent pour des MRI et qui attendent plusieurs semaines avant d'avoir leurs rendez-vous? Alors que normalement, ce qui se faisait, c'est de prendre rendez-vous-même si des fois, le patient est impatient. Donc, on a le rendez-vous confirmé et puis, la personne part pour ces tests et puis, revient. Donc, récemment, j'ai eu quelqu'un qui m'a parlé, qui a attendu plusieurs semaines pour avoir son MRI.

Mr Volbert: Je vais prendre en considération ce que vous avez dit mais laissez-moi vous dire que ça a été tout le temps comme ça. C'est maintenant qu'on va essayer de voir parce que ça a été tout le temps comme ça. Maintenant, on va essayer de voir comment faire pour réduire ce temps-là. Merci.

Mr Chairperson: Yes, I think that it is high time to lunch. Let us break for one hour.

At 12.52 p.m., the sitting was suspended for one hour.

On resuming at 01.05 p.m. with the Chairperson in the Chair.

Mr Chairperson: Respected Members, the table has been advised that B/47, B/48 and B/54 have been withdrawn by the respective Members. Thank you.

Mr Chairperson: Now, let us proceed with next question. Ms Roussety?

MISSIONS UNDERTAKEN – PROMOTION OF RODRIGUES AS A TOURIST DESTINATION

(No. B/46) The Second Local Region Member of Baie aux Huîtres (Ms K. Roussety) asked the Commissioner for Tourism and Others whether, he will state and table on

the different missions undertaken for promotion of Rodrigues as a tourist destination, from March 2022 to date, indicating the:

- (a) composition of the respective delegations, highlighting each delegate's capacity for participation therein, and
- (b) different outcomes thereof and the costs per item for each mission?

Mr Wong So: Mr. Chairperson Sir, I wish to inform the House that since the resumption of commercial flights in March 2022, my Commission and Discovery Rodrigues Co. Ltd have undertaken the following activities in view of promoting Rodrigues as a tourist destination:-

- (i) Roadshow in Mauritius from 02nd to 06th June 2022; and
- (ii) Roadshow in Germany from the 04th to 07th July 2022 organised by the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority (MTPA).

With regard to part (a) of the question, for the Roadshow in Mauritius, Mr. Chairperson Sir, the delegation comprised 31 members as detailed hereunder: -

- Myself as the Head of delegation;
- One Tourism Promotion Officer from the Commission for Tourism;
- The Chairman and six Directors of Discovery Rodrigues from 2nd to 4th June for the launching of the mobile App on 3rd June and for working sessions with their counterparts in Mauritius;
- We had also the Manager and one Tourism Promotion Officer from Discovery Rodrigues;
- One Representative from ATR;
- One Media person;
- One Traditional troupe comprising six dancers and four musicians
- One singer and one keyboardist; and
- 16 tourism operators.

With regard to the Roadshow in Germany, Mr Chairperson Sir, the delegation comprised:-

- Myself as the Head of the delegation;
- The Chairman of Discovery Rodrigues;
- The Manager and one Tourism Promotion Officer from Discovery Rodrigues.

With regard to part (b) of the question, the Roadshow in Mauritius was organised on 03 days, from Friday 03rd June to Sunday 05th June 2022. The main activity of this mission was the launching of the Mobile Application “Discover Rodrigues” which was deployed on dedicated App Platforms such as App Store, Google Play and App Gallery. A networking cocktail was organised for the launching of the application where all main stakeholders and top travel agencies were present as well as the local operators from Rodrigues.

Cultural roadshows were organised in 04 strategic shopping malls namely: La City Trianon, Riche Terre Shopping Mall, Grand Baie La Croisette and Flacq Coeur de Ville.

With regard to the visibility of the event, three radio stations were selected to advertise the presence of Rodrigues Destination and the local operators from the Roadshow in Mauritius, mainly Top FM, Radio Plus and MBC. Radio spots were aired on Top FM and Radio Plus in addition to three interviews which were carried out on three different radio stations.

Furthermore, six advert spots were aired on Radio Plus along with the launching of the Mobile Application Video. A total of 26 spots were aired on Top FM over the course of eight days. A live interview also was broadcasted on MBC TV and Facebook.

Mr. Chairperson Sir, I wish to inform the House that the roadshow in Germany was the first networking event organised by the MTPA in Germany since the outbreak of COVID 19 in 2020.

The House may wish to note that Germany is the third market in Tourism Arrivals in Mauritius. In 2019, Mauritius welcomed 129,100 visitors from Germany whereas Rodrigues welcomed only 404 visitors from this market. It is our target to increase the number of arrivals from this market and to tap within the German tourists travelling to Mauritius. The strategy of my office is to absorb at least 5% of the annual number of visitors travelling to Mauritius from Germany by the end of 2027.

Mr Chairperson Sir, the Roadshow in Germany was held across four strategic towns, namely Munich, Franckfurt, Düsseldorf and Hamburg, where over 200 travel agencies, businessmen and stakeholders were invited to attend the workshops where one-to-one meetings were organised.

The Germany Roadshow was an opportunity for the Rodrigues Tourism Office to introduce to the audience the Rodrigues Destination through a PowerPoint presentation and 65 one-to-one meetings were held during the roadshow over the four towns.

Mr Chairperson Sir, I further wish to inform the House that 22 tourist operators from Mauritius participated in the roadshow and the Rodrigues Tourism Office was invited to be part of the MTPA's delegation to represent Rodrigues as a destination.

Mr Chairperson Sir, with regard to the costs incurred for the two missions, I now table the mission to the House.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

Mrs Gaspard Pierre Louis: M. le président, je vais avoir une question jusqu'à ce que le papier arrive. Est-ce que la dernière fois, on était à la veille de départ de la délégation pour Maurice pour La Tournée Rodriguaise. Le Commissaire du tourisme a annoncé le départ pour La Réunion et on a vu qu'aujourd'hui, dans les retombés, à aucun moment, il ne mentionne La Tournée Rodriguaise à La Réunion. Y-a-t-il eu cette tournée? Et si non, pourquoi?

Mr Wong So: Merci d'avoir posé la question, Madame la minorité. Mr Chairperson, Sir, you will recall that at the sitting of the Assembly dated 31 March 2022, I informed the House that I will leave a delegation from Rodrigues from 02 to 12 June 2022 in the context of the *Tournée Rodriguaise* in Mauritius and Reunion Island. However, Mr Chairperson, Sir, we have unfortunately not been able to travel to Reunion Island from 07 to 11 June 2022 as scheduled as same has been postponed upon the advice from the Prime Minister's Office that henceforth, we should have to liaise with the Ministry of Tourism and the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority (MTPA) for the organisation of this event in a holistic manner.

Hence, our participation in the roadshow which was held presently in Germany from the 04 to 07 July 2027 is the case. As such, Mr Chairperson, Sir, the *tournée* in Reunion Island has been postponed to coincide with the event of Florilège scheduled in October 2022. It is also to be noted that the financial cost and commitment pertaining to the *tournée* in Reunion Island has been postponed and maintained for abovementioned event in October 2022. The Discovery Rodrigues Company Limited has been able to successfully negotiate with all stakeholders to maintain all payments already engaged to October 2022 in order to avoid penalty fees or non-refundable payment for cancellation. Thank you, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

Mrs Gaspard Pierre Louis: M. le président, écoutant le Commissaire du tourisme, je me demande est-ce que désormais, au lieu d'avoir la Tournée Rodriguaise séparée où on a

toujours eu le focus sur toute La Réunion sur Rodrigues, moi j'ai eu l'occasion... Vous étiez dans la délégation. A plusieurs reprises, on a été à La Réunion. Donc, c'était une organisation de l'Assemblée régionale et on participait aussi au Florilège. Donc, c'était deux événements touristiques de promotion qui nous permettaient d'attirer le nombre de touristes parce que La Réunion est notre deuxième marché. Est-ce que désormais, il n'y aura plus La Tournée Rodriguaise organisée par l'Assemblée régionale? Si oui, pourquoi?

Mr Wong So: M. le président, permettez-moi de répondre assez longuement par rapport à cette question. Sachez que l'autonomie de Rodrigues n'a jamais été remise en question. Simplement, ce que le ministère demande, valeur du jour, c'est au niveau des activités qu'on va organiser au niveau de Rodrigues, qu'on le fait d'une manière holistique. Veut dire qu'il faudrait quand même soumettre un rapport avec le ministère du tourisme à Maurice pour l'organisation des sorties mais cela n'empêche pas que Rodrigues puisse organiser des activités en toute séparation avec Maurice. Veut dire que quelque part, bien sûr je vous le dis, vous avez le droit de me croire ou pas mais je vous le dis que bon, nous, nous avons la possibilité éventuellement d'organiser des activités en toute impartialité. Pas besoin de concerter avec Maurice. Mais néanmoins, lorsqu'on le fait d'une façon concertée avec le ministère, il va de soi que nous, Rodrigues, on va bénéficier de la part de contribution financière du ministère qui est évaluée à, dites-vous bien, Rs400 millions qu'ils ont mobilisé pour la promotion de la destination de Maurice et de Rodrigues tandis qu'à Rodrigues, on a très peu d'argent. Merci, M. le président.

