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No. 7 of 2023

RODRIGUES

FIFTH REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENTARY

DEBATES

(HANSARD)

(UNREVISED)

TUESDAY 13 JUNE 2023

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PRINCIPAL OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS

Mr Chairperson - Leopold, Mr Joseph Christian

Deputy Chairperson - Tolbize, Mr Justar

Deputy Clerk - Clair, Miss Marie Chrismélanie

Serjeant-at-Arms - Perrine, Mr Joseph Laval

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RODRIGUES

Fifth Regional Assembly

Debate No. 7 of 2023

Sitting of Tuesday 13 June 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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ANNOUNCEMENT

**PRIVILEGE COMPLAINT – MINORITY LEADER
REPLY B/33 – SITTING OF NO. 6 OF 18 APRIL 2023**

Mr Chairperson: Respected Members, I have one announcement this morning. I wish to inform the House that there has been a privilege complaint by the Minority Leader, Miss Rose Marie Franchette Gaspard Pierre Louis, CSK, stating that in her opinion, reply to question PQ B/33 at the sitting of No. 6 of 2023, 18 April 2023, and the summing up speech of the Chief Commissioner at sitting No. 5 of 2023, 29 March 2023, are inconsistent and misleading the House. I have given due consideration to the complaint and I am now coming with my ruling thereon.

For the purposes of determining matters of contempt, the list of offences is provided under section 6 of the National Assembly, Privileges, Humanities and Powers Act and which have been extended to this Assembly, that is, the Rodrigues Regional Assembly under section 65 of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act.

Respected Members, after having gone through the above Act, the Standing Orders and the Rules and Regulations of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and having regard to past practice of the House, I had a word with the Chief Commissioner as regards the complaint made by the respected Minority Leader.

The Chief Commissioner has explained to me his position as regards this issue, more particularly, by drawing the attention of the Chair to the substance answer provided for PQ B/33 at the sitting No. 6 of 2023 on 18 April 2023, which this House will agree with me is fairly explicit and which is being maintained by the Chief Commissioner. Therefore, the stand of the Chief Commissioner rectifies the confusion that may have arisen. In view of explanation offered to the Chair and the House by the Chief Commissioner, I do not propose to proceed further with the matter and consider it close. This is my ruling and in accordance with Standing Order 37, it is final. I thank you for your attention.

The Table has been advised also that question B/62 will be answered by the Chief Commissioner.

PAPERS LAID

A. Commission for Agriculture and Others

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- The Certificate of Incorporation issued by the Registrar Companies for Rodrigues Coffee Company Ltd.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

CONSTRUCTION/UPGRADING – ROADS/TRACK ACCESS ROADS

(No. B/61) The Second Island Region Member (Mr J. Tolbize) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the construction /upgrading of roads and track access roads, he will, for the benefit of the House, state and table on the cost of 1 km of:

- (a) two track concrete access road with strips 600 mm wide and 1,500 mm apart, centre to centre;
- (b) a 3 m (10 ft) wide concrete track access road, and
- (c) a 3 m (10 ft) wide asphalt track access road?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, with respect to part (a) of the question, I would like to inform the House that my commission in fact constructs two track concrete access road with strips 900 mm wide and 700 mm apart, centre to centre.

The average cost of 1 km of such works is approximately Rs 6.5 million per kilometre including accesses, bus layby and turning bay.

As regards to part (b) and (c) of the question the indicative cost of 1 km of a 3 m wide concrete track access is approximately Rs 9 m and that for three metres wide asphalt track is approximately Rs 30 m including bulk excavation, masonry works, drainage works which are site specific depending on topography.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, we have also to note that the lifespan of concrete road is about 20 years and for asphalt between 10 to 15 years.

I am tabling the indicative estimated cost as requested by the respected member.

Mr Tolbize: Mr Chairperson, Sir, can the Commissioner inform the House whether the construction of roads and track roads are extended to the residential parcelling (*morcellement*). Thank you.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: M. le président, en effet on a vu depuis l'année dernière qu'il y a beaucoup de morcellement qui ont beaucoup de problème surtout en période

de pluie. Donc, nous avons décidé, bien sûr détendre ce projet au morcellement. Donc, nous avons déjà commencé le morcellement de Mourouk, morcellement de Baladirou ainsi que Gravier. Nous avons déjà terminé le tronçon qui désert les habitants de Cascade Jean Louis dans le morcellement et, bien sûr nous allons continuer à mettre ces facilités dans d'autre morcellement dans le futur.

Mr Chairperson: Next question.

