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No. 6 of 2023

RODRIGUES

FIFTH REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENTARY

DEBATES

(HANSARD)

(UNREVISED)

TUESDAY 18 APRIL 2023

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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, 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, Prisons & Reforms Institutions (Administration)
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

Deputy Clerk - Clair, Miss Marie Chrismélanie

Serjeant-at-Arms - Perrine, Mr Joseph Laval

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RODRIGUES

Fifth Regional Assembly

Debate No. 6 of 2023

Sitting of Tuesday 18 April 2023

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

The National Anthem was played

(Mr Chairperson in the Chair)

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ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

CONSTRUCTION/UPGRADING OF ROAD – RIVIÈRE COCO TO SONGES

(No. B/31) **Mrs M. A. L. ALLAS (Fifth Island Region Member)** asked the Commissioner for Agriculture and Others whether, in regard to coffee production in Rodrigues, he will inform the House on: -

- (a) the date of incorporation of the Rodrigues Coffee Company Ltd and its composition;
- (b) when the purchasing and marketing thereof will start in Rodrigues, and
- (c) if the characterization and the authentication thereof has been completed?

Mr Perrine: Mr Chairperson Sir, I wish to inform the House that the Rodrigues Coffee Company Ltd was incorporated on 02 March 2023 with Registration Number: 195011. The composition of the Board is as follows: -

- | | | | |
|-------|------------------------|---|----------|
| (i) | Mr. Rib Benley AGATHE | - | Chairman |
| (ii) | Mr. James Kurt AH KIAM | - | Director |
| (iii) | Mr. Josier COLLET | - | Director |
| (iv) | Mr. Dhanesswar DUMUR | - | Director |

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the purchasing of coffee from planters has already started since the beginning of March 2023 and is ongoing. The berries are being processed at the Coffee Processing Unit at St Gabriel. Marketing and processing of same will be done in two to three months as the berries will have to be dried to reach a percentage humidity of 12/13 %.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the characterisation and the authentication of the Rodrigues Local Coffee has been initiated, but not yet completed.

My Commission is in liaison with CIRAD Office of Reunion Island to complete that exercise.

Dr Agathe: Alors, je voudrais demander au Commissaire, *Mr Chairperson, Sir*, quel est le modèle économique de ce projet suite à cette décision de créer une entreprise? Est-ce que ce choix a été fait en concertation avec les planteurs et est-ce que leurs intérêts sont suffisamment pris en compte ?

Mr Perrine: Bien sûr, M. le président, il y a eu un *business plan* et un *feasibility study* et c'est après avoir soumis ce *business plan* qu'on a décidé d'aller de l'avant avec la compagnie. Vous savez, le *marketing* de ce produit est essentiel et capital pour le succès et on ne peut pas laisser le management de faire le marketing de ce produit dans la main des amateurs. Les planteurs auront toutes formations, toutes assistances pour produire mais le marketing, la négociation qui doit se faire, c'est très haut niveau. Ce n'est pas à la hauteur des planteurs pour l'instant. C'est pourquoi on a dû faire appel. On a dû mettre en place une compagnie pour une bonne gestion, entretenir des négociations à haut niveau pour qu'on puisse commercialiser ce produit.

Comme j'ai déclaré à la télévision, le café de Rodrigues, c'est de l'or. Il faut savoir maintenant le commercialiser, le vendre. Bien sûr, nous ne pourrions pas satisfaire tout le monde mais Rodrigues va vendre son café au plus.... S'il n'y a pas un bon management, il n'y a pas de bonnes négociations pour aller négocier au niveau international, c'est-à-dire, c'est un projet qui va faillir, qui ne va pas apporter le succès qu'on pense et ne va pas aider Rodrigues à avoir des recettes et des planteurs aussi à trouver de l'économie dans leurs produits.

Dr Agathe: Donc, le projet, je posais la question quand même sur le modèle économique. C'est-à-dire, comment va s'effectuer le partage des valeurs qu'on va créer au niveau de la filière. Les producteurs sont quand même à la base de la création de la filière. Donc, comment imaginez-vous, comment avez-vous conçu la question de la répartition des valeurs au sein de la filière ? Parce qu'il faut quand même encourager et leur donner priorité. C'est eux qui sont quand même à la base de la création de la valeur. Donc, vous n'avez pas répondu la question, M. le président. Le Commissaire n'a pas répondu à la question sur comment va s'effectuer le partage de la valeur, où est-ce que le café va être commercialisé, qu'est-ce que cela veut dire au plus haut point.

Mr Chairperson: Okay, I am sorry but according to the Standing Order, I have no... on the answer of the Commissioner. Moreover, when you look at the question, the question, I

have given you some *marge de manoeuvre* for your supplementary question but it is not in line with the substantive question. Are you contesting my ruling? Okay. Thank you.

Mr Perrine: M. le président, vous savez, il faut faire attention. Je comprends la question. Vous savez, il y a 15 lots pour les coopératives qui sont un petit peu les planteurs qui sont engagés. Mais si vous voyez leur cultivation, qu'est-ce qu'ils sont en train de cultiver, il y a neuf lots qui ont été abandonnés. Il y a seulement trois lots. Comment voulez-vous qu'on commence à... On a discuté, on a invité tout le monde. C'est-à-dire, on a participé dans une discussion pour savoir. Le problème, il faudrait qu'on trouve un bon management, un bon négociant, quelqu'un qui peut apporter le café Rodrigues hors de Rodrigues, hors de la région. En Europe que le café de Rodrigues vaut de l'or ; ce n'est pas à Rodrigues. Parce que si vous faites... On a fait la dégustation. La majorité de personnes n'a pas apprécié le café de Rodrigues mais pourtant, ce ne sont pas des connaisseurs. Ce sont les connaisseurs qui vont venir à Rodrigues.

C'est en Europe que le café de Rodrigues va pouvoir trouver le marché des négociations. D'ailleurs, Rodrigues va participer à Salon de Café International à Paris et à Milan. C'est à partir de là que les gens, comme j'ai dit, les négociations vont venir à Rodrigues sur le café unique que nous avons à Rodrigues et pour préserver cette valeur de ce café, ce n'est pas de produire des cafés bas de gamme qu'on peut vendre à Rodrigues à n'importe qui. Ce n'est pas ça, l'objectif. Je dois vous dire que le Gouvernement régional va investir beaucoup d'argent et on aura revenu sur ce café dans deux ou trois ans ; pas maintenant. Mais je comprends, les planteurs vont avoir leurs parts. Ce n'est pas qu'il y a une compagnie qui va prendre de l'argent. Non, c'est une compagnie de l'Etat. Les planteurs auront leurs parts d'après leur *cost of production* qu'ils ont fait mais nous, nous allons chercher notre meilleur prix. D'ailleurs, nous avons eu des offres pour 200 € le kilo. Par contre, quand on achète à Rodrigues, à Rs80 le kilo. Mais s'il faudrait avoir la quantité, la masse critique pour pouvoir vendre. C'est ça, l'important. L'important, c'est qu'il faut produire du café dans le.... de Rodrigues pour pouvoir exporter. Notre objectif, c'est de produire 5 tonnes. A ce moment-là, le projet va être viable, va être rentable. Merci.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Commissioner for Agriculture mentioned that the company was incorporated on 07 March.

Mr Chairperson: Your mic, please.

Mr Lisette: 07 march 2023. I would like to know whether he has tabled a table copy of the letter of incorporation as per the investment regulation that was... Investment Management Regulation are passed in this Assembly itself.

Mr Perrine: Je ne sais pas. Je vais vérifier cette information parce que je me rappelle la dernière fois, on a parlé sur le café et je vais vérifier. Et si ce n'est pas fait, on va le faire. Il n'y a pas de problème là-dessus....

Mr Ramdally: M. le président, au départ, donc, à la prise des fonctions du Commissaire, le Commissaire avait parlé d'un projet mal ficelé, donc, le projet de café. Donc, j'aimerais bien lui demander quels ont été les changements qu'il a apportés au projet, à quel niveau et quels ont été les résultats de ces changements depuis qu'il est en fonction.

Mr Perrine: M. le président, je n'ai pas eu de détails. On a changé complètement le projet. C'est-à-dire, l'orientation du projet. Parce que dans la façon de faire le *processing* même a été modifiée, les équipements qui ont été achetés. C'est un vrai gaspillage d'argent. Tous ces équipements se trouvent à Citronnelle abandonnés et on doit maintenant...les négociations, il y a une délégation va partir pour Maurice pour voir les équipements qu'il faudrait acheter, appropriés pour.... Je ne vais pas entrer dans les détails. J'ai dit, c'est un beau projet mais c'était mal ficelé. On a remis dans la bonne direction. Maintenant, vous allez voir dans les années à venir qu'est-ce que Rodrigues peut produire.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I have another question for the Commissioner for Agriculture. There is the Cooperative of Planters who are indulged in the plantation and production of coffee and I understand that as at now, there are some planters who are already selling the product not to the company that you have set up but abroad. I would like to know from him whether the planters will have any contract agreement to ensure that the coffee production comes to the company or will they be free to sell the products to any potential purchaser.

Mr Perrine: M. le président, il y aura un contrat. Il y aura le *contract planting*. Ça veut dire les planteurs qui vont bénéficier de l'assistance de la formation, de l'aide de la Commission. Il y aura un contrat. Ils doivent prendre leurs produits à la compagnie. Mais je dois dire que peut-être eux-mêmes, ils vont venir parce qu'ils vont voir la différence entre les prix. Et puis aussi, il y a le label *Made in Rodrigues* à ce moment-là que le café aura. Et avec ce label, mais je pense que les gens vont cesser de voir le café de Rodrigues, le vrai café de

Rodrigues. Mais on ne peut pas vous savez, libre commerce, on ne peut pas obliger les gens, empêcher les gens à vendre mais de par la qualité et le prix qu'on va offrir et les gens vont venir vendre avec un....