Mrs Gaspard Pierre Louis: M. le président, là, je me demande est-ce que ce n'est pas un recul par rapport à Rodrigues? Bien sûr, on est dans la République. On doit concerter les institutions mais au moins à trois reprises, on a été, on a pu organiser Rodrigues seul pour justement, avoir ce focus au niveau de La Réunion. Et je pense qu'il y a quelque chose qui ne va pas et peut-être il faudrait... Moi, je crois vous avez parlé de l'autonomie. C'est vraiment là, une question d'autonomie. Pourquoi est-ce que maintenant, au lieu de pouvoir organiser seul cette tournée, qu'est-ce qui nous empêche de le faire ?

Mr Wong So: Je viens de vous dire qu'éventuellement, la tournée va se faire pendant le mois d'octobre qui coïncide justement avec la cérémonie, la célébration de l'activité de Florilège à La Réunion. Nous, on est tenu de dire au ministère du tourisme les activités qu'on est en train d'organiser. Il va de soi que Rodrigues a la possibilité d'organiser des activités en toute impartialité pour nous. Il n'y a aucun souci là-dessus. Il n'a jamais été dit que dorénavant, *all actions that should be undertaken by the Commission for Tourism should be vetted by the*

Ministry. Ça n'a pas été le cas. Simplement, puisqu'ils ont suffisamment d'argent, les Rs400 millions comme promotion de la destination, autant que Rodrigues puisse en bénéficier. C'est ce que je suis en train de vous dire. Croyez-moi, c'est la seule solution que je peux vous donner. Il n'a jamais été question de remettre en question l'autonomie de Rodrigues.

Mr Ramdally: M. le président, si je comprends bien le Commissaire, est-ce que pour la tournée qui devait se passer en juin dernier, est-ce que ça veut dire que vous n'aviez pas de budget pour ça?

Mr Wong So: Non, la question qui se pose pour le mois de juin, c'est que ça n'a pas été... on n'avait pas assez/suffisamment de temps pour préparer la tournée. De ce fait, le Prime Minister's Office nous a demandé de *alter*. C'est tout.

Mr Lisette: But, Mr Chairperson, Sir, I have to ask the question because on the very eve that you were leaving, you came to this House to say that "I am leaving for Reunion Island". And then, we come to understand today that you were not able to leave because there was not enough preparation for... How are you preparing our events that you are going to sell abroad? Is this the way, professional way of preparing such event when we are going to sell a market that is so important for an industry in Rodrigues?

Mr Wong So: M. le *respected Member*, je dois vous dire en toute sincérité, il a été de notre intention de partir à La Réunion avec une grosse délégation pour faire la Tournée Rodriguaise. Il n'a jamais été question de quoi que ce soit de dire qu'on va annuler ou renvoyer. Ça a été notre intention. Mais si vous le savez très bien que moi, parce que vous étiez...

(Interruptions)

Mr Wong So: Permettez-moi de répondre. Parce que vous étiez de ce côté de la Chambre, vous savez très bien qu'à un moment donné, il y a des prérogatives qu'on ne peut pas outrepasser. Mais voilà, ça a été dit dans le rapport, dans la réponse que this has been delayed that it has been advised by the Prime Minister's Office that we should alter the *séjour* à La Reunion. Is it really a big problem?

Mr Lisette: I would like to ask a question, straightforward, Mr Chairperson, Sir. Was it advised or were you told to cancel the....

(Interruptions)

Mr Wong So: Au moment où j'ai fait la déclaration à l'Assemblée ici, il était dans l'intention de partir. Je peux vous assurer à la Chambre au moment où l'annonce a été faite au

Parlement qu'on allait partir, on était sur le point de partir. Mais par la suite, on a eu justement ce qu'il y a eu.

(Interruptions)

Mr Baptiste: I would like to know whether approval was sought before according to established procedures because normally, we should seek approval first and then we confirm the participation.

Mr Wong So: M. Baptiste, you are a respected Member, you have been in this Parliament the last 20 years. You know things, how are they being done at the Prime Minister's Office. Is it really....? Bien des fois, lorsqu'on fait des demandes d'autorisation venant de Prime Minister's Office, souvent... Regardez-moi bien en face, M. Baptiste. Souvent, ça arrive la veille de votre départ.

Mr Chairperson: I am your Baptiste today.

Mr Wong So: Yes. *Mr Chairperson, Sir*, ce que je voulais dire au *respected Member*, bien souvent, dans des sorties, souvent, l'autorisation arrive au dernier moment à la veille sinon l'avant-veille de notre départ. Merci.

Mr Chairperson: I allow you two last questions. So, you choose who will ask the questions. Okay, have your last question.

Mrs Gaspard Pierre Louis: M. le président, quand je regarde la liste des items déposés, je vois que pour le *launching of the mobile App*, ça nous a coûté quand même la bagatelle de Rs470000 alors qu'on avait déjà lancé le tender et faire le *mobile App*. Donc, est-ce que le Commissaire peut nous dire quel a été le retombé de ce lancement? Parce que j'ai suivi un peu la tournée à Maurice. J'ai lu les journaux. Je n'ai jamais vu jusqu'ici un article de presse parlant de ce *mobile App*. Je ne sais pas si je n'ai pas bien regardé. Est-ce que la presse mauricienne était là? Parce que quand même, Rs500000 presque, est-ce que ça a eu l'effet/l'impact que vous souhaitez?

Mr Wong So: Merci, Madame, de poser la question qui me permet quand même de répondre. D'abord, la question qui se pose, c'est le lancement de ce *mobile App* nous a coûté Rs470000. M. le président, sachez quand nous partons à Maurice, nous faisons lancement du mobile App à Maurice, ça se fait dans un hôtel digne de ce nom avec tous les éclats et les gens qui sont venus participer à cette baptismation, il va de soi qu'il y a un coût à payer par rapport à la l'organisation. Vous êtes mieux placés que moi pour savoir quel est le coût d'une

organisation d'une telle envergure. Le montant n'est pas exagéré et le montant reste raisonnable à priori. Ce que je peux vous dire, vous avez parlé de lancement de ce *mobile App*, c'est un *mobile App* que tout le monde ici peut éventuellement voir sur son portable. Je peux vous dire que depuis qu'on l'a lancé, les *viewers* se situent à la hauteur de 5437 et les réactions, les *comments* et les *shares* par rapport à ce *mobile App*, c'est 1943.

Votre question, pour vous répondre, éventuellement, c'est un *mobile App* qui est adressé non pas aux Rodriguais; c'est un *mobile App* qui est adressé *worldwide*, que vous soyez à Boston, Toronto, Paris ou New York. Veut dire que la personne qui veut visiter Rodrigues, sur le *mobile App*, il a la possibilité de s'enquérir des prestations et des services. Le Rodriguais, il a la possibilité d'aller sur le *mobile App*. C'est sans problème. Mais ça concerne surtout les gens venant d'ailleurs qui voudraient, qui ont l'intention, qui ont la possibilité aussi de venir visiter Rodrigues de voir les prestataires de service et les qualités des offres qu'il y a sur le marché rodriguais.

(Interruptions)

Mr Wong So: Mais bien sûr, mais je vous ai dit, j'ai dit dans la déclaration le nombre d'interview qu'on a fait, les *press release*, les *press advert*. On était extrêmement couvert par la presse mauricienne. Merci, M. le président.

Mr Chairperson: Last question.

Mr Perrine: I would like to know from the Commissioner, for Germany, what is the market share in terms of percentage, number of tourists coming from Germany and in line with the paper tabled, I would like to know whether it would have been better to concentrate, to mobilise the resources because here, I see that for Mauritius, it is Rs 1.49 m. and for Germany, it is Rs 744,000. So, would it not have been better to mobilise these funds on markets like Reunion Island and Mauritius where we have many more tourists coming as compared to Germany?

Mr Wong So: Merci, M. le président, pour moi de répondre à cette question, j'ai dit dans mon exposé que l'Allemagne représente le troisième marché en termes d'arrivées – 129000 d'arrivées à Maurice. Je vous ai cité le nombre d'arrivées à Rodrigues. Je peux le dire ou le redire – 404. Ça fait pitié.

(Interruptions)

Mr Wong So: Pourcentage, vous êtes mieux placés que moi pour dire qu'est-ce que 404 représente sur 129000. Je veux dire par là, il a été de notre devoir suite à l'invitation de la MTPA de pouvoir participer à ce *road show*. Je me permets, M. le président, de vous dire que moi en tant que Commissaire du tourisme participant à ce road show en Allemagne, on a sur le plan purement politique, on a été le *political figure* qui est le mieux placé et dites-vous bien, dans tous les *speeches* et les *introductory notes*, Alain Wong So comme Commissaire du tourisme est placé en premier d'où l'importance que Rodrigues aussi soit représenté dans ces moments. Bien sûr, vous allez dire que c'est sans importance pour vous. J'imagine. Mais vous devriez comprendre qu'on est en train de placer Rodrigues sur la carte du monde sur le plan touristique – 404 arrivées touristiques sur une année. Merci, M. le président.