**FÉDÉRATION DES ASSOCIATIONS COOPÉRATIVES DES ELEVEURS DE
RODRIGUES (FACER)'**

(No. B/62) The Second Island Region Member (Mr J. Tolbize) asked the Commissioner for Agriculture and Others whether, in regard to the 'Fédération des Associations Coopératives des Eleveurs de Rodrigues (FACER)', he will obtain information and state to the House on:

- (a) any grant allocated thereto by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and, if so, on what basis, and
- (b) the total amount due thereby to the L.F Ltd as at 01 October 2021 and up till date?

Mr Chairperson: Chief Commissioner?

The Commissioner for Agriculture and Others (Mr L. A. Perrine): Mr Chairperson, Sir, with your permission, I would like to reply to question B/62 as the subject relates to a breeder's cooperative association which is an agricultural issue that falls under my portfolio.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, the 'Fédération des Associations Cooperative des Eleveurs de Rodrigues Ltd' (FACER) played an important role in providing animal feeds, veterinary products and chicks to the general public.

It is much regretful to note that such a strategic association in the field of agriculture has experienced the worst and has since April 2022 close down business and all its employees are under the welfare programme. FACER is now relying on the yearly grant in aid from the Rodrigues Regional Assembly to honour its liabilities, such as, a lorry purchased on lease and its auditors fee.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards part (a), a grant Rs 100,000 was allocated to FACER for financial year 2021-2022 to meet administrative expenses. A second disbursement of Rs 100,000 is being considered to meet and has been submitted by the association and this

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request is being considered and the money will be used to meet expenses for this current year which stand for payment of lorries on lease and part of auditor's fee.

As regards part (b), an amount of Rs 11 m. was due to the Livestock Feed Ltd by FACER during financial year 2021-2022 for the purchase of animal feed and only Rs 4 m. has been settled.

As at date, I am informed that a total amount of Rs 7 m. is due by FACER to the Livestock Feed Limited.

M. le président, ça c'est qu'on m'a dit de lire mais c'est catastrophique pour Rodrigues ce qui s'est passé pendant ces dernières années concernant FACER. C'est ce qu'on appelle *a chaotic management*. Ça va jaillir sur Rodrigues au niveau international parce que FACER a eu une mise en demeure d'une compagnie qui est internationale, qui est basé en Belgique, c'est le Atradius Collections B.V. en Belgique, c'est-à-dire, *international debt collectors*. L'Assemblée Régionale a dû intervenir pour stopper, pour bloquer cette mise en demeure en attendant qu'on arrive à trouver une solution. Parce que la réputation de Rodrigues au niveau international allait être éclabousser.

M. le président, le *mismanagement* de FACER est un petit peu dans tous les coopératives. Il y a une vingtaine qui est en liquidation. Je ne peux pas comprendre. Et les coopératives c'est pour les petits éleveurs et les petits planteurs, comment ça se fait que toutes ces sociétés doivent être liquide. J'étais à Maurice récemment, j'ai vu avec fierté lorsque les éleveurs parlent de leur maison. C'était une maison des éleveurs. Excusez-moi mais c'est devenu une maison des voleurs. *Sorry*, excusez-moi, je retire voleurs. Mais ce n'est pas possible qu'on continue, une *caverne d'alibaba* ! Mais on va mettre de l'ordre. Vous savez, pour nous, pour moi personnellement, il y a trois mots qui est important, c'est *integrity, honesty and accountability* qui n'existait pas du tout dans la coopérative. Et, nous allons mettre de l'ordre. C'est pourquoi l'Assemblée Régionale à recommander au Registrar de *supercede* ce comité et de mettre en place un *Caretaker Board* pour mettre de l'ordre, pour prendre des actions, pour récupérer tous cette argent qui est dilapidé. Les membres du comité sont supposés être là pour gérer la compagnie, eux-mêmes ils prennent à crédit pour aller vendre et ils n'ont pas payé leurs dettes. C'est inacceptable. Et nous, je dis bien, tous ceux qui ont commis un acte illégal, ils vont payer et ce *Caretaker Board* va mettre en place une enquête pour savoir qui sont les coupables parce qu'on ne peut pas sur le dos des éleveurs commettre des tels actes.