Mr Lisette: Yes, Mr Chairperson, Sir, this is right. The question for Mr Agathe was very pertinent in the sense that what is going to be the kickback of the profit that is going to be provided to the planters. Otherwise, if you are not going to guarantee them with a particular percentage of the profit, of course, they will have all the attitude, all the freedom to sell the product not to the company but to any supplier. The question is how are you going to ensure that this is going to happen and if you are going for... if you say that there is a business plan which has been set up, I am sure that you should have already determined what is the percentage of kickback that should be given to the planters.

Mr Perrine: En sus des *incentives* que la Commission va offrir, il y aura aussi des *incentives* sur la quantité, bonus qu'on appel, que la coopérative va vendre ou bien peut-être planteur. Vous savez, on ne connaît pas le prix. Je vous donne un exemple. Au départ, on devait acheter le café à Rs40 le kilo. Mais quand on a eu les commandes pour 200 € le kilo, on a doublé le prix. C'est-à-dire, la compagnie a doublé le prix. C'est-à-dire, Rs80 le kilo. Ça vous montre que presque... on va retourner la majorité même parti de l'argent qu'on va recevoir vers les planteurs. Mais ça ne peut pas se faire au départ. Il faudrait tout le café pour comprendre en négociant. Vous allez le négocier avec Café Express de Paris qui vous demande tant de kilo. Ils vous donnent un prix. A partir de là, vous faites votre profit. Je dois dire aussi qu'à Rodrigues, il y a différente qualité. Ce n'est pas tout le café de Rodrigues qui va être vendu, qui va être haut de gamme. Il y a des régions, des lots qui produisent des cafés bas de gamme. Alors, ça aussi, il y aura un genre de grade pour savoir. Mais seulement, je peux assurer la Chambre que cette compagnie, ce n'est pas une compagnie pour faire du profit. C'est une compagnie justement pour aider la production. Merci.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, le Commissaire a parlé d'un projet totalement mal ficelé dont il a dû tout revoir. Je sais que dans le cadre de ce projet, il y avait eu des tests qui avaient été effectués par rapport à la qualité de ce *soluble sugars*. On sait que c'est cela qui détermine la vraie qualité du café et que cette qualité, ça démarre depuis la semence jusqu'à bien sûr, prix les personnes dégustent. Est-ce que dans le cadre de ces tests qu'on avait fait, on avait identifié les endroits bien spécifiques pour collecter les semences ? On avait décidé aussi que seule la coopérative sera apte à faire la propagation et surtout aussi, on avait identifié des

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endroits bien spécifiques par rapport aux conditions propices pour avoir cette qualité. Est-ce que dans le cadre de ce changement complet, le Commissaire va changer aussi tout ça ?

Mr Perrine: M. le président, on a changé ce qu'il fallait changer.

(Applause)

Mr Perrine: Par exemple, pour les analyses que l'ancien négociant avait porté à La Réunion. Il est mort avec les *samples* qu'il apportait. Nous, nous avons repris d'autres *samples* et d'une façon systématique, c'est-à-dire à partir de deux endroits, les lots, à ce moment-là, on envoyait en France et aller en Belgique pour être analysé. Les réponses sont arrivées et on sait maintenant quel lot, qui produit des cafés haut de gamme, quel lot, '*ki*' bas de gamme et cetera. Mais seulement, je dois reconnaître que ce n'est pas tous les endroits. On a fait à Saint Gabriel et aux alentours. Mais là, on pense faire Rodrigues entier, enfin, tout le *coffee belt* au centre du pays pour savoir exactement. Ça va prendre un peu de temps. *We will not be hurry up*. On va le faire. On va demander. Parce que vous savez, on ne peut pas forcer les gens. Et on va donner la formation, on va aller encadrer ces planteurs-là.

Il y aura des experts qui vont venir, pas seulement de Maurice et de La Réunion, peut-être international aussi qui vont venir nous expliquer. Parce que vous savez, le café, c'est beaucoup d'argent. C'est de l'or au niveau international. Après le pétrole sur le marché international, c'est le café. Beaucoup d'argent mais il y a beaucoup de pays qui produisent le café mais bas de gamme. Mais seulement, il y a seulement quelques pays qui produisent ce café de haute gamme et Rodrigues, ça, on n'a pas changé. Parce que le café, quelques kilos produisent un café spécifique, unique à Rodrigues. C'est ça qui est important. C'est ça qu'on va voir à partir de là, *we are going to build up* et à partir de là. C'est ça. C'est-à-dire, c'est ça que je dis. Je parle de mettre le bœuf devant la charrue. C'est-à-dire, à partir de là, on va essayer de faire le *build-up* du café autour de Rodrigues. Merci.

Mr Chairperson: Next question!

ANIMAL FEEDS SCHEME

(No. B/32) Mrs M. A. L. ALLAS (Fifth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner for Agriculture and Others whether, in regard to the Animal Feeds Scheme, he will inform the House on: -

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- (a) the number of farmers having so far benefitted therefrom and if there will be a second phase;
- (b) the name of the supplier therefor together with the technical description and nutritional specification of the feed being distributed to farmers, and
- (c) if he is contemplating to extend the scheme to pig farmers?

Mr Perrine: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the number of farmers having benefited from animal feeds are as follow:

- i. Trèfles Centre: 184
- ii. Citronelle and Port-Sud Est: 472
- iii. La Ferme Region: 631.

Making a total of 1287.

There is a second phase which has started in more critical areas like, La Ferme and Citronelle (Mt Goyaves, Baladirou, Camp Baptiste, and Dans Bebe for a total of 95 farmers). The second phase will continue until the ruminants have recovered from the severe drought in 2022. Feed distribution (Second Phase) will resume upon reception of the next feed consignment, about 200 tons which have been ordered. Hopefully, we are receiving by the next boat.

As regards part (b), the name of the supplier is Livestock Feeds Limited and the nutritional specification of the feed being distributed to farmers are as follows: -

- (i) Composition:
 - 1. Cereals and by-products, Lucerne or other fodder, oilseed cakes, molasses, minerals, premix of vitamins and traces of elements. Vegetable oil and preservatives.
- (ii) Nutritional Guarantees:
 - 1. Moisture 12.5%

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2. Protein 13%
3. Fat 2.5 %
4. Fibre 13%
5. Calcium 1.5%
6. T. Phosphorus 0.3%

Mr Chairperson, Sir, actually, my Commission is updating the list of sow breeders on the field and around the island with the objective of assisting genuine sow breeders through feed scheme.

I am tabling a list of feed that we are supplying, specification of feed that we are supplying, which is called Beef Plush Mash. Thank you.

De Agathe: M. le président, je voudrais demander au Commissaire de l'agriculture quand est-ce que la procédure a été lancée, la procédure d'achat?

Mr Perrine: Je n'ai pas les informations mais je peux dire que je pense c'est au commencement du mois de mars. Je vais vérifier. Mais je suis au courant qu'on est en train de faire un *assessment*, évaluer les *bids* que nous avons et d'ici la fin de la semaine, on va savoir. Le contrat va être *awarded* à qui et on va commencer la distribution.

Dr Agathe: M. le président, le sens de la question, c'était pour savoir parce que nous savons qu'en fait, ce plan est prévu pour pallier aux méfaits de la sécheresse. Donc, pendant la sécheresse, il y avait un problème de manque de forage et la décision a été prise, donc, de fabriquer un aliment qui permettrait aux animaux de reprendre. Alors, c'est pour ça on voudrait savoir quand est-ce que cette procédure d'achat a été lancée puisque la sécheresse a été commencée autour du mois d'octobre et novembre. Donc, quand est-ce que les aliments sont arrivés effectivement ?

Mr Perrine: Je pense que l'aliment, c'est pour l'après sécheresse d'après ce que les techniciens me disent. C'est aussi... Parce que ce n'est pas arrivé avant. Parce que si c'était pour combattre la sécheresse, ça aurait dû là depuis novembre, peut-être septembre, octobre. Mais ça, l'aliment, c'est pour permettre les animaux de rétablir, de reprendre. Mais vous savez, on ne peut pas prédire. Peut-être l'année prochaine, on va essayer de faire à temps mais ce qui

est important dedans, M. le président, je connais mes éleveurs qui ont beaucoup de difficultés. C'est pourquoi on pense continuer ce programme jusqu'à peut-être août. Vous savez, c'est la première fois que les éleveurs ont des aliments gratuitement et on va étendre pour le porc aussi. On va voir si pour les autres secteurs aussi, on peut étendre. C'est-à-dire, faire les éleveurs reprendre. En même temps, on va essayer de reformer le système de production aussi. Ce n'est pas simplement pour aider et puis recommencer à zéro. Mais là, on va essayer, on va continuer et on va essayer d'introduire aussi le système des animaux qui sont dans la rue, qui font beaucoup de dégâts partout et introduire le système *cut and carry*. Et en même temps, on va essayer de reformer ce système de l'élevage à Rodrigues, les pâturages aussi en même temps. Et en même temps, on les aide. Et je pense que les éleveurs sont très satisfaits parce qu'ils n'ont pas à déboursier beaucoup d'argent. Parce que vous savez, il y a au moins une vingtaine de conteneurs d'aliments qui arrivent tous les bateaux, surtout pour les ruminants. Et on va essayer d'étendre pour le porc aussi parce que je sais que beaucoup d'éleveurs vivent d'élevage de porc. Et on va essayer très bientôt d'étendre aliment gratuit pour les éleveurs de porcs aussi. Merci.