Mrs Gaspard Pierre Louis: One last question.

Mr Chairperson: A good question?

Mrs Gaspard Pierre Louis: All questions are good.

Mr Chairperson: Okay. Go on. Very last.

Mrs Gaspard Pierre Louis: M. le président.

Mr Chairperson: Your microphone, please.

Mrs Gaspard Pierre Louis: J'ai écouté avec attention M. le Commissaire du tourisme. J'ai vu qu'il est très fier, c'est bien qu'il a été le *political head, the only one*. Donc, je voudrais savoir déjà est-ce qu'il a eu des *side meeting* parce qu'il paraît qu'il était le seul *policy-maker*. Donc, a-t-il eu des *side meetings* ou bien il a participé qu'au *road shows*? Et puis, une deuxième question : j'ai vu que son objectif, c'est d'arriver à 5% dans cinq ans par rapport aux arrivées à Maurice, qui nous donne environ 5300 arrivées. Donc, 5300 arrivées. Est-ce qu'il prévoit qu'on va continuer à avoir ITB Berlin et ajouté à ça, ce genre de *road show* pour arriver à cet objectif parce que sinon, ça va nous coûter quand même les yeux de la tête pour ce marché. Est-ce qu'il a pris le temps de regarder ce chiffre pour un objectif dans cinq ans à venir?

Mr Wong So: Merci de me tendre la perche, Mme Franchette. Je me pose la question, moi-même, M. le président. Puisque je sais qu'ITB Berlin a été un élément phare dans votre campagne précédente pour le précédent gouvernement pour la campagne promotionnelle. Je me pose la question maintenant. Avec 404 arrivées touristiques germanique, est-ce que ça a été le succès escompté? Nous, 5% en 2027, ça nous fait à peu près 6000 arrivées germaniques

(Germans) by the year 2027. This is the figure that we are projecting right now. Merci, M. le président.

**INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS – COMPLAINTS REGISTERED
– EMPLOYEES LAID OFF PER SECTOR & REASONS**

(No. B/47) The Second Local Region Member of Baie aux Huîtres (Ms K. Roussety) asked the Commissioner for Labour and Industrial Relations and Others whether, in regard to industrial relations, he will state and table the number of:

- (a) complaints registered at his Commission since March 2022 to date, giving details on the nature thereof, and
- (b) employees laid off per sector and the corresponding reasons therefor?

(Withdrawn)

OPENING OF CARDIAC DEDICATED UNIT – RODRIGUES

(No. B/48) The First Local Region Member of Saint Gabriel (Mr J. R. Ramdally) asked the Commissioner for Health and Others whether, in regard to the opening of a Cardiac Dedicated Unit in Rodrigues, he will inform the House on where matters stand in relation thereto?

(Withdrawn)

Mr Chairperson: Okay, next question.

ACQUISITION - FOUR NEW AMBULANCES

(No. B/49) Mr J. R. Ramdally (First Local Region Member for Saint Gabriel) asked the Commissioner for Health and Others whether, in regard to the recent acquisition of four new ambulances by his Commission, he will:

- (a) give details as to when the contract therefor was awarded indicating the contract value thereof, and
- (b) indicate if the commissioning of the vehicles has been effected and, in the negative, to give the reasons thereof?

The Commissioner for Health and others (Mr Volbert): Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards to part (a) of the question, the contract was awarded on 10 November 2021 for a total sum of Rs 10 m. exclusive of VAT.

As regards, to part (b), the vehicle was commissioned on 10 May 2022.

Mr Ramdally: Mr Chairperson, Sir, can I ask the Commissioner if there was a problem with the commissioning because these ambulances have been for a very long time stuck on the quay just behind?

Mr Volbert: M. le président, il n’y avait aucun problème avec le *commissioning*. L’ambulance est arrivée à Rodrigues le 09 avril 2022 et c’est le *supplier* qui devait faire le *handing over*. Donc, on a attendu à ce que le *supplier* arrive et fasse le *handing over* à l’hôpital de Crève-Cœur.

Mr Ramdally: Mr Chairperson, Sir, can I ask the Commissioner, normally two of these ambulances were meant for SAMU purposes. Have these purposes been modified or are they the same?

Mr Volbert: No. Ça n’a pas été modifié parce que nous comptons mettre sur pied une unité de SAMU très, très bientôt.

Mr Chairperson: Okay, next question!

“NOU ZOLI VILAZ” PROJECT

(No. B/50) The First Local Region Member of Grande Montagne (Dr. H. Agathe) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the “Nou Zoli Vilaz” project, he will state to the House on where matters stand in relation thereto and the outputs thereof as at date.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the ‘Nou Zoli Vilaz’ project was implemented by the former government with the Collaboration of the Rodrigues Council of Social Services (RCSS).

The ‘Nu Zoli Vilaz’ project was first implemented on a pilot basis in five villages during the financial year 2019/2020 and in another 10 villages during the financial year 2020/2021.

As at date, eight out of the 15 projects implemented in the 15 villages can be considered as completed.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the projects under the “Nou Zoli Vilaz” concept were implemented with the expectation of their:

- (a) promoting healthy living habits of the villagers,

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- (b) providing a safe and pleasant environment for the organisation of community activities,
- (c) providing the village with a secure and clean source of water, and
- (d) providing the village with a source of revenue through increased community engagement.

Unfortunately, most of the projected outputs have not been attained due to an observed decrease in Community engagement most probably due to lack of incentives, participation, engagement, awareness, time or funding. Interest was shown by some villagers only during the project implementation phase and no more upon completion.

It should also be noted that there was a lack of supervision by the Commission for Community Development and poor collaboration between the different stakeholders, during the implementation of this project. To date, Mr Chairperson, Sir, this is still observed in the eight projects that have been completed, as they are hardly being utilised for the purpose planned, if not at all.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I have to point out that the previous government intended to come up with a third phase to this project, known as the Community Development Assistance Scheme (CDAS) Project, whereby some 87 villages would have been concerned. The aim was to empower Village Communities, to promote community mobilization and participation in the implementation of development projects at community level and to foster synergies of actions between the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and Village Committees to achieve the goals of sustainable development.

However, with the coming into power of this new government, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, and with the portfolios of Community Development and Environment falling under the purview of my Commission, I consider that these projects can now be carried out in a different manner and as part of a bigger and more integrated approach. The request submitted by the 87 villages following the CDAS call for project will thus still be taken into account and integrated in the bigger development plans the Commission for Environment and Community Development has for each electoral region, with a view to ensure more effectiveness, greater impact and sustainability. Such projects will thus no longer be implemented in a piece meal manner so as to ensure greater efficiency and greater impact and better use of human resource.

In this respect Mr Chairperson, Sir, Rs 36M has been earmarked in this financial year to implement projects aiming at the development of the Community such as:

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- 1) Desilting of River Beds to minimise flooding in villages – Rs 7.4 m.
- 2) Rehabilitation of 31 Green spaces and Children Playgrounds – Rs 0.8 m.
- 3) Setting Up of 5 green spaces at Creve Coeur, Jean Tac, Champs, Grand Var and Anse Goeland – Rs 1 m.
- 4) Installation of 200 public solar lights around the island – Rs 3.5 m.
- 5) Construction of eco-friendly amenities on beaches around Rodrigues – Rs 0.5 m.
- 6) Rehabilitation of Masonry Seawall at Baie Lascar and Anse aux Anglais – Rs 3 m. including Baie Malgache
- 7) Protection of Beaches for Erosion at Gravieres and Petite Butte – Rs 1.5 m.
- 8) Setting up of a Material Recovery Centre at Roche Bon Dieu (Centre de Tri) – Rs 8 m. ; and
- 9) Waste water Treatment Plant at Grenade – Rs 10.3 m.

Also, we are continuing to improve access in remote villages through the construction of track roads and other access roads.

I wish to point out, Mr Chairperson, Sir, that my Commission has already started consultative meetings with village committees to inform them of the upcoming developments and seek for their involvement before and after project completion.

I wish to point out, Mr Chairperson, Sir, that this present government has also at heart to provide a safe and pleasant environment to all Rodriguans but we wish to give a boost to community engagement by proceeding differently.

Thank you.

Dr Agathe: J'ai bien écouté le Commissaire. Donc, il a l'air d'avoir mis l'accent sur la question financière. Par exemple, là, il dit qu'il y a un budget de Rs36 millions qui est prévu pour le budget 2022/2023 mais on voit que dans ce qu'il a mentionné comme liste de projets, il y en a beaucoup qui avait habituellement à être mis en œuvre à l'Assemblée. Alors que le projet « *Nou Zoli Villaz* », l'objectif, c'était de permettre la participation. C'était la clé. C'était la clé du fonctionnement de la méthode de ce projet. Et donc, vous avez même dit qu'il y a au moins huit projets parmi qui ont été complétés. Je dois dire que sur ces huit projets, il y en a

deux qui visent à améliorer l'accès à l'eau. Beaucoup qui visent, qui ont été complétés, à améliorer donc, le jardin, le cadre environnemental des centres communautaires. Donc...