Vous savez il y a Mme Yvette Piraso était ici l'année dernière. Cette dame-là, c'est une volontaire du progrès qui a travaillé pendant des longues années avec FACER. Et vous savez, elle était estomaquée, avec les larmes aux yeux lorsqu'elle a vu la situation de FACER. Et nous, nous allons mettre de l'ordre, refaire les éleveurs de Rodrigues participer, émerger dans la région et aussi au niveau de l'Afrique cette association doit joindre le 'Sakawo' qui est l'association des fermiers d'Afrique et même le 'World Farmers Association'. C'est là que Rodrigues va émerger et non pas avec des sociétés. Au lieu de protéger les membres, les éleveurs, ils protègent leur propre intérêt. Je vous remercie.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, j'ai écouté avec attention le Commissaire de l'Agriculture parlant de FACER et de *mismanagement/chaotic management*, pour reprendre ces mots. Est-ce que je peux demander au Commissaire de l'Agriculture de nous dire dans le cadre de FACER, une coopérative, est-ce qu'il y a eu, comme cela exige le 'Cooperative Act', le rapport de l'Audit, je sais il doit y avoir le *internal audit* ainsi que le *external audit*, dans le cas de FACER, parce qu'ils ont géré certain montant, ils ont recours à des *external audit*. Est-ce que je peux savoir du Commissaire de l'Agriculture quel a été les retombés de ces rapports au 30 juin 2022, y-a-t-il eu des preuves qu'il y a eu de *financial mismanagement* parce qu'il parle de liquidation, etcetera ?

Mr Perrine: M. le président, d'après mes informations, nous allons savoir lorsque le *Caretaker Board* va entrer en fonction. On va savoir tous les dessous, qu'est-ce qui s'est passé. Parce que c'est impensable. Vous savez qu'en 2022 ils ont importés pour Rs 62 millions aliments pour animaux. Mais comment se fait-il que vous importez Rs 62 millions, vous ne faites que revendre et les gens, les planteurs, les éleveurs payent, mais il y a perte. Mais je ne sais pas, il y a les auditeurs. Tout ça on va voir comment les auditeurs ont fait leurs travaux. Parce qu'il y a les auditeurs de Maurice. Parce que c'est une compagnie que le *turn over* est plus de Rs 10 millions, c'est-à-dire, que ce sont les auditeurs, *external auditor* comme la Minority Leader vient de nous dire, qui fait l'audit. Nous allons voir tout ça, réconcilier pour savoir comment se fait-il qu'avec tous ces pertes, etcetera, cette coopérative continuer à fonctionner. M. le président, je vais *table* la mise en demeure de la cour pour montrer la véracité de tous ce qu'ils sont en train de dire.

Mr Lisette: The Commissioner for Agriculture mentioned in his answer that there is a grant of Rs 100,000 which is being given to FACER, I think it has been for a long time and now he is revealing that this amount, I think, is being used for reimbursing what the FACER owes to his creditors. I would like to ask him whether the money that is funded by the Rodrigues

Regional Assembly, the Rs 100,000 is not meant solely for manager fees rather for than for paying the debts of FACER?

Mr Perrine: M. le président, vous savez pour cette année-ci FACER a soumis une demande, c'est-à-dire, l'Assemblée Régionale est en train de considérer cette demande. Justement, comme vient de faire souligner *respected Member*, c'est que cette argent, ce *grant*, il y un cahier de charge pour payer certaine dépense spécifique mais je ne peux pas dire/répondre dans le passé comment ça se fait. Mes collègues qui sont là, à chaque fois qu'il y a une demande, on vérifie que l'argent est utilisé spécifiquement pour ce qui a été écrit et condition dans le... Vous savez pour donner un *grant* il y a un *agreement* qu'on a signé. Il faut qu'on suit. Mais comme je vous dis pour ce qui s'est passé avant, je ne peux pas vous répondre. Mais pour cette année-ci, je vous dis que la requête *has been put on hold* pour vérifier tout ça avant d'effectuer le déboursement.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, le Commissaire de l'Agriculture au départ a dit qu'il va aller voir ces *reports*. Maintenant, je peux lui confirmer qu'en juin 2022, jamais il n'y a eu *adverse report*, que ce soit au niveau du *internal auditor*, que ce soit du *external auditor*. Le Commissaire a beaucoup parlé de ce fournisseur, c'est vrai s'est dommage que la situation de FACER est arrivé jusque-là. Est-ce le commissaire est au courant que ce fournisseur a aussi une grande part de responsabilité dans ce qui se passe aujourd'hui au niveau de FACER. Pourquoi ? parce qu'il a été depuis des années l'unique fournisseur de FACER, d'un coup il trouve à donner à un autre compétiteur qui a travaillé à l'intérieur de FACER, le même montant de produit et pour le même petit marcher. En voulant avoir être *greedy* pour avoir le plus grand part du marcher, il a provoqué une compétition déloyale qui a fait aujourd'hui la chute de FACER, est-il au courant de ça ?