Dr Agathe: M. le président, moi, j'aimerais quand même exprimer quelques doutes sur ce modèle de donner gratuitement. En général, l'efficacité d'un modèle de subvention, c'est d'aider la production, d'encourager ceux qui produisent davantage. Là, qu'est-ce qu'on a vu ? On a donné une quantité déterminée fixe à tous les catégories d'éleveurs, même ceux qui élèvent beaucoup d'animaux, ils ont reçu la même quantité que ceux qui n'élèvent même pas une dizaine de tête. Alors, donc, j'aimerais poser la question mais quelle est la viabilité, quel est le modèle économique derrière ce mode de donner gratuitement ? Est-ce qu'il n'y aurait pas, donc, une autre façon de procéder dans le but d'encourager la production, ceux qui sont dans l'effort de produire en grande quantité ?

Mr Perrine: M. le président, je me rappelle, ce petit garçon, on lui dit de jouer, il ne veut pas jouer. Lorsqu'on ne vient pas jouer, il est en colère. On donne, ils ne sont pas satisfaits. On ne donne pas, ils trouvent des... C'est incroyable. Mais tout le monde, on donne à tout le monde. Si on avait fait une sélection, '*zot ti pou dir politik*'. Maintenant, tout le monde. Tout ce que je veux faire, toute la population, quel bord de politique, c'est ça notre truc aussi, tout le monde va recevoir.

Mr Baptiste: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to know on what basis have decisions been taken to determine how much to be distributed to the different farmers. The amount to be distributed on what ration?

Mr Perrine: M. le président, c'est des techniciens. D'ailleurs, même formule que Maurice applique qu'on applique à Rodrigues. C'est le FAREI, le ministère en agro-industrie qui a expliqué la façon de distribuer et combien d'animaux il vous faut pour avoir tant de kilo et cetera. Je vais dans prochaine session, déposer la lettre et les spécifications, quelle est le critère qu'on utilise pour donner... distribution de ces aliments. Vous savez, M. le président, il faut savoir que l'argent, c'est le ministre des finances qui est en train de financer ce projet. Et des trucs qui ne sont pas d'après les règlements, vous croyez que le Ministère de finance va nous donner de l'argent ? Et je vous annonce que le ministère est d'accord pour doubler ce qu'ils ont donné à Rodrigues. Attendez, vous allez voir.

Mr Baptiste: I think at times; we do not need experts. I would like to know whether the Commissioner is aware that people having for example, ten heads of cattle and those having 100 heads have been given the same amount of animal feed.

Mr Perrine: M. le président, c'est vrai. Mais seulement, vous savez, nous n'avons pas de base de donnée. Il faut baser sur ce que nous avons à Citronnelle. Mais ces personnes qui ont 10 animaux et on donne les aliments pour cinq. Il y a *protest form* qu'ils peuvent signer. On va vérifier et si vraiment, ils ont ces nombres d'animaux et on va les remettre après, on va faire la distribution après. Mais vous savez, il y a des gens aussi qui vous racontent des histoires, qui vous disent qu'ils ont tant, tant d'animaux et puis, ils n'ont rien du tout. C'est-à-dire, il nous faut travailler sur des chiffres exactes, confirmés, vérifiés par les officiers. Tous les gens, les éleveurs qui arrivent et qui ne sont pas enregistrés sur notre liste, on ne les fait pas retourner les mains vides. On va leur donner quelque chose en attendant qu'on vérifie. Je sais il y en a. On est en train de travailler dessus. On va donner satisfaction à tout le monde *provided* qu'ils ont vraiment les animaux. Et puis aussi, il y a, vous savez, les informations que nous avons datent peut-être de deux/trois ans. La personne peut avoir vendu les animaux qu'ils avaient. Et puis ou bien aussi, ils ont acheté, ils ont beaucoup plus. A ce moment-là, il faut rectifier.... Merci, M. le président.

Mr Lisette: Yes, Mr Chairperson, Sir, as per the answer of the Commissioner for Agriculture, I understand that he has no record or no data whatsoever of the number of animals

that are possessed by the planters. But this is prone for an abuse and floors in the system that he is applying for the distribution of the animal feeds. How come that he is distributing animal feeds without knowing that the farmers possess the number of heads that they are stating or is it not possible that there has been distribution of animal feeds to farmers? I would not say to farmers because... to people who do not possess even animals as per his explanation.

Mr Perrine: M. le président, je ne pense pas qu'il y a des éleveurs aussi malhonnêtes que ça.

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: Allow the Commissioner to answer the question, please!

Mr Perrine: Je ne pense pas. Moi, je connais les éleveurs. Il y en a, mais pas aussi malhonnêtes que ça. Nous, nous faisons confiance dans les éleveurs. Ils arrivent. Il y a une dame qui est dans la queue qui attend depuis deux heures de temps pour raconter des histoires. Ce n'est pas vrai. Non, non, non. On va vérifier après mais si la personne abuse, on va prendre les actions qu'il faut.

Mr Chairperson: Next question. Next question!

BALAO BAY PROJECT – ST FRANCOIS

(No. B/33) Mrs R.M.F. Gaspard Pierre Louis, C.S.K. (Minority Leader) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the Balao Bay project at St Francois, he will inform the House on the:

- (a) date of submission thereof to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and of its approval;
- (b) scope of the project, and
- (c) date of the issue of the letter of reservation and the issue of the lease, respectively?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, in March 2016, a pre-project document by Mr A.C. and Mrs M.N.A. was submitted for the construction of a hotel project of an extent of 6,500 m² at Anse Ali. The then, Executive Council at its meeting held on 05 August 2016, have decided to approved in principle the grant of a State land lease in the eastern coast of Rodrigues to the promoters for the setting up of a tourism project provided that they abide

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to some specify criteria and that a letter of reservation be issued to the promoter, subject to all clearances being obtained from the relevant authorities as well as proof of financing.

On 13 October 2016, Mr A.C. and Mrs M.N.A., were informed of the decision of the Executive Council and were requested to submit a full business plan, detailed preliminary plan and evidence of financial capability. Further to a site visit by the State Land Committee on 23 March 2017 and its recommendations that the site was appropriate for the setting up of the project, the then Chief Commissioner conveyed approval on 26 April to issue a letter of reservation to Mr A.C. and Mrs M.N.A. on reserved terms and conditions for site of an approximate extent of 2 *arpents*.

By a letter dated 16 October 2017, Mr A.C. requested that the lease earmarked for the hotel project at Anse Ali be drawn on Société Civile Balao Bay. They were subsequently, requested that since Société Civile Balao Bay and their personal name were separate legal entities, to submit a new and fresh application to Invest Rodrigues in the first instance and to follow an established procedures regarding the grant of Industrial Lease for the hotel project by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly.

In regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that Société Civile Balao Ltd submitted an application for Balao Bay hotel project to Invest Rodrigues in January 2018. After screening by Invest Rodrigues, the project was referred in April 2018 to the Commission for Tourism that recommended that the project as the development was in line with its strategy to promote the development of adequate infrastructure, to increase room capacity on the island. The Entrepreneurship Committee thereafter, recommended the project to the Executive Council for a decision.

Following the Executive Council decision at this meeting held on 13 September 2018 to approve in principle the project of Société Civile Balao Bay for the implementation of a hotel project at Anse Ally. The project was referred to the Commission for State Land on 26 October 2018 to initiate procedures for the issue of State Land accordingly.

In regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that the scope of the project comprises two phases. Phase 1 entails four bungalows, reception area, bar etc., swimming pool in Phase 2 of the project. It was expected to construct five villas, each comprising two bedrooms which would have been initiated after a few years through finance generator from Phase 1.

With regard to part (c), I am informed that the then Executive Council at its meeting held on Friday 26 October 2019, has decided to approve that the Commission for State Land

allocates a plot of State Land of an approximate of one hectare at Anse Ally to Société Civile Balao represented by Mr A.C. for the setting up of a project.

On 05 February 2020, a letter of reservation was issued to Société Civile Balao Bay for the implementation of a hotel project over a plot of State Land of appropriate extent of one *arpent* situated at Anse Ally. The reservation was valid for a period of one-year subject to payment of a reservation fee of Rs 118,500 and submission of three comprehensive sets of developments together with a detailed project write up with the financial statements of the project hotel for perusal and approval of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly within a period six month as from the date of the letter.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that upon fulfillment of the condition of the letter of reservation, the then Chief Commissioner convened approval on 19 July 2021 to grant new industrial lease to Société Civile Balao over the site of one *arpent* at Anse Ally for the implementation of a hotel project. Consequently, letter dated 25 August 2021 was issued to Société Civile Balao Bay and the lease agreement was signed on 26 November 2021 for a period expiring on 30 June 2041.

However, Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to inform the House of the following: Article 14 (a) of the lease agreement provides that the lessee shall start construction on the site within a delay of nine months, that is, from 26 November, date of signature of the lease, and as to date no construction has started, save for a corrugated iron sheet structure and a complete basement in breach of Article 3 (e) of the lease which states: ‘The Lessee shall not construct any building or structure of any kind prior to the site and building plans having been approved by the Lesser.’

It is only on 12 December 2022 that Société Civile Balao Bay has submitted an application to the Commission for Public Infrastructure for an industrial building and land use permit. It is noted that the construction of the iron sheet structure and concrete basement on the site has been undertaken prior to the issue of the industrial building and land use plan and, as I have said is in breach of Article 3 of the lease.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, in view of the above, the matter will be referred to the Executive Council for consideration. Thank you.