Mr Chairperson: Now, come to your question. What is your question?

Dr Agathe: Oui, alors, je voudrais dire est-ce que quand même avant de changer l'orientation de ce projet, puisque l'approche était de favoriser la participation, est-ce que vous avez consulté le RCSS? Et puis, deuxième question. Vous avez mentionné dans votre discours programme, dans votre budget que vous voulez donc être guidés par les SDGs. Et les SDGs mettent l'accent beaucoup sur la participation des communautés disant qu'étant donné multiples contraintes qui pèsent sur les gouvernements habituellement, la participation des communautés peut aider à résoudre beaucoup de problèmes comme cela a été démontré dans la résolution des problèmes d'eau ou l'amélioration du cadre de lieu environnemental. Donc, est-ce que finalement la participation dans la communauté n'est plus quelque chose d'important pour vous?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: M. le président, là n'est pas la question. Le respecté Membre Agathe, je crois qu'il a travaillé sur ce projet-là. Mais malheureusement, on a vu que le projet n'a pas été un succès. C'est peut-être subjectif. Mais nous, nous trouvons au niveau de la Commission avec toutes les contraintes qu'il y a eu, je viens de dire par exemple, il n'y a pas eu assez d'engagement, de participation de plusieurs commissions. Il y a aussi un manque d'*incentive*. Parce que moi, je trouve qu'avec tout ce temps qu'ils ont eu, ils ont eu quand même beaucoup de temps, seulement huit projets ont été complétés sur 15, qui représente à peu près 50%. Est-ce qu'on va commencer à continuer à dépenser l'argent public et on reçoit, on a à la fin, seulement huit projets sur 15 qui ont été complétés. Donc, c'est vrai, nous comptons sur la participation des gens mais nous pensons aussi qu'il faut mettre plus de moyens au sein de la communauté.

C'est la raison pour laquelle que moi, lorsque je suis venu prendre mes responsabilités ici, j'ai dit: il faut que l'Infrastructure publique, l'environnement et le développement communautaire marchent ensemble. Parce que c'est vrai qu'il y a eu des appels à propositions mais nous pensons que nous allons faire ça comme j'ai dit, dans un plus *holistic approach*, un *global approach* où on va mettre plus de moyens à la disposition de ces gens-là pour pouvoir réaliser ces projets. On est pour la participation des gens. C'est la raison pour laquelle, nous disons qu'ensemble, '*nou avancer*' et d'où aussi, nous allons mettre sur pieds les conseils régionaux pour justement palier à ce problème-là. Moi, je pense que des fois, au niveau des

villages, vous savez ce qui se passe, M. le président, c'est que des fois, au sein des villages, comme si c'est le comité qui représente tout le village. Or, il y a beaucoup de conflit.

Nous savons très bien qu'il y a pas mal de conflits à Rodrigues. Je prends par exemple, pour le projet poubelle, nous sommes passé par la RCSS. Donc, je les ai rencontrés. On a discuté sur ce projet-là. Je leur ai dit, je leur ai rassuré d'ailleurs pour leur dire qu'on va justement faire ces projets-là et j'ai commencé à faire le tour des villages pour rencontrer les différents comités de villages pour leur parler et voir aussi quelles sont leurs aspirations, quelles sont leurs demandes au niveau de leurs différents villages et on est en train aussi de compiler tout ça et voir comment aider ces gens-là. Mais le truc, c'est que des fois, mais ça ne reflète pas vraiment la réalité. Par exemple, je prends un exemple, concernant les poubelles, la distribution des poubelles.

Dans un village, la liste des familles qu'ils ont soumise, c'était autour de 90. Or, lorsqu'on va distribuer les poubelles, en réalité, il y a 300 familles. Donc, oui, on veut la participation de tout le monde mais il faut que ce soit bien fait. Il faut les encadrer. Même RCSS, je leur ai dit il faut bien les encadrer. Mais la raison pour laquelle ils sont venus me voir, ils me disent: «Ecoutez, on a une route qui mène dans notre bureau là-bas qui est défectueuse». On fait la route. Pour nous dire, notre intérêt, notre engagement vis-à-vis de ceux qui travaillent avec les différents villageois, les différents villages de l'île. Donc, on va faire le projet mais comme je vous ai dit, j'ai énoncé beaucoup d'items sous lequel on va faire tous ces projets.

Dr Agathe: Donc, on est en train de parler des projets de développement communautaire et on avait déjà un budget de, je suppose que vous êtes au courant pour le budget 2021-2022, il y avait un budget de Rs8 millions qui était prévu pour l'implémentation de ce projet '*Nu Zoli Vilaz*'. Il y a eu deux années où le projet a été mis en œuvre. La première année où il y a eu quasiment 100% de réussite. La deuxième année, il y a des projets qui sont *ongoing*. Cela ne veut pas dire qu'ils n'ont pas été réussis. Il y a des fois des contraintes propres aux projets. Là, vous dites qu'il faut une approche holistique.

C'était des projets qui concernaient des comités de village formulés par des comités de villages. Donc, il y avait un budget qui était prévu. Il y avait un cycle de projets qui était mis en œuvre. Des projets ont été identifiés. Vous arrivez, vous annulez les projets sans consulter avec le RCSS pour savoir si vraiment, donc, il y avait lieu de réorienter tout ça. Donc, c'est pour ça que je pose la question étant donné que les réponses suivaient et que l'objectif, c'était de permettre la participation, est-ce que le principe même de la participation est respecté? Qui

vous est soi-disant cher puisque vous avez beaucoup parlé de la SDGS. Vous voulez être guidés par la SDGS. Aujourd'hui, dans le monde actuel, on se dit que justement à la participation, on peut résoudre beaucoup de problèmes que le gouvernement ne peut pas résoudre. Là, on a aménagé à travers ce projet, des...

Mr Chairperson: Come to your question. I think the Commissioner has....

Dr Agathe: Donc, est-ce que vous avez... Je répète la question. Est-ce que vous avez consulté avec le RCSS avant de prendre la décision de réorienter ce projet? Je ne parle pas de l'ensemble de l'enveloppe que vous avez pour l'environnement et autres, des projets ou en général. C'est mis en œuvre à travers un contrat. Là, c'est la participation.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: M. le président, il y a un nouveau gouvernement, un nouveau commissaire et une nouvelle politique. Certes, j'ai rencontré le président de la RCSS. Je lui ai expliqué. Je lui ai dit: Ben, voilà, on a Rs8 millions. J'arrive après huit mois, il y a toujours Rs8 millions. Et on doit dépenser ces Rs8 millions-là dans trois mois ou quatre mois. Comment faire, M. le président? Eux, ils n'ont rien fait. Pourquoi? Vous devez vous poser la question: pourquoi est-ce que vous n'avez rien fait, pourquoi est-ce que l'argent n'a pas été dépensé? J'arrive, M. le président, après huit mois, on a Rs8 millions qui n'ont pas été dépensés. Qu'est-ce que je fais? A ce moment-là et sachant qu'eux-mêmes, ils n'ont pas donné le bon signal en tant que gouvernement. Nous savons tous que l'année financière commence en juillet. Je pose la question. Pourquoi est-ce que vous n'avez pas distribué cet argent-là à ces comités villages-là vous-mêmes? Vous aviez le temps. Huit mois. Mais moi j'arrive, je dis : Ecoutez, on ne va pas pouvoir implémenter ces projets-là.

J'ai tout la liste des projets qui sont là. On ne va pas pouvoir implémenter ces projets-là et on a pris la décision justement. Afin d'impliquer tout le monde, on a pris la décision avec l'*approval* du Conseil exécutif de recruter 300 jeunes, 300 ambassadeurs de l'environnement. Et c'est avec cet argent-là qu'on paye ces jeunes qui passent. Je pense c'est un projet qui est très important et sur ce projet-là, on a beaucoup de retard: c'est le tri des déchets. Et ces jeunes, ils passent dans toutes les maisons, dans les villages et c'est un projet qui touche toute l'île Rodrigues. Et vous allez me dire l'approche participative est là. On touche tout le monde, toute l'île Rodrigues. Ces gens-là, ces jeunes-là, ils passent dans les maisons pour expliquer aux gens, pour leur dire voilà: vous savez comment faire le tri des déchets, quelle est notre politique etcetera. Donc, moi, je pense que nous avons pris la bonne décision mais nous n'excluons jamais le rôle de RCSS dans tous les projets qu'on va faire concernant la Commission.

Mr Chairperson: I allow only two further questions.

Mr Lisette: I would like to ask the Commissioner for Environment, the Deputy Chief Commissioner, seven projects not complete, does that mean that there has been misappropriation of fund disbursed by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly to the village committees and if yes, what action is he going to take?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: M. le président, même s'il y a eu *misappropriation of fund*, le temps, il nous restait que quelques mois pour réaliser ce projet. On a pris la décision. Oui, bien sûr, on a pris la décision de réorienter le projet et d'expliquer à ces personnes-là.