Mr Perrine: Vous savez, M. le président, moi comme j'ai dit il faudrait que le *Caretaker Board* fasse une enquête, rédiger un rapport parce que moi je me base sur simplement sur l'évidence, pas ce qu'on dit, pas ce qu'on raconte. Il y a beaucoup. Mais ce que je dois vous dire, tous les secteurs qui étaient sous FACER n'a pas fonctionné. Par exemple, poulet, poussin et même les animaux, les autres remuants. Ce que je dois faire ressortir que pour nous FACER à un rôle très, très important à jouer dans élevage à Rodrigues. Par exemple, la gestion de l'abattoir, au lieu de donner ça à un étranger, on aurait pu demander à FACER. Vous savez, on va relancer l'industrie de poulet à Rodrigues parce que Rodrigues importe mille tonnes de poulet tous les ans. 300,000 *eggs*, c'est-à-dire, à Rodrigues ont importé presque tout et on aurait dû exporter. Il y a la possibilité d'exporter. Alors, on va relancer ce secteur. Parce

que je vois à Montagne Croupier il y a une dizaine de poulailler qui est abandonné. Peut-être on va pouvoir réutiliser ces poulaillers qui ont été abandonné à Montagne Croupier. Merci.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, le Commissaire de l'Agriculture a aussi parlé de *Caretaker Board*. Je sais que c'est une provision aussi du Cooperative Act, est-ce que je peux savoir – normalement c'est le Registrar qui met en place le *Caretaker Board*. Est-ce que c'est le Registrar qui la mis en place cette fois-ci ou bien c'est le Executive Council ?

Mr Perrine: M. le président, c'est-à-dire, le Registrar nomme sous la loi 47 section 10, le *Caretaker Board*. Ce n'est pas l'Assemblée Régionale qui nomme le *Caretaker Board*. Mais nous en tant que responsable de l'agriculture à Rodrigues, on doit attirer l'attention du Registrar sur quelque chose qui ne marche pas, qui ne fonctionne pas. C'est à lui de prendre ces responsabilités. Pas plus tard que dans la semaine dernière, j'ai parlé avec lui, il est en train de *vetted* et faire une enquête sur ces personnes qui vont être nomme, c'est-à-dire, on nomme pas n'importe qui, les agents politiques. C'est le Registrar qui va faire une enquête 'Due Diligence' comme on appelle avant de recommander quelqu'un pour être sur ce *Caretaker Board*. D'ailleurs, c'est pour temps limiter en attendant que les éleveurs se réorganise pour prendre en charge leur maison et aussi le *Caretaker Board* aura un cahier des charges qu'il doit respecter et soumettre rapport en temps et lieu et avec suivi strictement par le Registrar. Merci.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Commissioner for Agriculture has stated about mismanagement in the affairs of FACER and I understand that the Commission for Cooperative is also responsible for auditing the accounts of the FACER. I would like to know if the Commissioner for Agriculture has liaised with his counterpart – meaning Commissioner for Cooperative to know whether there has been any fraud as regards in the affair of the management of the FACER?

Mr Perrine: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Commission for Cooperatives and the Commission for Agriculture speak the same language. Nous sommes sur la même longueur d'onde et on attend avec impatience le *Caretaker Board* qui va entrer en fonction, je pense d'ici la fin du mois et on va faire un inventaire, on va faire des enquêtes qu'il faut pour savoir justement, pas pour punir mais pour savoir où le mal, pour pouvoir redresser, réorganiser. Ce n'est pas *witch hunt* ça mais c'est simplement pour que les éleveurs puissent être représenter au niveau régional et défendre leur intérêt. Parce que comme je vous dit, le Rodrigues Regional Assembly, le gouvernement régional compte beaucoup sur les éleveurs. C'est un secteur important dans Rodrigues. Vous savez chaque bateau qui part là, il y a à peu près Rs 3.5

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millions qui rentre dans les poches des éleveurs – chaque bateau. Mais c’est quelque chose d’important et on ne peut pas – vous savez le niveau de difficulté que la population est en train de rencontrer. Tous les secteurs où on peut avoir des revenus, on va pousser, c’est pour aider la population justement de sortir des difficultés qu’ils sont en train de faire face. Et pour nous, secteur de l’élevage est très important. Merci.

Mr Chairperson: Next question.

DENGUE FEVER

(No. B/63) Mrs R.M.F. Gaspard Pierre Louis, C.S.K. (Minority Leader) asked the Commissioner for Health and Others whether, in regard to the case of dengue fever diagnosed on a Rodriguan patient in Mauritius, he will obtain information and:

- (a) provide a chronology of events and whereabouts of the patients prior to diagnosis;
- (b) state if same was admitted in any health institutions in Rodrigues prior to his departure to Mauritius, and, if yes, the number of days, and
- (c) state the precautionary measures his Commission has taken for the detection and prevention of any propagation thereof, together with the protocol established therefor?