The Minority Leader: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the House would recall that recently during the summing up of the Chief Commissioner, he mentioned lengthily that this project has been approved by the OPR government within six months from the date of application

while he himself here, giving the details, the procedures started in 2015 and only in 2021, the lease has been given, which means that the Chief Commissioner *a induit la Chambre en erreur*. *Est-ce que, M. le président, le Chef commissaire peut nous dire par rapport à cette compagnie qui est le Balao Bay, quel est la part des associées dans cette compagnie ?*

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, what I am aware and was surprised to note is that there is one Mr A.C., who is a French national and in the document I have in the file, his date of birth is 17.01.1995. We do not have any issue with granting land to people especially, young people of 28 years old. But I question the motive of granting such a large extent of land, 10,000 m² of land, prime land, to one person only, whereas we have a lot of people waiting to get a share of land for their project. I am informed that the share of Société Civile Balao Bay, when the project was submitted was – at the time of submission of project in January 2018, not 2015, the shares owned was 85% by Mr A. Clavarie and 50% by Mrs N. Clavarie. Afterwards today, both holds 50% in the partnership.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I have been informed also that some unclear facts about this projects have been communicated to other Commissioners and that we have different versions. In any case, we do not have on report the issue of land use and building plans for what have been constructed there. And, I do not know how that person has been granted electricity on the site. We are not for this type of privilege to certain person. I invite people, young Rodriguans to look at this, how a 28 years old French, expatriate got this land. We do not have any objection but as I have said, we have our policies and we will review projects of this type.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, je vois donc que le Chef commissaire reconnaît qu'il a menti à la Chambre en venant aujourd'hui apporter d'autres éléments par rapport à la date, par rapport au associé. Est-ce que le Chef commissaire peut nous confirmer si le changement en terme de la part des associés, *the stakeholders*, avait été fait avant que le *lease* a été *granted* ?

The Chief Commissioner: I do not have this information, Mr Chairperson, Sir. When the project was submitted, the share was 85/15 %. This is an indication of maybe the financial contributions of each partner. In any case, we are thinking about this site and we do not agree with how the lessee has behaved, going ahead with the construction, going ahead with the clearance of the site, including removing rocks and trees on the site without any permit, without any authorisation. This is a clear breach of the lease agreement. The lessee is in breach of his lease in terms of the period he has to start his construction. We are in our right to take action.

Just like they cancelled so many valuable projects when they came back in government in 2012. And, today we are still having Court cases where the unilateral decision to cancel these leases which were still valid. We have at least three, four pending Court cases for claims of hundreds of millions of rupees from the Rodrigues Regional Assembly that we have to manage because they have breached contractual agreements under the lease and gone against the interest of those lessees. We have for example, the project by Sumeru Ltd where the Supreme Court has given adverse judgement against the Rodrigues Regional Assembly for the manner in which the lease was cancelled and now, we have to deal with this.

The Minority Leader: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Chief Commissioner is going far beyond the question here and he said that he is not aware whether on the date that the lease has been issued. Prior to that there has been the change in terms of the shareholders. So, I will give him the proof here that on the 19 February 2019 same amendment has been done and only in 2021, the lease has been issued. So, he deliberately lies to the House.

Mr Chairperson: I am sorry, Minority Leader. I have been tolerant enough. You have used the word ‘*menti*’ to the House.

(Interruptions)

Are you contesting my ruling? Right. And this is not in order for the decorum of the House. Now we are continuing on the same line. This is not correct. This is not correct. I am saying that this is not correct. Okay?

Now, I would ask the Minority Leader to withdraw this word ‘lying to the House’. This is not the decorum of the House.

(Interruptions)

This is my ruling.

(Interruptions)

If the Minority Leader agrees that she has used this word twice and I am asking the Minority Leader to remove this word. Otherwise, you will have to withdraw yourself from the House.

(Interruptions)

Minority Leader, I have told you to withdraw and to use an appropriate word for this in your question and if you do not, you have to withdraw yourself from the House.

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(Interruptions)

At this stage the Minority Leader withdraw from the House

Mr Chairperson: Next question. The House has been informed that the question B/34 will be answered by the Commissioner for Agriculture.

We move the next question. Mr Baptiste, please?

You are withdrawing your question? Okay. So, next question. B/36 is not here. B/37? Dr. Agathe?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, on a point of order. Being given that you have kindly requested the member Minority Leader to withdraw here words and she has left the precinct of the Assembly, I would like to know whether it will good, whether you consider that she may be readmitted later for the sitting?

Mr Chairperson: I will give my ruling later on your point of order.

Dr. Agathe, are you withdrawing your question or are your coming with your question?

(Interruptions)

So, Dr. Agathe you are withdrawing your question? Okay. Next question. Mr Ramdally is not here. Mr Baptiste, question B/40. Withdraw. B/41, Mr Agathe? Withdraw again. Mr Baptiste, B/42? Okay. Miss Raffaut, 43? Withdraw? Yes. 45, withdraw. 46, withdraw. Mr Spéville, B/47? Okay, withdraw.

**‘PROGRAMME D’ACCOMPAGNEMENT A LA PROFESSIONALISATION DE
L’AGRICULTURE) - SUBSIDY**

(No. B/37) Dr H. Agathe (First Local Region Member for Grande Montagne) asked the Commissioner for Agriculture and Others whether, in regard to the *‘Programme d’accompagnement à la professionnalisation de l’agriculture’*, whereby a subsidy of Rs 500,000 will be granted to 60 young farmers, he will state:

- (a) the expected dates for the first disbursements;
- (b) the criteria and mechanism established for the selection of beneficiaries, and
- (c) table the names and addresses of the beneficiaries?

(Withdrawn)

EMBARGO – SALE OF LIVE ANIMALS FROM RODRIGUES - LIFTING

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(No. B/38) Dr H. Agathe (First Local Region Member for Grande Montagne) asked the Commissioner for Agriculture and Others whether, in regard to the embargo imposed on sale of live animals from Rodrigues, he will obtain information for the benefit of the House and state if consideration is being given to the lifting thereof?

(Withdrawn)

(No. B/39) Mr J. R. Ramdally (First Local Region Member for Saint Gabriel) asked the Commissioner for Agriculture and Others whether, in regard to the onion planters in the valley of Port-Sud-Est, he will inform the House on if he is aware of any difficulties being encountered thereby and, if so, to state the measures his Commission is contemplating to remedy the situation?

(Withdrawn)

PARCELLING/STATE LANDS – RECLAIMED LAND/BAIE AUX HUITRES/BAIE LASCARS

(No. B/41) Dr H. Agathe (First Local Region Member for Grande Montagne) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the parcelling on State lands on the reclaimed land area at Baie aux Huîtres and Baie Lascars, following the recent decision of the Executive Council to resume undeveloped lots, he will state to the House on the number of lots resumed to date per site and the reasons therefor, and to table the list of any new beneficiaries?

(Withdrawn)

**BENEFICIARIES/SOCIAL REGISTER IN MAURITIUS
NATIONAL EMPOWERMENT FOUNDATION**

(No. B/43) Ms M. N. Raffaut (Second Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner for Social Security and Others whether, in regard to beneficiaries on the Social Register of Mauritius, he will obtain from the National Empowerment Foundation, information as to the total number of beneficiaries in Rodrigues since 2022 to date, indicating the number thereof:

- (a) having signed their social contract after recertification, stating the terms and conditions and those who are still awaiting for their allowances accordingly, and
- (b) whose social contract (i) are pending, giving reasons therefor, and (ii) have been cancelled?

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(Withdrawn)

ADMISSION OF PATIENTS – HEALTH INSTITUTIONS IN RODRIGUES

(No. B/44) Mr J. R. Ramdally (First Local Region Member for Saint Gabriel) asked the Commissioner for Health and Others whether, in regard to the admission of patients in the health institutions in Rodrigues, he will state and table a breakdown of the:

- (a) bed capacity of each admitting institution, and
- (b) average occupation rate per institution since January 2023?

(Withdrawn)

UNAVAILABILITY OF DRUGS – DRUGS STORES/QUEEN ELIZABETH HOSPITAL/AREA HEALTH CENTRES & HEALTH CENTRES

(No. B/45) Mr J. R. Ramdally (First Local Region Member for Saint Gabriel) asked the Commissioner for Health and Others whether, in regard to drugs in the drug stores of Queen Elizabeth Hospital, area health centres and other health centres in Rodrigues, he will state and table the list of medications which are currently not available, giving the reasons therefor and the impact thereof on the services provided?

(Withdrawn)

**PATIENTS SENT TO MAURITIUS/FURTHER TREATMENT
SINCE SEPTEMBER 2022**

(No. B/46) Mr J. R. Ramdally (First Local Region Member for Saint Gabriel) asked the Commissioner for Health and Others whether, in regard to patients sent to Mauritius for further treatment since September 2022 to date, he will inform the House about the:

- (a) total number of patients per illness sent together with the total number of companions;
- (b) number of patients and/or companions accommodated at the selected hotel and/or at their parents' dwellings, and
- (c) difficulties faced by the companions and/or the patients, if any, and, if so, to state the measures his Commission is envisaging to remedy the situation?

(Withdrawn)

FOOTBALL IN RODRIGUES – REFORM/POLICY

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(No. B/47) Mr J. P. Spéville (Fourth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner for Youth & Sports and Others whether, in regard to football in Rodrigues, he will inform the House on if any reform therefor is under way and state his policy about the promotion thereof in Rodrigues?

(Withdrawn)

**OLYMPIC MONTAGNE GOYAVES VOLLEYBALL CLUB
AFRICAN VOLLEYBALL CLUBS CHAMPIONSHIP 2023/TUNISIA**

(No. B/48) Mr J. P. Spéville (Fourth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner for Youth & Sports and Others whether, in regard to Olympic Montagne Goyaves Volleyball Club's participation in the African Volleyball Clubs Championship 2023 from 09 to 22 May 2023 in Tunisia, he will inform the House about the:

- (a) composition of the delegation and their respective roles, and
- (b) total participation cost and the contribution of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly therefor?