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: Let the Commissioner answer the question. He has all enough points.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Alors, les sept projets, je pense que ça, c'était première phase. Il y a aussi deuxième phase et troisième phase. Et c'est là où vous avez failli à votre devoir. Vous n'avez pas pu dépenser l'argent quand il le fallait. Parce que moi, je pense que... Il y a une première phase, deuxième phase et troisième phase, vous auriez dû dépenser l'argent. Pourquoi est-ce que moi, j'arrive après les élections, j'arrive je vois il y a Rs8 millions? Où est-ce que vous étiez depuis juillet jusqu'à mars ? Où étiez-vous? M. le président, donc, vous auriez dû. Vous aviez la machinerie, vous aviez tout. Vous aviez l'argent. Vous ne l'avez pas fait. Et nous, nous venons.

Il faut savoir une chose, M. le président. Il faut comprendre une chose. Il faut qu'ils respectent notre politique. Il faut respecter notre politique. Telle est notre décision. C'est la décision du Conseil exécutif de réorienter ce projet-là. Vous pouvez poser maintes questions que vous voulez. C'est notre politique et il faut que vous respectiez notre politique. Nous sommes de ce côté-ci de la Chambre. Nous prenons des décisions dans votre intérêt bien sûr, dans l'intérêt de tout le monde.

Dr Agathe: Je crois que le cycle de projets, c'est-à-dire l'identification de projets, le montage de projets étaient bien avancés. Donc, la question que je voudrais vous poser: est-ce que vous avez sacrifié ce principe? Donc, quand même, restons sur une note positive. Est-ce que vous comptez quand même venir avec d'autres projets à base de participation communautaire. Puisque là, on dirait que vous avez sacrifié ce principe de participation. Tout à l'heure, votre collègue Commissaire avait dit que permettre la participation, c'est de laisser dire aux communautés ce qu'il veut dire et de faire avec. C'est les communautés qui allaient

implémenter ce projet et pas l'Assemblée. Donc, on devait quand même, voir comment implémenter ça. Ce n'était pas simplement une question de l'Assemblée.

Mr Chairperson: Thank you.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: M. le président, mais bien sûr, c'est la raison pour laquelle... Je pense qu'ils ne m'ont pas écouté. C'est la raison pourquoi j'ai dit on va mettre en place les conseils régionaux pour impliquer plus la communauté. Et je viens de dire aussi on va aussi miser sur la participation du RCSS. Et autres choses et j'ai aussi dit les différents... J'ai listé les différents items et le montant alloué pour ce budget-là et bien sûr, il y a certains de ces projets par exemple, on va le faire avec la communauté, bien sûr. Mais ce que je ne comprends pas, pourquoi est-ce que vous, il y avait 15 projets, vous avez réussi à compléter seulement 08 sur 15.

Vous allez me dire quels sont les villages. Vous allez me dire aussi que ce n'est pas vous, ce n'est pas l'Assemblée régionale, il faut dissocier l'Assemblée régionale et les comités villages. Mais c'est vous qui êtes responsables, c'est vous qui étiez à la barre. C'est vous qui faisiez les *policies*. C'est vous qui preniez des décisions dans le Conseil exécutif. Donc, vous êtes fautifs à 100%. Donc, nous, on va revoir tout ça et voir comment aider ces gens-là, à bien sûr, venir et faire les projets et que ces projets-là puissent être pérennisés par d'autres comités villages qui viendront après.

Mr Chairperson: Okay, next question.

TRANSPORT FACILITIES – SPORTS ORGANISATION

(No. B/51) The Fourth Island Region Member (Mr J. P. Spéville) asked the Commissioner for Youth and Sports and Others whether, in regard to transport facilities provided by his Commission to the different sports organisation, he will enlighten the House on the: -

- (a) number and type of sport organisation benefitting therefrom, and
- (b) provider thereof with respect to athletes together with the associated cost implications?

Mr Ravina: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the provision of transport to sport organisation for training and competition remains a priority of my Commission. Actually, transport is provided to 27 Regional Sport Committees and Associations for competition only upon request.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (b) of the question, I wish to inform the House that upon request of Sport organisation and their requirements, my Commission initiates tender exercises for each competition which is organised. As such, transport provider varies.

The cost implications therefore differ depending on the request of the sport organisation as well as to the most responsive offer by bidders.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the vehicles of the Commission are also used for some competition depending on the nature of the activity for conveyance of officials and other supporting units such as medical services.

Thank you.

Mr Speville: Mr Chairperson, Sir, is the Commissioner aware if there is or there have been any transport difficulties faced by different associations/organisations and if so, give reasons why.

Mr Ravina: Mr Chairperson, Sir, due to COVID-19, we have not been able to provide transport for several competition as it is and, we are now after... *Mr Chairperson, Sir, après l'enlèvement du COVID-19 le 1er juillet, maintenant, on va relancer le tender exercise* for private transport is being prepared at the level of my Commission for conveyance of athletes for training.

Mr Chairperson: Okay.

Mr Lisette: I would like to know from the Commissioner whether he is admitting that the fact that there is an issue of transport for all athletes which are being trained at Malabar or other sport institutions like *l'école, Centre de Formation, Centre Rémi*. Is it the case right now?

Mr Ravina: Mr Chairperson, Sir, comme je le redis, je sais qu'il y a un problème mais tout ce problème, on va revoir tous ce problème-là, on va remédier à tous ce problème-là.

Mr Chairperson: Okay, I have been advised that Question B/55 has been withdrawn. Now, next question. Okay, I am sorry. Time is over for question.

GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE ALLIANCE PLUS (GCCA+) CLIMATE-SMART AGRICULTURE PROJECT

(No. B/54) Mr L. D. Baptiste (Second Local Region Member for Grande Montagne) asked the Commissioner for Social Security and Others whether, in regard to the

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Global Climate Change Alliance Plus (GCCA+) Climate-Smart Agriculture Project, headed by his Commission, he can for the benefit of the House: -

- (a) give a brief description thereof;
- (b) state the specific objectives of the project, and
- (c) specify the scope of works and update on the status thereof?

(Withdrawn)

SCHOOL FEEDING PROJECT/PRE-PRIMARY & PRIMARY SCHOOLS

(No. B/55) Ms M. N. Raffaut (Second Island Region Member) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the School Feeding Project in the pre-primary and primary schools, he will, for the benefit of the House, state and table:

- (a) the list of suppliers operating since January 2022 and the list of items being supplied together with their respective cost, and
- (b) if there has been a change in supplier as from March 2022 and, if so, to state to whom and when contract was awarded in relation thereto, giving details about the cost, duration and scope thereof?

(Withdrawn)

STATEMENT BY COMMISSIONERS

NEW ADMINISTRATIVE MEASURES

– IMPORT OF VEHICLES FROM MAURITIUS TO RODRIGUES

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson Sir, thank you for giving me the opportunity to provide this statement regarding the Import of vehicles from Mauritius.

As announced in the Budget by the Chief Commissioner, the repeal of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly (Shipment of Motor vehicle from Mauritius to Rodrigues) Regulation 2021 was one of the top priority actions that will be entertained by this Regional Government.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, this endeavour was also high on the agenda of this side of the House as underscore by the *Discours Programme 2022-2027*, where I quote “Nous visons a abolir les règlements controversés sur l’importation des véhicules de Maurice – *Abolition la loi 10 ans lors masin!*”. Unquote. I have to put on records that we voted against the initial Regulation made in 2017 for obvious and valid reasons and to show our consistency, we

repealed it on *Tuesday 31 May 2022*. I must also add, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, that such move was also the wish of the population of Rodrigues and we are pleased to have been able to accomplish their wish and our gratitude bears no bound to their trust in us.

As a caring government and as intimated in the speech of the Chief Commissioner, once the Regulation of Shipment of Motor Vehicle repealed a new set of conditions for importing vehicles will be concurrently worked out and approved by the Executive Council. These conditions, Mr. Chairperson, are warranted for the safety and security of population and also for a proper control and monitoring on the types and status of vehicles shipped to Rodrigues.

Mr. Chairperson, I led a delegation urgently to Mauritius and held meetings with the Commissioner for Transport at the National Land Transport Authority followed by an in situ visit to a Fitness Centre. This meeting was fruitful, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, and we managed to discuss and afterwards, adopt new set of conditions which I will elaborate further on. I wish, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, to express my gratitude to the office of the Minister of National Land and Transport who organised the meeting and provided valuable assistance to the delegation from Rodrigues in fine-tuning the conditions.

The proposed set of conditions was tabled at the sitting of the Executive Council of the 30 June 2022 and I would like to thank my colleagues for that. Consequently, Mr. Chairperson, the following conditions are now in application :

- All new vehicles will be allowed to be shipped over to Rodrigues without going through a Fitness Centre.
- A Shipping Fitness Certificate will have to be applied and issued by a Registered Centre in Mauritius and should not be older than 45 days.
- Vehicles above 7 years which require a Fitness Certificate by law will still have to apply for a Shipping Fitness Certificate irrespective whether the owner possesses a valid one which is older than 45 days.
- Vehicles shipped to Rodrigues will be checked by the Vehicle Examiner (Rodrigues) to visually assess and match the recently issued certificate of the imported vehicle.
- The same procedure will be applied to vehicles leaving Rodrigues on recommendation by the Commissioner for the NTA.