Mr Volbert: Mr Chairperson Sir, I am informed that Mr AF left Miami, USA on 02 April 2023, transit through Turkey on 03 April 2023 and arrived in Mauritius on 04 April 2023. On 14 April 2023, he travelled to Rodrigues. On 26 April, he went back to Mauritius and returned to Rodrigues on 20 May 2023. On 27 May 2023, Mr AF and his wife had dinner at Tekoma Hotel at Anse Ally, Rodrigues and spent three hours at the hotel. On 29 May 2023, Mr AF called at La Ferme Area Health Centre and was seen by a government Medical Officer and proceeded to his place. On 30 May 2023, he returned to La Ferme Area Health Centre as he was still suffering from fever, weakness and headache. He was anew attended by a Government Medical Officer and was allowed to return home. On 31 May 2023, he called anew at La Ferme Area Health Centre as there was no improvement in his health and a blood sample was taken from the patient and analysed in the point of care apparatus and found to be low platelets. He was then admitted at Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Crève-Coeur, on the same day. On 02 June 2023, Mr AF absconded from hospital and travelled to Mauritius by flight MK 141. On 03 June 2023, a blood sample was taken by the staff of City Clinic where he was admitted and revealed positive for Dengue Antigen NSI and negative for Dengue Antibodies

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(suggestive of recent infections). On 05 June 2023, the Central Laboratory Victoria Hospital confirmed PCR results were negative for Dengue Antigen and positive for IgG and IgM Dengue Antibodies (suggestive of seroconversion).

Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards to part (b) of the question, the answer is yes.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards to part (c) of the question, upon confirmation of a first positive case of dengue fever by the Communicable Diseases Control Unit (CDCU) of the Ministry of Health and Wellness on 05 June 2023, a High Level Meeting was held at the Central Administration and immediately the protocol following the positive case of a Dengue and Chikungunya was activated.

The Public Health Unit in Rodrigues enquired on the health status of close contacts. blood samples of four suspected cases were immediately sent to the Molecular Biology Laboratory, Candos.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, as per protocol, the same day, indoor residual spraying was carried out at the residence of Mr AF. Again as per Protocol, Mr Chairperson, Sir, fogging activities started on the first day following the positive case and within a radius of 300 metres from the residence and the place of hospitalization of the patient. Fogging operations having been repeated on day three, day seven and will be continued on day 10. Larviciding activities were carried out on day two, day four, day eight and will continue on day 11.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, a technical meeting was held via zoom was held on Thursday 08 June 2023 with different sections of the Ministry of Health and Wellness dealing with communicable diseases. Another technical meeting, Mr Chairperson, Sir, was held with the representative of the World Health Organisation (WHO) Dr. (Mrs) Dra Anne Ancia who was on official visit in Rodrigues and after discussions, the protocol of the ministry was recommended to be followed.

The High Powered Committee met on 09 June 2023 at 09.00 hours and was apprised that a delegation of the Ministry of Health and Wellness, the CDCU and the Vector Biology and Control Division (VBCD) comprising the NCD Coordinator, Deputy Director Public Health and Food Safety, Head Vector Biology and Control Division, a Community Physician, a Senior Health Surveillance Officer and a Health Surveillance Officer would assist the health services into the prevention and propagation of the dengue.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, the service of the Dornier was requested for the urgent airlift of:

- (i) 5 fogging machines
- (ii) 20 litres aqua k.othrine

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- (iii) 180 litres Nebol
- (iv) 15 litres Abate (Temephos)
- (v) 5 kilograms residual insecticide
- (vi) 5,000 dengue flyers
- (vii) Protective equipment composes of overall, goggles, masks.

In the meantime, Mr Chairperson, Sir, other six cases have been detected from two close relatives of the first patient and one employee of the Air Mauritius. One habitant of La Ferme, one of Cascade Jean Louis, Petit Gabriel and Vanguard, respectively. Therefore, peri-domestic activities were carried out with assistance of the VBCD and CDCU at:

- (a) the residence of patients, and
- (b) site of work of patients.

Followed by fogging operations, larviciding activities, house to house inspection and fever surveys as per protocol.