(Withdrawn)

**INDIAN OCEAN ISLAND GAMES 2023 - PREPARATION OF RODRIGUAN
PARTICIPANTS**

(No. B/49) Mr J. P. Spéville (Fourth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner for Youth & Sports and Others whether, in regard to Indian Ocean Island Games 2023, he will, for the benefit of the House, state where matters stand regarding the preparation of Rodriguan participants selected or preselected therefor?

(Withdrawn)

SAFETY MEASURES AT SEA

(No. B/51) Dr H. Agathe (First Local Region Member for Grande Montagne) asked the Commissioner for Fisheries and Others Whether, in regard to safety measures at sea, he will inform the House on:

- (a) the number of contraventions issued to fishers at sea for non-wearing of lifejackets for the last 12 months, and
- (b) if any procurement exercise has been carried out for the purchase of lifejackets and, if so, when, and the outcomes thereof?

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(Withdrawn)

TRACK ROAD PROJECTS – FINANCIAL YEAR 2022-2023

(No. B/53) Ms K. Roussety (Second Local Region Member for Baie aux Huitres) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to track road projects for the financial year 2022-2023, he will table the list region wise and state the amount of money:

- (a) already spent therefor, and
- (b) earmarked for outstanding projects yet to be implemented?

(Withdrawn)

SECURITY SERVICES – SPORT COMPLEXES

(No. B/54) Mr J. P. Spéville (Fourth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner for Youth and Sports and Others whether, in regard to security services at sport complexes around Rodrigues, he will state to the House on if same are currently being provided and, if so, to give details thereon?

(Withdrawn)

‘TOURNÉE D'AGENCES’ - 27 FEBRUARY TO 01 MARCH 2023

(No. B/57) Ms K. Roussety (Second Local Region Member for Baie aux Huitres) asked the Commissioner for Tourism and Others Whether, in regard to the ‘*Tournée d'Agences*’ mission held by his Commission and the Rodrigues Tourism Office from 27 February to 01 March 2023, he will inform the House about the outcome thereof, indicating the:

- (a) detailed composition of the delegation and their respective roles, and
- (b) expenditure incurred therefor?

(Withdrawn)

MAMMOGRAPHY SERVICES – QUEEN ELIZABETH HOSPITAL

(No. B/58) Ms K. Roussety (Second Local Region Member for Baie aux Huitres) asked Commissioner for Health and Others whether, in regard to the mammography services at Queen Elizabeth Hospital, he will inform the House about the:

- (a) criteria setup by his Commission to benefit therefrom, and
- (b) number of patients having already benefitted therefrom and the number on the waiting list therefor, if any?

(Withdrawn)

Mr Chairperson: We are getting to question B/60

Mrs Allas, B/60?

Commissioner for Agriculture?

RAINWATER HARVESTING STRUCTURES – MT GOYAVES/BAIE MALGACHE

(No. B/60) **Mrs M. A. L. Allas (Fifth Island Region Member)** asked the Commissioner for Agriculture and Others whether, in regard to rainwater harvesting structures at Mt Goyaves and Baie Malgache, he will: -

- (a) state if the two structures are operational and, if not, why not;
- (b) give details on the sum disbursed by his Commission up to now therefor, and
- (c) state if there is any dispute in relation thereto and, if so, to give details?

Mr Perrine: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I wish to inform the House that the Rainwater Harvesting Structures at Montagne Goyaves and Baie Malgache are not currently operational.

The contract for the construction of the Rainwater Harvesting at Montagne Goyaves was awarded to Laxmanbhai and Co (Mtius) Ltd on 18 May 2016. Additional works amounting to Rs 810,860 was granted to the contractor on 07 March 2019. The contractor Luxconsult (Mtius) informed on 21 February 2022 that a disagreement exists between the Engineer and the contractor on different items. A site meeting was effected on 05 May 2022 by the Engineer and Manager, Agricultural Research and Extension Services in the presence of the contractor. Repairs have been made to punctures of the geomembrane by the contractor. Recommendation of the Consultant with regard to water tightness is still being awaited.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, the contract for the construction of Rainwater Harvesting at Baie Malgache was awarded to the same contractor, that is, Laxmanbhai and Co (Mtius) Ltd, on 02 June 2016. Following various formal exchanges and discussions with the contractor, the Consultant, Luxconsult (Mtius) Ltd informed that a disagreement exists between the engineer and the contractor with regard to some unfinished small works.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards to part (b) of the question, I wish to inform the House that the sum disbursed as at present amounts to Rs 19,718,173 for Baie Malgache and Rs 14,814,668 respectively with respect to the projects Rainwater Harvesting at Baie Malgache and Montagne Goyaves.

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Mr Chairperson: No supplementary question?

ADJOURNMENT

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I beg to move that the House be now adjourned to Tuesday 13 June 2023 at 10.30 hours.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner, rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Mr Chairperson: The House stands adjourned.

At 11.46 p.m., the Assembly was, on its rising adjourned to Tuesday 13 June 2023 at 10.30 a.m.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

STATE LAND - LEASE TO MR J.K.E. – BAIE AUX HUITRES (VENISE LAND)

(No. B/34) Mrs R.M.F. Gaspard Pierre Louis, C.S.K. (Minority Leader) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the State land granted on lease to Mr J.K.E. at Baie aux Huîtres (Venise land), he will inform the House on if any approval has been given for the transfer or renewal or issue of a new lease in relation thereto during the current financial year and, if so, to give details?

Reply: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, with your permission, I would like to reply to Question B/34.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that:

- One Mr J.K.E held a residential cum commercial lease over a portion of State Land of an extent of 1340 m² situate at Baie aux Huitres for a period which expired on 30 June 2010 for the purpose of running a night club, shop and residence;
- While his request for renewal was being processed, Mr J.K.E on 17 July 2015 further requested for the conversion and transfer of the lease onto one company M. Ltd for the running of a general retailer's shop, restaurant and night club;
- As per request of the Town and Country Planning Officer, the said company submitted on 01 October 2018 layout plans for the running of shops and a restaurant only with on-site parking. After perusal of the layout plans, the Town

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and Country Planning Officer on 08 February 2019 raised no objection to the transfer of the lease for the running of shops and restaurant only; and

- The matter was thus referred by the Cadastral Office on 07 March 2019 to the Chief Commissioner's Office for consideration.

However, I am informed, Mr Chairperson, Sir, that the Executive Council at its meeting held on 08 April 2019 has approved that the land of the extent of 1340 m² at Baie aux Huitres formerly leased to Mr J.K.E be reserved for the extension of Oyster Bay Government School which implies to resume possession of land together with the building with compensation. Subsequently, Mr Chairperson, Sir, in a letter dated 13 May 2019, Mr J.K.E was informed that his request for the transfer of the lease to third party has not been acceded to but the letter was returned undelivered.

Following a complaint letter dated 21 January 2019 as addressed to the Ombudsman by the company M. Ltd on the delay in processing the transfer and further to an exchange of correspondence between the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and the Ombudsman, the latter was finally informed by a letter dated 10 June 2019 of the then Executive Council's decision.

The Company with Mr J.K.E as Co-Respondent filed a motion in the Supreme Court for leave to apply for a judicial review of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly's decision pertaining to the application for the transfer or issue of a new lease over the subject site.

In a judgement delivered on 09 September 2020, the Supreme Court whilst noting the undue delay of more than three years taken by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly to process the application for the transfer, has set aside the motion for a judicial review on the grounds that the letter dated 12 June 2019 which the Ombudsman addressed to the company was only to convey the Rodrigues Regional Assembly's decision to reserve the subject site for a school project and not its decision to turn down the request for transfer.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that upon the Principal Surveyor's recommendations that should the Rodrigues Regional Assembly decide not to go ahead with the extension of Oyster Bay Government School but to consider the grant of a new Industrial Lease in the name of company M. Ltd, the Executive Council at its meeting held on Friday 07 October 2022 decided to: -

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- (a) nullify the decision of the then Executive Council to reserve land of an extent of 1340 m² at Baie aux Huitres formerly leased to Mr J.K.E for the extension of Oyster Bay Government School; and
- (b) consider the grant of a new Industrial Lease in the name of company M. Ltd over a portion of State Land of an extent of 1340 m² at Baie aux Huitres for the running of a General Retailer's Shop and a restaurant on usual terms and conditions.

CONTINUOUS RISE – PRICES OF COMMODITIES

(No. B/35) Mr L. D. Baptiste (Second Local Region Member for Grande Montagne) asked the Commissioner for Consumer Protection and Others whether, in regard to the continuous rise in the prices of commodities in Rodrigues for the past months, she will inform the House about the measures she envisages to take to help combat the high cost of living faced by the households?

Reply: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the escalation of the war in Ukraine and the rise in interest rates, in response, for example to a worsening of inflation, is causing a deceleration and a slowdown in the global economy, destabilizing the energy and food markets. This could lead to a tightening of financial conditions, especially in emerging and developing countries and could complicate the fight against food inflation coupled by rising energy prices.

Inflation could remain high in Mauritius and Rodrigues, amplified by the continuous slide of the Mauritian rupee against major traded currencies such as the US dollar and EURO.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, the regional government - L'Alliance Liberation has taken into consideration the unstable context, I just mentioned, to prepare its budget for financial year 2023-2024. With the coming up budget, which is a '*budget d'action et de responsabilité*', as defined by the Chief Commissioner himself in his budget speech, we are pursuing our actions and coming up with new socio-economic measures aiming at empowering our local people and providing them with a broad spectrum of opportunities to develop personal, economic and professional projects, thus creating an enabling environment for sustainable development.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, as I already informed in my reply to a question put by the respected Second Local Region Member of Grande Montagne, Mr L. D. Baptiste for the RRA Sitting of 19 July 2022, the central government has put in place a series of measures which were announced in its budget for 2022-2023 that is helping to alleviate the burden caused by the high cost of living faced by the households in Mauritius and Rodrigues, such as, the increase in the

basic retirement pension, the maintain of the price of “*pain maison*”, the price of 12 kg cylinder of cooking gas via subsidies, and also the supply of essential products, such as, milk, edible oil and pulses at a subsidised rate by the State Trading Corporation (STC).