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- Vehicles coming to Rodrigues to be used on site only or for any special purpose will be dealt on a case-to-case basis by my Office.

Mr. Chairperson, I am pleased to inform the House that a more user friendly import permit form has been devised and I further inform the House that my Commission has at date issued the following shipping permits as per the new conditions set by my commission:

Import Permit	New	Reconditioned	Second Hand
Motorcycle	34	-	2
Car/DP	11	1	13
Goods vehicle	-	-	11
Heavy Locomotive	2	-	-
Export Permit			
Motorcycle	3		
Car/DP	3		
TOTAL	53	1	26

Mr. Chairperson, this makes a total for the past three weeks 80 import permits have been issued by my Commission.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, this is a clear example of “*Passer de la parole aux actes*” and I thank you for your attention.

(Applause)

Mr Chairperson: Yes.

**AGREEMENT – DRUGSTORE OWNERS/SUNDAYS & PUBLIC HOLIDAYS
– ROSTER BASIS**

The Commissioner for Health and Others (Mr J. N. Volbert): M. le président, je souhaite annoncer dans cette auguste Assemblée que suite à ma deuxième rencontre avec les propriétaires des pharmacies privés, une première rencontre, à un mois de cela, a été trouvée pour que ceci travaille pendant les jours de semaine de 8h00 à 17h30, y compris les samedis et qu'il y aura une pharmacie, par alternance, qui travaillera les dimanches de 8h00 à 17h30, y compris les jours feriés dans le but d'assurer un bon service et aussi, à la satisfaction de la population Rodriguaise dans le domaine de la santé.

M. le président, personne n'est à l'abri d'un aléa de santé qui peut survenir en dehors des heures d'ouverture d'une pharmacie et pour le cas de Rodrigues parfois les dimanches, et les jours feriés certaines pharmacies étaient fermées. Si pendant des dizaines d'années le service privé au niveau de la santé a été négligé, nous en tant que gouvernement responsable et prévenant, sommes conscient qu'il faut faire un travail en commun et suivant une même ligne directrice. C'est pourquoi, M. le président, que j'ai tenu à rencontrer les propriétaires des pharmacies privées pour leur proposer l'idée d'une pharmacie en alternance et je tiens à leur remercier pour leurs ouvertures d'esprits car tout de suite, ils ont accepté la proposition.

M. le président, l'objectif de ce présent gouvernement est de s'assurer et de garantir un accès continu aux médicaments et ainsi assurer la sécurité sanitaire à travers l'île non seulement pour notre population mais aussi pour les visiteurs qui parcourent notre île. La commission a pris cette décision à la demande de la population d'avoir un service pharmacologique privé hors des heures normales qui d'habitude était de 8h00 à 3h30 la semaine, et de 8h00 à 11h30 les dimanches et les jours feriés. Les trois pharmacies seront tour à tour de garde sont : Mont Lubin Pharmacie, Pharmacie Darcy de Port Mathurin et la Pharmacie de Port Mathurin.

M. le président, la commission informera la population de la pharmacie qui sera de garde les dimanches et les jours feriés dans un communiqué de la radio qui permettra à la population de savoir où se déplacer pour acheter des médicaments.

Ma commission espère qu'avec ces nouvelles mesures, la population bénéficiera d'un service de qualité. Toutefois, en tant que commissaire de la Santé, je demanderais au Rodriguais d'éviter l'automédication et de consulter des professionnelles de santé. Merci.

(Applause)

ACTIVITIES TO BE HELD – 21TH ANNIVERSARY/RODRIGUES AUTONOMY

The Commissioner for Arts and Culture and Others (Mr J. V. Ravina): M. le Président, comme vous avez dû le constater, nous avons débuté l'année 2022 sur de très bonnes notes. Il y a eu d'abord la stabilité au niveau du COVID-19 à Rodrigues et partout ailleurs, et Rodrigues a connu un changement au niveau politique. Qui dit changement, dit aussi une nouvelle vision et une nouvelle façon d'opérer.

M. le président, cette année sera aussi une année très particulière parce que dans trois mois environ, Rodrigues va vivre un des moments le plus fort de son histoire. Elle célébrera en octobre les 20 ans de son autonomie. Comme nous avons l'habitude de dire, on n'a pas tous les jours 20 ans et cela doit être fêté comme il se doit. Ce sera aussi M. le président, un moment où tous les Rodriguais doivent s'asseoir et se pencher sur où nous en sommes et quel sera notre avenir.

M. le président, pour marquer cet événement outre les activités habituelles telles que la cérémonie officielle dans les écoles pré-primaires, primaires, secondaires et vocationnelles où le message du Chef commissaire est lu, la cérémonie du dépôt de gerbes, la remise de la citoyenneté d'honneur et de la médaille de la reconnaissance, cette année-ci une parade spéciale et innovante marquera les 20 ans de l'autonomie suivie d'un spectacle de son et de lumière à la hauteur des deux décennies que nous allons célébrés.

M. le président, 20 ans c'est un âge de maturité où tout homme et femme doit se poser la question sur son avenir. Rodrigues est arrivée à un âge où elle doit pouvoir faire un vrai bilan de ses 20 ans de son accession au statut d'autonomie et aussi pouvoir se projeter 20 ans en avant. C'est pour cela que pour la première fois à Rodrigues, nous allons organiser dans le cadre des activités de l'autonomie, une grande conférence internationale sur l'autonomie avec la collaboration de l'Université de Maurice, l'Université de la Réunion, l'Université de Paris Nanterre et l'Université de Paris Panthéon Sorbonne et aussi nos têtes pensantes de Rodrigues.

M. le président, cet événement, nous voulons le célébrer avec le peuple, pour le peuple et par le peuple. C'est pour cela que nous avons sollicité la participation de tout un chacun.

M. le président, nous avons tenu une première réunion avec tous nos collaborateurs de différents secteurs Rodrigues et c'est avec enthousiasme qu'ils nous ont proposé de très belles idées en termes d'activités suivantes :

- Nous allons offrir à chaque élève des écoles pré-primaires, primaires, secondaires et vocationnelles un petit pavillon avec l'armoirie de Rodrigues, pour qu'ils puissent se rappeler de l'importance de cette célébration.
- Pour montrer que nous sommes dans une période importante de notre histoire, M. le président, la route de l'autonomie sera vêtue de drapeaux et oriflammes de notre armoirie.
- Nous allons organiser une dictée de l'autonomie en 'Kreol Rodrigue' pour valoriser notre culture et notre langue créole, visant à promouvoir la littérature Rodriguaise à travers nos écrivains locaux.

M. le président, afin d'inclure la participation des jeunes dans la célébration des 20 ans de l'autonomie et en respectant la démocratie participative, des jeunes représentant les divers groupes de jeunes se sont rencontrés durant ce mois de juillet, notamment le 6 juillet au 'Youth Counseling Centre' de Malabar et dimanche dernier à Baladirou. Les jeunes très motivés sont enthousiasmés de vouloir participer dans cet événement marquant les 20 ans de l'autonomie.

M. le président, dans ce contexte, le samedi 8 octobre 2022 sera consacré à notre jeunesse. Un 'Talent Show' sera organisé pour valoriser le savoir-faire et la capacité de nos jeunes à travers différents métiers et talents tels que dans les secteurs de l'entrepreneuriat Jeunesse, agricoles, informatiques, le domaine artistique et esthétique entre autres. Les jeunes de ces différents secteurs auront pour la première fois une plateforme de cette envergure pour exposer leurs talents et savoirs faire et aussi vendre leurs produits et services.

M. le président, je tiens à vous remercier pour votre louable initiative pour la réforme de la 'Rodrigues Youth Parliament'. Dimanche dernier à Baladirou, suite à l'intervention du Chef commissaire, de la vôtre et celle de la Clerk de cette auguste Assemblée, les jeunes ont été très emballés à y faire partie de cette nouvelle 'Youth Parliament'.

M. le président, nous proposons d'organiser :

- Une campagne de sensibilisation dans tous les villages et les données recueillies culmineront vers la conférence internationale sur l'autonomie.
- En cette période spéciale, inviter les restaurants de l'île à valoriser les menus typiques de Rodrigues.
- Lancer un timbre-poste commémoratif.

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- Eriger un monument qui marquera la célébration des 20 ans de l'autonomie et un logo qui témoignera de cet événement.

M. le président, les femmes ont une place importante dans l'accession de Rodrigues au statut d'île autonome, c'est pour cela que nous allons aussi organiser des activités qui marqueront la contribution de la femme dans la construction de l'île Rodrigues d'aujourd'hui. Nous allons avec l'aide de la section des Sports, la commission de la Santé et celle de la Famille, organiser un *trail de la famille* où tous les composants de la société Rodriguaise peuvent participer.