Fever surveys were carried out on Saturday 10 June at Ile Michel, Cascade Jean Louis and La Ferme including the Catholic Church of St Esprit, with the authorization of Father Luc René, Apostolic Vicar of Rodrigues. Furthermore, Mr Chairperson, Sir, training for doctors and Nursing Officers were carried out on Sunday 11 June 2023 and training for Agent de Santé on Monday 12 June.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, a daily monitoring/surveillance meeting is held for the overlooking of the dengue fever status in Rodrigues island and the monitoring of duties assigned to each member. In addition, Mr Chairperson, Sir, an island wide cleaning campaign is being carried out to reduce vector proliferation being the only way to prevent the propagation.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) is playing a crucial role in informing the population on keeping the environment clean to prevent the propagation of mosquitoes. I thank you, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, est-ce que je peux savoir du Commissaire étant donné *the history of the patient AF*, whether he considers that *this patient AF is the patient zéro*, est-ce que c'est le patient 0, par rapport à la dengue ou bien par rapport au *history* parce qu'on connaît tous aujourd'hui *the incubation period*, ainsi de suite. Est-ce que pour étant arrivé à Maurice le 4 avril du bateau de croisière, le 14 il est venu à Rodrigues, le 20 il est venu à Rodrigues pour après tomber malade le 29, est-ce que ce patient AF est considéré comme le patient zéro ou bien cette situation de maladie était déjà à Rodrigues ?

Mr volbert: Oui, le patient AF est considéré comme le patient zéro parce que c'est lui le patient qui la fièvre dengue a été détecté.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, je pense qu'il y a eu une confusion par rapport c'est qui le patient zéro. En général le patient zéro c'est celui qui a cette maladie pour la première fois alors que de par est-ce qu'on voit comme les dates, comment peut-on aujourd'hui, le monsieur est arrivé à Rodrigues le 14 avril, il est reparti pour Maurice le 26 avril, revenir le 20 mai et tombait malade le 29, alors que le *incubation period* c'est connu pour être de trois à sept jours au maximum 10 jours. Donc, il est revenu de croisière depuis le 4 avril. Donc, clairement, scientifiquement, je suppose qu'il ne peut pas être le patient 0. Est-ce que le Commissaire est au courant qu'il y a eu au début de ce mois de mai beaucoup de personne qui ont été à l'hôpital de Crève-Cœur avec des fièvres, tester du sang – *blood placate low*, vomissement, est-ce qu'il y a eu des informations relier à ce niveau, au niveau du management pour dire quelle situation différente que celle de COVID parce que ces gens ont été teste COVID négative.

Mr volbert: M. le président, je n'ai pas ces informations mais j'aurais aimé que la Minority Leader nous communique les informations si elle les a depuis le début. Parce que nous on n'a pas cette information. C'est vrai qu'il y a des patients qui arrivent à l'hôpital avec la fièvre mais ce n'est pas forcément la fièvre de dengue. Mais la Minority Leader a des informations plus précis comme une patriote donnez-nous ces informations pour qu'ensemble nous pouvons travailler correctement.

Mr Baptiste: I would like to ask the Commissioner whether the Commission is trying to track down or has tried to track down the source of the infection to know how it was introduced in the country being given that as the Minority Leader has said we cannot, based on the information that we have, patient zero as you have said cannot be the one who introduced if we look at the...

Mr volbert: M. le président, je répète de nouveau, le cas qui a été rapporté officiellement est considéré comme le patient zéro. Donc, la maladie transmet par les moustiques, personne même au niveau de la santé on a eu des réunions de haut niveau, personne ne peut dire comment la maladie est entré. Mais ce qu'on dire, c'est que la maladie peut se transmettre d'une personne à l'autre par les moustiques. Si vous avez des informations, ce n'est pas une chose de mauvais que j'ai dit là. Si vous avez des informations, vous êtes des patriotes,

communiquiez-nous les informations et on peut travailler aussi pour que nous trouvons une solution avec cette maladie.

Mr Lisette: There is one thing on which I am wondering when I look at the history of the patient, because I think that he went at least three times to the hospital and then admitted in Queen Elizabeth Hospital on 31 May, where a blood test was taken. I would like to ask the Commissioner for Health whether after the health deterioration of the patient in the hospital itself, he decided to sign a DAMA (discharge against medical advice) and before going to Mauritius he made a statement to the Police because he is not having as he felt the necessary treatment as regards to his symptoms?

Mr volbert: Avant de répondre à cette partie de question, je peux dire aussi que la fièvre dengue vient d'être classé dans le protocole. Il n'y avait pas ça auparavant. C'est à la suite de l'atelier de travail que nous avons eu avec le STAR du 29 au 2 mai, que les officiels ont demandé à ce que la fièvre dengue soit classer dans le protocole pour Rodrigues. Et, c'est ce a été fait. Et, concernant la partie de votre question, je n'ai pas les informations. Il se peut qu'il est allé à la station de la Police pour faire une entrée mais l'information que j'ai là, c'est que *he was absconded from hospital and proceeded to Mauritius*. C'est vrai, s'il ne se sentait pas bien, n'importe qui aurait pu le faire mais moi je n'ai pas les informations s'il a passé par la station de Police avant de partir pour Maurice.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, le Commissaire est-il au courant qu'il y a eu un deuxième cas de patient qui avait été admis à l'hôpital de Crève-Cœur et qui après à la suite par rapport au soin qu'il a eu, il a pris la décision de partir pour Maurice pour des soins. Et, en arrivant à Maurice, le 2 juin a été testé positive à la dengue.