It is also to be noted that the Rodrigues Regional Assembly has initiated actions to cover the transport cost of Rs 2.50 per litre regarding edible oil under brand name ‘SMATCH’ in order for additional increases not to be passed on to consumers in Rodrigues.

Subsidies provided by the central and regional government is helping to alleviate the burden of the rise in prices of commodities on households, but however, Mr Chairperson, Sir, the House will agree with me that in the actual context of tightening of financial conditions, the policy of subsidy is not viable for any government in the long run.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, ongoing discussions are being held with the Ministry of Commerce and Consumer Protection in Mauritius regarding the prevailing situation of high cost of living which is impacting the households mostly households of Rodrigues where the cost of commodities is higher than in Mauritius and on ways to alleviate the burden of the rising prices of commodities on consumers in Rodrigues.

Since my taking of office, I attended some three meetings at the Ministry of Commerce and Consumer Protection and I have met the Honourable Minister of Commerce and Consumer Protection twice. *En tant que gouvernement responsable, nous ne sommes pas insensibles aux problèmes dont font face la population et nous travaillons d’arrache-pied pour trouver des solutions et cela en collaboration avec le gouvernement central.*

Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Honourable, Minister of Finance, Dr. Renganaden PADAYACHY was also in Rodrigues in the context of budget consultations for 2023-2024. During the budget consultation meetings, the Chief Commissioner and other members of the Executive Council which I form part, as well as representatives of the civil society have raised the question of the high cost of living in Rodrigues with the Prime Minister and have proposed that measures be taken in the forthcoming national budget to address the situation.

We remain confident, Mr Chairperson, Sir, that the Honourable Minister of Finance will take into consideration the plea of the Rodriguan population as far as the actual economic situation of the Republic of Mauritius will enable him.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, during my recent meeting at the Ministry of Commerce and Consumer Protection, we have proposed some new items to be included on the list of controlled commodities for Rodrigues such as iron bars and laundry soaps.

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Furthermore, following observations made, that the supply of essential products under the brand name ‘SMATCH’ imported by the State Trading Corporation and sold at subsidised price, is rapidly depleted due to the high demands for same in Rodrigues, I have negotiated with the Ministry of Commerce and Consumer Protection to see with the State Trading Corporation to increase its supply to Rodrigues and information has been obtained that the State Trading Corporation has actually sufficient stock of pulses, edible oil and milk powder. The State Trading Corporation has received two containers of edible oil since the last trip of Black Rhino and as from Friday 14 April 2023, there were some 6,000 packets of milk powder of brand name ‘SMATCH’ in Rodrigues. Two distributors have also just been registered by the State Trading Corporation to market its products throughout the island of Rodrigues, therefore this will ensure that State Trading Corporation products will be more accessible to consumers in different retail shops around the island.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, as I said earlier in my reply, the budget presented by The Regional Government L’Alliance Liberation for the next financial year includes numerous economic and social measures to support families in Rodrigues to preserve their purchasing power.

At the level of my Commission, we have the new item Vote: “*Programme d’autonomisation des familles Rodriguaises*” with a provision of Rs 950,000 which targets vulnerable families to set up income generating activities and for placement and training programmes to facilitate their access to a job. The budget provision for promotion of women development and family welfare has also been doubled to promote women and family empowerment.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, the budget for the forthcoming financial year also includes numerous incentives for entrepreneurs including women entrepreneurs such as the conversion of the ex-restaurant of Mon Limon into a market place for women entrepreneurs and the construction of a market fair for women entrepreneurs at Petite Butte. These facilities will definitely increase marketing opportunities for these women entrepreneurs and consequently generate more revenue for these women entrepreneurs.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, if we take for example, the education sector, measures such as the provision of ‘*repas chaud*’ twice a week to students of pre-primary and primary schools, the provision of ‘solar kit’ to vulnerable families to reduce the cost of electricity consumption will definitely help Rodriguan families to reduce their monthly expenses. This coupled with the

different measures/*plan d'aides* for students undergoing post-secondary and tertiary studies will ease the burden of educational expenses on the part of families in Rodrigues.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I do not want to abuse on the time allocated to the members of the other side of the House for asking questions, to list the different budgetary measures under the different economic sectors. I have listed only a few but there are other measures in the agricultural sector, the fishing sector, green and blue economy, social housing that will help the households in Rodrigues including the vulnerable ones to cope with the high cost of living.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, at the level of the Consumer Affairs Unit, continuous sensitisation and education programmes will be carried out to help families for example in preparing a budget and how to manage it and on how to adapt their consumption patterns to the new trends. My commission will reinforce its different actions pertaining to the protection of consumers' rights including the monitoring of prices of controlled commodities and affixing of prices as well as the supply of essential goods supplied by the State Trading Corporation such as Edible Oil, Milk powder and pulses.

Last but not least, Mr Chairperson, Sir, my commission is also working with the Ministry of Commerce and Consumer Protection for a comprehensive study in Rodrigues pertaining to Consumer Protection and Price Fixing which will include an assessment of all technical issues such as consumption patterns, issues in relation to the supply chains that affect the processing strategies of the different controlled commodities, processes in Price Fixing Unit and Consumer Affairs Unit of Rodrigues in view of coming up with new strategies and policies for the welfare of consumers and also in view of finding alternative mechanism and solve bottleneck to bring efficiency and effectiveness on service delivery.

During my recent mission at the Ministry of Commerce and Consumer Protection, confirmation has been received that a team from the Ministry will be in Rodrigues soon to kick start the study which will be for a duration of three weeks. The result of the study is expected before the end of the financial year.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

INVESTMENT – WATER SECTOR PROJECTS - RODRIGUES PUBLIC UTILITIES CORPORATION (RPUC)/MAURITIUS INVESTMENT CORPORATION (MIC)

(No. B/36) Mr N. Lisette (First Local Region Member for Baie aux Huitres) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to investment in the water sector projects in

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Rodrigues by the Rodrigues Public Utilities Corporation (RPUC) from funds contracted or to be contracted from the Mauritius Investment Corporation (MIC), he will:

- (a) give details as to the investment to be made;
- (b) state the financing structure of the project(s), and
- (c) state the commitment of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly thereon?

Reply: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Rodrigues Public Utilities Corporation (RPUC) is a private company incorporated on 18 June 2021 and fully owned by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly. It acts as the executive arm of my commission for water production, treatment and distribution. It's funding is provided by my commission from the capital and recurrent budget. The RPUC will also contract loans from the Mauritius Investment Corporation (MIC) to finance projects in the water sector.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, as agreed by Cabinet in 2021, the RPUC will have access to a loan of Rs 1 billion from the MIC for water sector projects. The priority projects to be implemented for financial year 2022/23 to financial year 2024/25 are as follows: -

- (1) New desalination plant of capacity $3 \times 1000 \text{m}^3$ per day at Pointe Coton consisting of:
 - Construction of a new building of approximately 1000m^2
 - Construction of two new reservoirs of capacity 1000m^3 each
 - Supply, install and commissioning of $3 \times 1000 \text{m}^3/\text{day}$ Reverse Osmosis Treatment (ROT) units
 - New boreholes for intake of seawater and system for brine rejection
 - New pumping station and transfer pipeline from Pointe Coton to Mt Piquant/Roche Bon Dieu.
 - site boundary walls, etc.
 - Budget: Rs 345 Million
- (2) Caverne Bouteille desalination plant: -
 - Modification to existing building
 - New $500 \text{m}^3/\text{day}$ ROT Unit

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- sea water intake, etc.
- Budget Rs 50 million
- (3) Upgrade primary and secondary networks for transfer of water from production points to receiving reservoirs
 - Budget Rs 55 million
- (4) Desilting of dams/existing barrages and construction of new retention basins for phreatic water table recharge
 - Budget Rs 30 million
- (5) Start installation of water meters in 2024
 - Budget Rs 10 million
- (6) Operating costs for the new desalination plant of 3000m³ plus 500m³
 - Budget Rs 50 million

Mr Chairperson, Sir, the total investment will be Rs 540 million. The balance of Rs. 460 million on the agreed loan of Rs 1 billion will be discussed later as new priority projects are determined.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (b), the Mauritius Investment Corporation (MIC) requested that the RPUC presented an application for the loan supported by a Business Plan for the first draw of Rs 540 million of projects as specified in my reply to part (a) of the question. Following a bidding exercise, the RPUC enlisted the services of Ernst and Young Ltd for the write up of the Business plan. Upon approval of the plan by the RRA, the RPUC submitted the official request to the MIC on 10 February 2023. MIC is currently considering the request and when approved, it will submit the terms and conditions of the loan agreement to the RPUC.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, once these terms and conditions are known to the RPUC, it will request the RRA for the repayment of both capital and interests over a period of 10 years. The RPUC is holding regular discussions with the MIC and it is expected that the MIC will reply to the RPUC by the end of this month. In the meantime, the RPUC has launched tenders for two transfer reservoirs and is finalising with Luxconsult Ltd for the bidding documents for the building and desalination plant at Pointe Coton.

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Mr Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (c), the Rodrigues Regional Assembly has already liaised with the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development for the repayment of both capital and interest on the loan to be contracted by the RPUC. From information received, based on a written request from the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development will issue a letter guaranteeing the repayment of loan and interest.