M. le président, comme je l'ai dit, nous aurons la participation de tout un chacun car pour la première fois, nous proposons d'organiser un 'Open Day' dans toutes les commissions pour valoriser le rôle des fonctionnaires dans le fonctionnement de l'autonomie de Rodrigues.

M. le président, comme vous le constaterez par les activités et programmes proposés, tous les composants de notre société Rodriguaise s'en retrouveront.

Pour conclure, j'invite tous nos membres ici présents dans cette assemblée et aussi toute la population Rodriguaise à participer massivement dans nos activités pour fêter dignement ces 20 ans de l'autonomie avec fierté et solidarité. Merci, M. le président.

(Applause)

ADJOURNMENT

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I beg to move that the House be now adjourned to Tuesday 30 August 2022 at 10.30 hours. Thank you.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner, rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Mr Chairperson: The House stands adjourned.

At 3.09 p.m., the Assembly was, on its rising adjourned to Tuesday 30 August 2022 at 10.30 a.m.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

PLANTATIONS – BEANS, POTATOES & ONIONS –YEAR 2021 & 2022

(No. B/52) Mrs R.M.F. Gaspard Pierre Louis, C.S.K. (Minority Leader) asked the Commissioner for Agriculture and Others whether, in regard to plantations of beans, potatoes and onions for the year 2021 and 2022, he will give details on the: -

- (a) number of planters concerned region wise;
- (b) amount of seeds, the varieties and the prices thereof offered to planters;
- (c) facilities given to the planters yearly and the market prices obtained or agreed, and
- (d) expected yield for the different crops for this year?

Reply: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that the total number of planters involved in red beans, potatoes and onion production on the island are currently as follows:

Red Beans:	404
Potatoes:	259
Onion:	345

Most Red Bean planters come from Regions 1 and 2 while for potatoes they are from Regions 2 and 6 and for onion from Regions 3 and 6.

As regards to part (b) with respect to volume of seeds sold to these planters in 2020, the figures stood as follows:

- Red beans: 1281 kg
- Onion seeds Bellarose: 37.4 kg
- Onion seed Francia: 13.9 kg
- Potato spunta: 9046 kg

The selling prices of these seeds were:

- Rs 140/kg for red beans
- Rs 4050/kg for onion seeds Bella Rose
- Rs 3600/kg for onion seeds Francia
- Rs 52 kg for potato seeds

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, to be in line with the policy set by my Commission to boost agricultural production in Rodrigues, the following facilities are provided to planters of these specific crops:

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- (i) Provision of mechanization facilities
- (ii) Provision of organic fertilizer to onion growers
- (iii) 50% subsidy on seeds
- (iv) Guaranteed buying price for onion from the Agricultural and Marketing Board as follows:

Rs/kg

- (1) Bellarose - Rs 40,000 per ton
- (2) Francia - Rs 36,000 per ton
- (3) Local - Rs 40,000 per ton

Note that these are the floor prices for three onion varieties; the only commodity which price is fixed by the government.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, given the prevailing climatic condition which is nowadays unpredictable owing to climate change, the expected yield for the different crops are as follows:

- (1) Onion (Bella Rose) - 7.0 Ton/acre
- (2) Onion (Francia) - 8.0 Ton/acre
- (3) Beans - 0.5 Ton/acre
- (4) Potatoes - 8.0 Ton/acre

Mr Chairperson, Sir, in view of encouraging these planters to produce more of these crops, my Commission approved a subsidy of 50% on all seeds mentioned above.

Consequently, onion, red beans and potato planters are being refund 50% on their total seeds purchases by my Commission upon submission of their receipts. Furthermore, the method of subsidy has been democratized to allow all seeds producers and suppliers in Rodrigues to benefit from such facility and not only one seed supplier as it was the case in the past. As such, local seed's producers having invested in this *filière* can attract more clients as their prices will be more competitive.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I wish to inform the House that procurement of seeds in general has become very difficult nowadays. Several large countries are facing tremendous effort to source seeds to ensure the continuity of their agriculture. This is why my Commission has made local seed production a priority. Local seeds producers will be provided facilities to produce

more seeds while my Commission will resume possession of all its agricultural stations to put them under seeds production.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, Rodrigues we will never reach food sovereignty if we do not produce our own seeds.

**WORKING RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RODRIGUES REGIONAL ASSEMBLY &
MESSRS. J.F.C. AND J.A.**

(No. B/53) Mrs R.M.F. Gaspard Pierre Louis, C.S.K. (Minority Leader) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, he will inform the House of the working relationship between the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and Messrs. J.F.C and J.A, detailing on the: -

(a) roles and responsibilities each hold therewith, indicating if and when appointment was made in relation thereto, and

(b) respective conditions of service including any facilities, allowances or benefits being provided?

Reply: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I would like to inform the House that Mr J. F. C. has been identified and recommended for employment as Adviser in Communication Matters at the Rodrigues Regional Assembly. However, procedures for approval in respect of his appointment is still ongoing.

As regards to Mr J. A., the latter has proposed to offer advisory services to assist the Rodrigues Regional Assembly on a pro bono basis in the field of economic development. The Executive Council has, at its meeting held on 22 April 2022, approved Mr J. A's offer who is being provided with air tickets, accommodation, transport and subsistence allowance as per PRB rates.

**FISHERIES DIVISION – NO. OF FISHERIES POSTS/MOBILE
SQUADES/MEASURES UNDERTAKEN**

(No. B/56) Dr H. Agathe (First Local Region Member for Grande Montagne) asked the Commissioner for Agriculture and Others whether, in regard to Fisheries Division in Rodrigues, he will state the:

(a) number of fisheries posts thereof, respectively, indicating in each case the number of Officers posted thereat, highlighting patrolling facilities put at the disposal thereof;

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(b) number of mobile squads thereof, the date of set up and scope of work of same, and

(c) measures undertaken during the past five years to empower Fisheries Protection Officers?

FAMILY FARMING PROJECT/BUDGET ESTIMATES 2021-2022

(No. B/57) Ms M. N. Raffaut (Second Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner for Women Affairs and Others whether, in regard to the Family Farming Project, in the budget estimates 2021–2022, she will, for the benefit of the House:

- (a) give a brief description of the project;
- (b) state the specific objectives thereof;
- (c) provide an update on the status thereof, and
- (d) the amount spent so far under the respective item vote?

Reply: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Family Farm Project is a budgetary measure and consists of providing assistance to eligible vulnerable Rodriguan families so as to empower them to improve their living conditions through income generating activities mainly in livestock and agricultural production.

The specific objectives of the project are to:

- (i) Promote family welfare and improve the living conditions of needy families;
- (ii) Encourage active participation of all members of the family in the realisation of a common household project;
- (iii) Empowering vulnerable families to produce their own agricultural products that will be used to cater for their household's needs;
- (iv) Generate income through the sale of excess produce.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, with regard to the Family Farm Project in the budget estimates 2021-2022, I am informed that the voted provision of Rs 1,250,000 under the Vote Item No. 28212.030 - Family Farming Project, was approved by the former Executive Council to be spent as follows:

- (a) to invite applications for Family Farm Project as per eligibility criteria up to an amount of Rs 250,000 (20% of the voted provision), and

- (b) to award Family Farm Project to beneficiaries of New Social Housing Scheme as per list to be submitted by the Commission for Housing up to an amount of Rs 1,000,000 (80% of the voted provision).

I am also informed that the communiqué to enlist potential beneficiaries for the Family Farm Project for financial year 2021-2022 was launched by the Commission for Family Welfare and Others on 26 November 2021 and at the closing date to submit applications which was set on 10 December 2021 - 55 applications were received.

The Screening Committee in its evaluation report dated 10 March 2022 received at my Commission on 14 March 2022 has recommended a list of 46 beneficiaries who are eligible to benefit from the Family Farm Project.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, since the Rs 250,000 allocated was insufficient to award the scheme to all the beneficiaries who were found eligible to benefit from the project from my Commission, the Executive Council, at its meeting held on 13 May 2022, has decided to approve that the total voted provision for the project is being devoted to award the scheme to all the eligible candidates who have applied for the scheme at my Commission.

The award of the scheme to eligible beneficiaries, which amounted to 42, after confirmation was received from other Commissions and National Empowerment Fund, that four (4) among the 46 beneficiaries who were recommended for award of the scheme by the Screening Committee, are already beneficiaries of other project from other institutions, was held on 10 June 2022 whereby, an agreement was signed between the beneficiaries and my Commission. One beneficiary among the 42 decline the award after signature of agreement. Procurement exercises for the purchase of materials and equipment to be provided to beneficiaries under the scheme have already been initiated and delivery of materials and equipment to beneficiaries has already started and is being done progressively as soon as delivery is done by suppliers.

The assistance provided to eligible beneficiaries under the scheme is as follows:

- (i) Up to a maximum of Rs 20,000 for crop production in terms of seeds, gardening tools, chain link fence and wooden poles (*rondin*) for enclosure, and
- (ii) Up to a maximum of Rs 30,000 for livestock rearing in terms of chicken, chicken feed, materials to build a chicken coop.