Mr volbert: Je n'ai pas encore ces informations que le patient a été admis à l'hôpital mais je sais qu'un Rodriguais parti pour Maurice, d'ailleurs je l'ai dans ma réponse. Mais ce qui est intéressant maintenant c'est que nous avons eu les tests rapides et maintenant s'il y a des patients, des personnes qui se pointe à l'hôpital avec de la fièvre, avec des symptômes de la dengue et maintenant on va pouvoir faire ces tests et bien sûr si c'est positif on va pouvoir savoir à l'instant.

Mr Ramdally: M. le président, est-ce que je pourrais demander au commissaire si considérer le patient AF comme le patient zéro c'est aussi la position du CDCU ?

Mr volbert: C'est la CDCU même qui nous a dit ça parce qu'il travaille d'après le protocole. Si le protocole établi on ne peut pas aller accuser à tort et à travers. On n'a pas les

informations, on n'a pas les informations. Il faudra se fier sur les informations qu'on a. Le patient AF, c'est le patient sur qui la fièvre dengue a été testé positif. Donc, c'est lui le patient zéro officiellement.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, peut-être que j'ai dit que le deuxième patient a été admis, probablement pas admis il était venu trouver recours pour des soins, après il est parti à Maurice et testé positif. Maintenant que on a su le 5 juin, on a entendu le Commissaire de la Santé venir parler de cette situation de préoccupation sanitaire au niveau de la télévision. Donc, d'après ces informations c'est le 3 juin qu'on a su, qu'on a eu confirmation que cette personne est vraiment malade de la dengue. Pourquoi est-ce que, c'est un sujet très préoccupant sachant aujourd'hui il y a la pluie donc le risque d'avoir la prolifération des moustiques est bien grand. Pourquoi avoir attendu le 5 juin pour la déclaration, très tard le soir et comment est-ce que aussi le Commissaire peut nous expliquer qu'un sujet si sérieux ce n'est que le 9 juin qu'il y a eu le *first powered committee* pour ensuite après annonçait quatre cas. Donc, pourquoi ce *delay* entre la date qu'on a su qu'il y a ce problème et puis c'est un sujet très sérieux, pourquoi est-ce que le Commissaire de la Santé, le Conseil Exécutif a attendu autant, plus de cinq jours pour venir après avec le High Powered Committee alors que ça devrait être une action rapide pour vraiment prendre les décisions rapides pour empêcher cette prolifération.

Mr volbert: M. le président, le cas a été rapporté officiellement, on ne peut pas se baser sur ce que disent les gens. Le cas de la fièvre dengue détecté à Maurice sur un Rodriguais a été rapporté officiellement le 5, le 5 pendant la journée et le 6 on a commencé, on a bougé tous les *stakeholders*, on a été dans le village où habite AF, on a fait la fumigation, on a fait *larviciding*. Mais comment je peux expliquer si vous dites que on a pris du temps. Le 5 pour le 6, le lendemain. Est-ce que vous vous souvenez que rapport sur les vecteurs, les moustiques a été rendu publique en 2021, qui a été mentionné qu'il y a beaucoup de moustique, et vous étiez au pouvoir. Qu'avez-vous fait ? Qu'avez-vous fait à ce moment-là ? Et pour venir dire aujourd'hui qu'on tarde avec les... Ecoutez-moi, contrairement à vous, nous ça fait 14 jours depuis que la dengue a été détecté à Rodrigues et on contrôle très bien la situation. Contrairement à vous c'était à six heures temps chaos partout à l'hôpital avec la COVID.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, est-ce que je peux savoir du Commissaire, il a parlé de fumigation dans le village de AF, je vois qu'il est très excité. Nous on est bien calme parce qu'on a géré COVID. Au contraire si dengue se propager entre humain et humain peut-être on serait tous à St Gabriel aujourd'hui, avec ce rythme-là.

Mr Chairperson: Address the Chair!

The Minority Leader: M. le président, le commissaire...

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: Order!