The modus operandi of such repayments will be fine-tuned. One proposal is to have the repayment amount for each financial year inserted as a special item under the capital budget of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, starting from financial year 2024/25. The Rodrigues Regional Assembly will then transfer the amount to the RPUC to repay the loan to the MIC.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

**DIFFICULTIES FACED BY PLANTERS – GRAVIERS, SOURCE TIGOMME &
ANSE FEMI**

(No. B/40) Mr L. D. Baptiste (Second Local Region Member for Grande Montagne) asked the Commissioner for Agriculture and Others whether he is aware of the difficulties faced by the planters of Graviers, Source Tigomme and Anse Femi relating to water management and distribution thereat and, if so, to state the remedial measures he intends to take to relieve them?

Reply: Mr Chairperson, Sir, my commission is aware of the difficulties face by planters in the region of Graviers, Source Tigomme and Anse Femi concerning water management and distribution. In light of solving this problem, a meeting was held at Source Tigomme on Friday 31 March 2023 in the presence of the following:

- Members of the Graviers Farmers Association;
- Planters of the region;
- Officers of the Water Unit, and
- Officers of the Agricultural Services.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, the main following remedial measures are being considered: -

- To have two separate water distribution networks in the region, one only for domestic purposes and the other one for agricultural purposes. No planters will be allowed to tap water for irrigation from domestic line and vice versa;

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- Water for agriculture purposes will be distributed on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays only. For domestic purposes on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Refilling the reservoir to be done as from Friday afternoon till Monday morning;
- Posting of an additional water supply attendant for better follow-up of irrigation lines;
- To start water distribution for irrigation earlier in the morning as far as possible;
- To review the networks with the distribution of water on laterals and not on main lines;
- To secure water valves to avoid tempering.

FOREIGN NATIONALS WORKING IN RODRIGUES

(No. B/42) Mr L. D. Baptiste (Second Local Region Member for Grande Montagne) asked the Commissioner for Labour and Others whether, in regard to the foreign nationals working in Rodrigues since 2022 to date, he will obtain information to state and table on the:

- (a) total number thereof, indicating the respective industries and grades in which they are employed;
- (b) established procedures for the grant of appropriate permit/authorisations, and
- (c) structures set up by his Commission to ensure compliance with all existing labour laws?

Reply: Mr Chairperson, Sir, as at date according to a recent inspection undertaken by Officers of my Commission, there are 84 foreign workers working in Rodrigues. The details are being tabled as requested by the respected Member.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards to part (b), the established procedures for the grant of work permit for foreign workers to work in Rodrigues are as follows: -

- (i) Employers wishing to recruit foreign workers to work in the Republic of Mauritius including Rodrigues, should apply for work permit at the Ministry of Labour, Human Resource Development and Training;
- (ii) For application regarding Rodrigues, same is referred to the Employment Information Centre of my Commission by the above Ministry for enquiry purpose;

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- (iii) The Employment Information Centre in Rodrigues will undertake the enquiry during which the Employers should show proof that local workers are not available in Rodrigues in the requested field;
- (iv) The Employment Information Centre will submit a report to my Commission who will refer the matter to the Executive Council for its no objection or otherwise, depending on the outcome of the enquiry;
- (v) The Employment Information Centre in Rodrigues will transmit the decision of the Executive Council to the Ministry for a decision;
- (vi) In case of favourable recommendation by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, the Ministry will request the applicant to submit a Lodging Accommodation Permit to enable further consideration of his application for work permit;
- (vii) The applicant will submit an application to the Occupational Safety and Health Unit of my Commission for the above said permit;
- (viii) The Occupational Safety & Health Unit will undertake an enquiry jointly with the Fire and Rescue Services and the Public Health Officer to assess the building to be used as accommodation for the foreign workers, and their compliance to the provision of the relevant regulations (Occupational Safety and Health (Employees Lodging Accommodation Regulations 2011));
- (ix) Upon favourable recommendation from the above authorities, the application together with the Inspection Report and recommendation is referred to the Lodging Accommodation Committee of the Ministry for its determination;
- (x) Upon production of the Lodging Accommodation permit by the Applicant, the Ministry will issue a work permit for individual foreign worker to enable them to work and stay in Rodrigues for specific period as specified in the work permit. The work permit may be renewable depending on the requirement of the Employer and the Project.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards to Part (c), the House will appreciate that the Employment Information Centre of my Commission ensures follow up with respect to conditions specified in the work permit.

Moreover, our Labour and Industrial Relations Division and the Occupational Safety and Health Unit ensure monitoring with respect to compliance with their relevant legislations,

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that is the (Workers Right Act 2019 and Occupational Safety and Health Act 2005) respectively.

NET FISHING – PAST FIVE YEARS

(No. B/50) Mr L. D. Baptiste (Second Local Region Member for Grande Montagne) asked the Commissioner for Fisheries and Others whether, in regard to net fishing since the past five years, he will state and table on:

- (a) the total number and list of fishers/associations/cooperatives possessing an appropriate license to operate in the lagoon of the island of Rodrigues;
- (b) if any licences have been cancelled and, if so, to give the reasons therefor, and if any new applications were made and the outcome thereof?

Reply: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I wish to inform the House that presently, there are five Large Net Permits which are operating in the lagoon. Four permits belong to Cooperative Societies and one individual. The permit holder are as follows: -

- (i) Rodrigues Fishermen Multi-Purpose Cooperative Society (La Saline, Baie Topaze) represented by Mr Bruno Capdor;
- (ii) Rodrigues Fishermen Multi-Purpose Cooperative Society (Pointe Palmiste Branch) represented by Mr Donald Felicite;
- (iii) Rodrigues Fishermen Multi-Purpose Cooperative Society (Camp Pintade Branch) represented by Mr. Ignace Speville;
- (iv) Rodrigues Fishermen Multi-Purpose Cooperative Society (Pointe Coton Branch) represented by Mr, Elzer Castel), and
- (v) Rodrigues Fishermen Multi-Purpose Cooperative Society (Pointe Corail), Mr. Jean Rosere Ithier (Individual).

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that (b) no licence has been cancelled. However, Mr. J. A. I. has accepted to relinquish his Large Net Licence against payment of compensation in 2021. Moreover, there was a disagreement by two members about the relinquishment of the Large Net Licence from the Rodrigues Fishermen Multi-Purpose Cooperative Society Ltd (Pointe Corail) and they have refused to accept the proposed compensation.

As regards part (c) of the question, Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that an application from Mr. Jean Roulere Ithier, Chairman of the Ex Rodrigues Fishermen

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Multi-Purpose Cooperative Society (Pointe Corail) was received for a Large Net Permit in 2022.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I wish to inform the House that some members of the Cooperative Society Rodrigues Fishermen Multi-Purpose Cooperative Society (Pointe Corail) have taken their compensation and two members namely Mr Roulere Ithier and Mr Rockman Ithier did not agree to take their compensation. A Large Net Permit was issued to Mr. J. R. Ithier, on 15 September 2022 following decision of the Executive Council on humanitarian ground.

WATER DISTRIBUTION – CENTRAL & EASTERN SECTIONS

(No. B/52) Mr N. Lisette (First Local Region Member for Baie aux Huitres) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to water distribution in the central and eastern sections of Rodrigues, he will state and table the frequency of distribution from the different reservoirs to the villages?

Reply: Mr Chairperson, Sir, it is very unfortunate that we cannot maintain a stable frequency of distribution of water all year round. The reason is that our water production of some 5000 m³ per day is not sufficient to meet the daily demand of some 12,000 m³ per day. Production has been seriously affected due to climate change and frequent breakdowns of desalination plants. Lack of rainfall implies that there is no recharge of our water table. This severely impacts on ground water production. On the other hand, the demand keeps on increasing. This is a major challenge. Major investments are needed in the water sector but it will take time to see the results.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, the frequency of distribution for the Eastern section is as follows:

SN	RESERVOIR	VILLAGE SERVED	FREQUENCY
1	Mt Pikant	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pte Cotton• Mt Pikant• Roche Bon Dieu	45 days
2	Grenade	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Roche Bon Dieu• Brulée• Bel Air• Mt Zatte• Rivière Banane	45 days

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SN	RESERVOIR	VILLAGE SERVED	FREQUENCY
3	Petit Brulée	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Grande Montagne• DansTif• Coromandel• Nouvelle Decouverte• Thammes• Bassin Martin• Mt Cherie• Mourouk• Roche Bon Dieu/Trèfles	25-30 days
4	Petit Brulée II	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Palissade• Nassola• Lataniers• Mt Malgache• Mt Bois Noir• Port SudEst	25 days
5	Coromandel	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• PatateThéophile• Mt Cabris Est• St François• Mt Ursule• Coromandel• Batatran	60 days
6	Matianne	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gravier• Var Brulée	20 days
7	Source Tigome	Gravier	8 days

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Mr Chairperson, Sir, with regard to the central section, the requested information is as follows: -

Water Distribution Frequency - Central Section			
SN	Reservoir	Villages	Frequency(Days)
1	Mt Patate	Mt Lubin	60-90 days
		Baladirou	
		Citronelle	
		Cyganges/Camp Baptiste	
		Dans Bébé	
		Mt Goyaves	
		Mt Limon/Deux Goyaves	
2	Malartic	Petit Gabriel	60-90 days
		Le Chou	
		Soupirs/Malartic	
		Mt Fanal/Mt Charlot	
3	Petit Gabriel	Citron Donis/Rivière Coco	40-50
		Petit Gabriel	30
4	Ste Famille	Pompée/Eau Claire(1)	60-70
		Battue Madame/Camp Paul	
5	Camp Paul	Songes/Port Sud Est/Fond Canari/Parc Tortue	25-30
		Eau Claire(2)	15
6	Mourouk	Anse Enfer/Mourouk	8
7	Cascade Victoire	Port Sud Est	8

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Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am tabling the requested information. Thank you.