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Mr. Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (d) of the question, I am informed that the amount spent to date under the item vote No. 28-212-030 – Family Farming Project is as follows:

- Rs 77,514 in the budget of financial year 2021-2022
- Rs 236,658 in the budget of financial year 2022-2023

Payment is still on-going and will be completed by the end of this month.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

CONSTRUCTION – BUS TERMINAL/RIVIERE COCO

(No. B/58) Mr J. P. Spéville (Fourth Island Region Member) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, in regard, to the construction of the bus terminal at Rivière Coco, he will, for the benefit of the House, state: -

- (a) the cost of the project;
- (b) to whom the contract was awarded;
- (c) the starting and completion date of the project, and
- (d) if any other facilities will be made available to the public thereat?

Reply: Mr Chairperson Sir, as regards to part (a) of the question, the cost of the project is Rs 5,438,141.48.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am informed that Works Order was issued to Transinvest Construction Ltd under the annual rate contract Maintenance, Upgrading, Resurfacing and Construction of Roads in Rodrigues.

As regards to part (c), I am informed that the start date was 27 August 2021 and works have been practically completed on 20 December 2021.

With regard to part (d), Mr Chairperson, this project comprises the construction of parking facilities for buses, toilet and bus shelter. The parking area which was entrusted to Transinvest Construction Ltd has been practically completed and is now in use. I am also informed that necessary actions have been initiated for the construction of toilet and bus shelter for this present financial year. The area will be further embellished and harmonized with the existing environment.

**TRIANGULAR TOURNAMENT/MAURITIUS WOMEN NATIONAL TEAM
– 05 TO 09 JULY 2022**

(No. B/59) Mr J. P. Spéville (Fourth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner for Youth and Sports and Others whether, in regard, to the Triangular Tournament for the Mauritius Women National Team, held in Mauritius from 05 to 09 July 2022, he will, for the benefit of the House, state and table: -

- (a) the scope and outcome of the tournament;
- (b) the cost incurred therefor and facilities given to the members of the delegation, and
- (c) composition of the delegation, highlighting each delegate's responsibilities?

Reply: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I wish to inform the House that the Mauritius Football Association (MFA) in a mail dated 17 June 2022 invited the Regional Women Football team (Senior) to participate in an International Friendly Women Football Tournament with Seychelles to be held in Mauritius from 03 to 10 July 2022.

My Commission and the Rodrigues Football Association considered this invitation as an opportunity for our local women players to:-

- (i) evaluate their level with their counterparts of the Indian Ocean;
- (ii) enhance ties of friendship with football players of our different people;
- (iii) have a chance to be identified to qualify for the national selection in Mauritius, and
- (iv) provide an opportunity for our coaches to perform on an international level and to thereafter share their experience locally.

We therefore agreed that a selection will be set up by the Rodrigues Football Association to participate in the competition.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, based on the report of Mr Tanwee, Coach, who was also the head of the delegation, our team did their best in spite of the lack of training.

At the level of my Commission and the Rodrigues Football Association, we take this result as a baseline to create both men and women selection which can participate in such events in the future. The same policy to be extended to men football and other sports team.

I wish to inform the House that despite the team lost five (5) goals to nil, both against Mauritius and Seychelles, the competition has been fruitful for Rodrigues since as per

declaration of the National Women Coach four (4) players may be selected to form part of the Mauritian selection.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (b) of the question, the costs incurred and facilities given to the delegation sum up to Rs 204,930 as follows: -

- (i) 22 air tickets amounting to Rs 152,680;
- (ii) stipend to 25 members of delegation amounting to Rs 20,000;
- (iii) equipment (track suits) amounting to Rs 16,250, and
- (iv) shin guard amounting to Rs 6,000.

The cost for accommodation, shoes for players, shorts and jerseys were borne by the Mauritius Football Association.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, in response to part (c.) of the question, I am tabling the list of the delegation and their responsibilities.

POLYTECHNICS MAURITIUS LTD - TRAINEES

(No. B/60) Mrs R.M.F. Gaspard Pierre Louis, C.S.K. (Minority Leader) asked the Chief Commissioner Whether, in regard to the training project in collaboration with Polytechnics Mauritius Ltd, he will state and table the number of trainees and where matters stand concerning the upgrade of the building identified to house same?

Reply: Mr Chairperson, Sir, as the House is aware, in the context of reforms in the education system, much emphasis is being laid upon promoting the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sector as an attractive opted pathway for students who opt to follow a skilled based education and professional training.

Since one of the major weaknesses of the TVET sector in Rodrigues is the lack of TVET providers, the Commission for Vocational Training has sought the collaboration of various training institutions in Mauritius to supplement the existing Training Centres in Rodrigues. Following consultations, Polytechnics Mauritius Ltd – a Government Owned Corporate body – has shown its interest to operate on a full time basis in Rodrigues to address the skilling and up skilling of the population.

I am further informed that Cabinet at its meeting held on 28 May 2021 has agreed to Polytechnics Mauritius Ltd signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the Rodrigues Regional Assembly for the setting up of a Polytechnics Mauritius Campus at Citron Donis

which would have as main focus the revamping of the Technical and Vocational Training sector for the development of a skilled workforce which is required in areas deemed as high importance to the socio economic development of Rodrigues.

Pending the upgrading of the building at Citron Donis to house the technical school, Polytechnics Mauritius Ltd has started its operations in Rodrigues since October 2021 on a blended mode at the Antoinette Prudence Human Resource Development Centre. Currently, 106 full time students are enrolled in the following four programmes:

1. Diploma in Interactive and Digital Media;
2. Diploma in Leisure Management;
3. Diploma in IT (Cyber Security), and
4. Diploma in Industrial Logistics.

These programmes are being delivered over a total duration of two and a half years (2½) to three (3) years inclusive of a period of internship.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am informed of the following regarding the status of the upgrading of the building at Citron Donis to set up a Technical School to be run by Polytechnics Mauritius Ltd:

- (i) The project for the setting up of a Technical School has been entrusted to the Global Consultancy Services for Selected Development Projects, that is, Luxconsult (Mtius) Ltd in Rodrigues since year 2020;
- (ii) Upon finalisation of the scope of works and cost estimates, the final draft bidding documents were submitted to the Central Procurement Board for vetting on 17 January 2022;
- (iii) On 18 February 2022, the Central Procurement Board requested that amendments be brought to the bidding documents;
- (iv) The Consultant Luxconsult (Mtius) Ltd was requested on 23 February 2022 to submit amended documents directly to the Central Procurement Board;
- (v) On 12 May 2022, the Central Procurement Board after examination of the draft revised bidding documents convened a meeting with the Rodrigues Regional Assembly in the presence of the Consultant to have the bidding documents cleared;

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- (vi) On 21 June 2022, the Consultant submitted the revised bidding document to the Central Procurement Board;
- (vii) In a letter dated 27 June 2022, the Central Procurement Board requested further amendments to the documents and Bill of Quantities;
- (viii) Subsequently, on 05 July 2022, the Consultant has submitted the revised bidding documents;
- (ix) To date, the draft bidding documents are still being vetted by the Central Procurement Board, and
- (x) Upon finalisation of the bidding documents, it is expected that the upgrading works for the setting up of a Technical School will start by the end of this year and the duration of the works will be 10 months.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to inform the House that pending the completion of upgrading works at Citron Donis and owing to the several constraints being faced by Polytechnics Mauritius Ltd (PML) to deliver courses at Antoinette Prudence Human Resource Development Centre, the Executive Council at its meeting held on Friday 03 June 2022 has approved that, pending its opening, the Community School at Baie Malgache be put temporarily at the disposal of PML to deliver courses in a more conducive environment with adequate infrastructure to the students.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am tabling the number of students for each course being delivered by Polytechnics Mauritius Ltd in Rodrigues and the status concerning the upgrading works for the setting up of a technical school at Citron Donis.

CONSTRUCTION – SAPPONAIRE TO ANSE FEMIE ROAD

(No. B/61) Mr N. Lisette (First Local Region Member for Baie aux Huitres) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the construction of the Saponaire to Anse Femie road, he will, for the benefit of the House, state:

- (a) the scope of works executed and payment made therefor, as at date;
- (b) where matters stand as regards to Phase 2 of the project, and
- (c) if he intends to proceed further with the construction of the road leading to St. Mathieu Chapel?

Reply: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that the road from Saponaire to Anse Femie is of length 2.3 km and total estimated cost Rs 104 m. The works is being executed in phases. As at now, two works orders have been issued as follows:-

- Works Order No.1 for length of 650 m has already been completed.
- Works Order No.2 for length 320 m is ongoing and shall be completed by end of July 2022. The scope of works comprises earthwork, masonry works, construction of drains, laying of kerbs, spalls and crusherun and asphaltic concrete work.

The total value of works certified to date is Rs 27,386,019 and the total estimated cost for both works orders issued is Rs 36,328,295.78

With regard to part (c) of the question, Mr Chairperson, Sir, concerning the construction of the road to reach St. Mathieu Chapel which is of around 1350 m of length coupled with an estimated cost of Rs 68 m., same is under consideration and is included in the priority list of road projects, in Rodrigues, subject to Executive Council's approval.