NURSERIES/KINDERGARTEN - POLICY

(No. B/55) Mrs R.M.F. Gaspard Pierre Louis, C.S.K. (Minority Leader) asked the Commissioner for Child Development and Others whether, in regard to the nurseries/kindergarten in Rodrigues, she will inform the House about the policy of her Commission in connection thereto?

Reply: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Commission for Child Development and others ensures that the Child Day Care Centres are compliant with the provision of the Children's Act 2020 and regulations made to regulate the activities of Child Day Care Centres for children in the cohort of 14 weeks to 3 years.

It is compulsory for a Child Day Care Centre to obtain a Certificate of Registration before it starts to operate and managers and Child Care Givers of Child Day Care Centres have to be registered before they start operating. To ensure that Child Day Care Centres comply with the appropriate norms and standards and that children are being cared in an environment conducive for their development, inspections are being carried out by the Child Development Unit.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, a vote item 'Crèche Scheme' under Sub Head 6-102 – Women's Affairs, Family Welfare and Child Development of the budget of my Commission is dedicated for the upgrading of standards of 'crèches'/Child Day Care Centres in Rodrigues to enable them to apply for registration with the Commission for Child Development. Furthermore, under the National Children's Council, the unregistered Child Day Care Centres/'Crèches' in Rodrigues which have been operating for at least one year have the possibility to apply for the one-off cash grant scheme of up to a maximum of Rs 500,000 to upgrade their standards to enable them to apply for due registration.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, my policy concerning Child Day Care Centres/Crèches in Rodrigues, through the Commission for Child Development and Others, consists of continuing to support the unregistered Child Day Care Centres/Crèches to comply with appropriate norms and standards to enable them to apply for due registration and also make provision for the physical and emotional safety of children.

To note also that the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family Welfare in Mauritius is contemplating to review the National Early Childhood Development Policy Paper (14 weeks – 3 years) prepared in 1998 followed by an Action Plan and the recently passed Regulations to

come up with better standards and enhancement in quality care for the overall development of children in Child Day Care Centres. The Ministry is seeking technical assistance of the European Union for same. My Commission will collaborate fully with the Ministry for the reviewing of the policy paper and Action Plan so that Rodrigues and its specificities are taken on board.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, my policy consists also to provide support to an NGO to set up a Centre d'Eveil for children of vulnerable families based on the model of Centre d'Eveil managed by the 'Fondation pour l'Enfance Terre de Paix' in Mauritius. During my recent mission in Mauritius, I have met with the Secretary General of the National Social Inclusion Foundation (NSIF) to discuss among others of the funding under the Fortified Learning Environment Unit (FLEU) of the NSIF for the setting up of Child Day Care Centre targeting vulnerable children and thereby enable mothers of these vulnerable children to leave their children in a secured place and get the opportunity to be empowered through training and capacity building and income generating activities to become autonomous.

The challenge remains to have an NGO in Rodrigues to register and make an application with the NSIF in Mauritius for funding to set up the Day Care Centre (Centre d'Eveil) for vulnerable children.

My commission can assist by empowering the interested NGO and also provide other supports such as training and coaching of Day Care Givers who will be employed by the Day Care Centre.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I wish to inform the House that for this financial year, negotiation has already been held with the 'Fondation pour l'Enfance Terre de Paix' for refresher training for registered Day Care Givers as well as the training of unregistered Day Care Givers working in Child Day Care Centres operating in Rodrigues. The training will also be opened to other persons who are interested to become Child Day Care Givers, however, priorities will be given to those already working in Child Day Care Centres.

The training will also target the Day Care Givers working in the Foyer for Children at Baladirou. The training is scheduled to start by mid-May 2023.

My Commission is also exploring the possibility, before the end of this financial year, of sending Child Day Care Givers to visit the Centres D'Eveil managed by the 'Fondation pour l'Enfance Terre De Paix' in Mauritius and to get acquainted with their mode of functioning, the pedagogy including pedagogical tools, infrastructure and other facilities available there.

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Mr Chairperson, Sir, there is need to adopt an integrated approach and service for early childhood in Rodrigues including the creation of a database as well as the introduction of a proper monitoring system. With the recruitment of additional Family Welfare and Protection Officers to be posted at the Child Development Unit and also the assistance of trainees under the STM (Service to Mauritius Programme), my Commission will start by initiating a survey to update its data on the Centre based and home based day care facilities in Rodrigues and create a database which will be updated on a regular basis. Technical assistance will also be sought for a SWOT analysis of the present Early Childhood Development (ECD) facilities in Rodrigues to enable the formulation of policies to ensure a proper system for Early Childhood Development in Rodrigues. Based on the defined policy, strategies and activities will be designed in the field of training and capacity building of personnel working in early Child Development, parental education and community awareness, equity and access in the provision of early childhood services, development of a monitoring mechanism, mobilisation and allocation of resources, infrastructural improvement among others. The collaboration and inputs of the different stakeholders in Early Childhood Development will be sought.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, as announced in the budget speech of the Chief Commissioner for the next financial year, one of the budgetary measures will consist of the setting up of a Gender Resource and Welfare Centre. I will ensure that the Gender Resource and Welfare Centre include a Child Care Resource Section which is one aspect of adopting a holistic approach, to developing integrated services for early childhood. The Child Care Resource Section will include pedagogical toys/tools, books and magazines related to child care and development that can be borrowed by Child Care Centres and parents.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, to terminate, I wish to reassure the House that the regional government L'Alliance Liberation is fully conscious of how critically important the early years are in the development of the child and that children learn best when they are part of a secure environment. Children need the stability and regularity that a good home and a good child care centre can provide. My regional government will leave no stone unturned to ensure that our small children live and evolve in a secure and conducive environment for their growth and development. I will also ensure that our policies for the Child Day Care Centres/Crèches are aligned with our strategies to ensure the increased participation of women who are mothers of young children in the work force which is a matter of social justice and also economic efficiency.

CONSTRUCTION – COMMUNITY CENTRE/BAIE MALGACHE

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(No. B/56) Mr N. Lisette (First Local Region Member for Baie aux Huitres) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the construction of the community centre at Baie Malgache, he will state the:

- (a) cost implication thereof;
- (b) contractual period of the project, and
- (c) progress of work as at date?

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I wish to inform the house that the construction of the Community Centre at Baie Malgache was awarded to the contractor B.H and the value of the project has reached the total sum of Rs 16,096,409.05 (exclusive of VAT).

The works include inter alia: -

- Construction of the building;
- Access road;
- Fencing work;
- Drainage works, and
- Retaining wall.

As regards to part (b) of the question, I am informed that the contract was awarded on 12 October 2021 for a contractual period of 300 days and the work was expected to be completed on 23 November 2022.

However, Mr Chairperson, Sir, the contractor has applied for extension of time for shortage of cement/raw materials and water and same is being assessed for a revised date.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards to part (c), the Community Centre at Baie Malgache has reached a construction state of 80%.

CONTRACT AWARDED – LAND SURVEYING AROUND RODRIGUES

(No. B/59) Mrs R.M.F. Gaspard Pierre Louis, C.S.K. (Minority Leader) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the contract awarded by his Commission for land surveying around Rodrigues, he will inform the House on the:

- (a) terms of reference of the contract together with the contractual period and contract value, and
- (b) number of lots surveyed per region?

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Reply: Mr Chairperson, Sir, with respect to part (a) of the question, I am informed that a contract to the tune of Rs 16,175,000 inclusive of VAT was awarded on 12 June 2020 for the preparation and survey of 2000 lots of state land in Rodrigues to B. ROOPUN – D. K. Nuckcheddy Joint Venture. The contract was for a period of 24 months. The completion period was extended up to 31 December 2022.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am informed that to date the number of lots surveyed per region for residential parcelling is as follows:

1. Region Wise

Region	Locality	Lot Surveyed
Zone 1	Anse Nicolas	38
	Montagne Du Sable	53
	Petite Butte	15
Zone 3	Montagne Malgache	17
	Montagne Cherie	11
	Citron Donis	31
TOTAL		165

2. Cité Cases

Region	Locality	Lot Surveyed
Zone 5	Terre Rouge	18
	Creve Coeur	14
Zone 2	Riviere Coco	26
	Papayes	18
	Ile Michel	26
	Montagne Cabris Corail	36

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Region	Locality	Lot Surveyed
Zone 6	Batatran	20
	Palissade	10
	Roche Bon Dieu	16
Zone 3	Songes	22
Zone 1	Grand La Fouche Mangles	12
	Cascade Jean Louis	12
TOTAL		230

3. Renewal cases scattered across the Island.

123 lots pertaining to renewal of leases have been surveyed around the island.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that the special conditions of the contract stipulate that payment shall be made according to the following schedule in accordance with the milestones established, subject to certification that the services have been tendered satisfactorily as per the following three phases namely:

- i) Submission of Layout Plan - (20%);
- ii) Boundary Stones fixed - (20%), and
- iii) Survey Report - 60% of the percentage amount
of the quantity represented out of 2000.

In addition, the contract stipulates that the Contractor should have a Project Manager who should be available on all times in Rodrigues and should be a Registered Land Surveyor with at least eight (08) years' experience in the field of land surveying. In addition, with regard to team composition, the land surveyor/Firm shall appoint suitable qualified and experience technicians and other staff as necessary to ensure that the surveys are carried out effectively.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that to date, 1218 lots have been handed over to the Service Provider, thus, 60.9% of the 2000 lots.

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However, out of the 518 lots surveyed for which survey plans have been submitted only 192 boundary stones have been fixed thus representing 9.6 of lots finalised.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that the Service Provider B. ROOPUN – D.K. Nuckcheddy Joint Venture has submitted a Notice to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly requesting payment of the contract amount.

Being given that the Service Provider has had recourse to legal actions, no further information can be communicated on the matter.