The Minority Leader: Le commissaire a parlé de fumigation dans le village de AF alors qu'on sait que AF a séjourné – il a mentionné dans sa réponse – quelques jours à l'hôpital de Crève-Cœur, est-ce que à l'hôpital de Crève-Cœur il y a eu aussi un exercice de fumigation, si oui, quand ? Parce qu'on a eu l'information que ça n'a pas été fait jusqu'ici.

Mr volbert: Moi, je dis que ça a été fait le même jour que dans le village de AF que dans le village où AF habite et d'ailleurs, je l'ai dit dans ma réponse quelque part : *"Again as per Protocol, Mr Chairperson, Sir, fogging activities started on the first day following the positive case and within a radius of 300 metres from the residence and the place of hospitalization of the patient."* Je l'ai dit dans ma réponse.

Mr Baptiste: The Commissioner has said that the commission is systematically trying to disinfect places, for example, places of the work and he is talking about effectiveness and systematic disinfection at the place of work. I would like to know what is the protocol if it detected among school children, for example?

Mr volbert: C'est pareil, on fait les tests. Les tests avec les enfants qui ont contact avec le patient et puis si on détecte la fièvre on fait le test rapide. Avec le test rapide on a une indication si c'est dengue ou pas et si c'est dengue, l'enfant est admis à l'hôpital de La Ferme. On a converti l'hôpital de La Ferme, le Area Health Centre de La Ferme en centre d'isolation et on peut aussi faire le screening sur tous les enfants de l'école et on fait *residual spraying*, *fogging activities* aussi dans les écoles et *larviciding* si le besoin est.

Mr Baptiste: I would like to ask the Commissioner whether he is aware that just this morning I learnt about a case where somebody, a parent called in a school to inform that his ward has been effected and admitted to the hospital and that nothing has been done. It seems that he has been admitted since the last three or four days. So, is it true that this protocol is working?

Mr volbert: *I am not aware what you said. It is you who said it.* So, moi, je que je vais dire, nous suivons à la lettre les protocoles établis par le ministère. Donc, si vous avez ces informations. Moi, je n'ai pas les informations, communiquez-nous les informations.

Dr. Agathe: Etant donné la répartition géographique mentionnée des cas détectés. Notamment, il y a un cas à Vanguard. Et, vous dites que la situation est sous contrôle, M. le président. Est-ce qu'on pourrait dire que la situation est vraiment contrôlée ou bien étant qu'il y a un cas à Vanguard, que la tendance pourrait indiquer, étant donné ce cas qu'il y a une expansion quand même de la maladie sur l'île et qu'on devrait se poser la question si on va avoir une épidémie ou pas ?

Mr volbert: Moi, je ne peux pas répondre à cette question, parce que moi je fiers les officiers qui sont qualifiés pour me dire ça. Je ne vais pas répondre là parce que moi je ne peux pas prendre sur moi pour dire oui, il y aura épidémie ou pas. De toute façon on a mis en place tous les mécanismes et va devoir combattre s'il y a une épidémie.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, toujours en parlant de *case detection*, il y a un protocole justement du ministère de la Santé par rapport au *active case detection in the community* où on mentionne *to track the contacts of the person infected*. Est-ce que, par exemple, toujours AF a été admis à l'hôpital de Crève-Cœur pendant trois jours, il y a eu des patients à côté donc qui on était des contacts. Est-ce ces patients dans le cadre de ce *contact tracing*, est-ce que dans le *tracing* justement, est-ce que ces patients ont été contactés et est-ce que les procédures ont été suivies comme il faut ?

Mr volbert: Je ne peux pas mentir, je n'ai pas les informations, il faudra que je cherche des informations auprès des autorités concernées et je ne peux pas dire là que c'est oui. Donc, peut-être si ces patients qui étaient à côté de AF, ils sont revenus à l'hôpital et moi, je pense que les autorités savent que AF était là dans la salle avec eux, allait faire le nécessaire pour savoir si les patients ont été contaminés.

Mr Chairperson: One last question. I give you two more questions.

The Minority Leader: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to know from the Commissioner for Health given that La Ferme Health Centre has been identified to cater for the needs for those patients who have to be admitted, can we know what is the bed capacity of this centre with regard to this?

Mr volbert: On a 17 lits à La Ferme et on a déjà fait provision si on a des cas on hausse, on a déjà commencé les travaux à Baladirou, le Youth Centre. Donc, on va admettre les patients si jamais, on a plus que 17.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, le Commissaire a parlé aussi des fumigations. Est-ce qu'on peut savoir comment ça se fait, quel est le *process* pour la fumigation ? *It seems*

that this is the last question, what is the product being used, est-ce que c'est un produit chimique qui peut avoir l'impacté sur d'autre produit ? Est-ce que aussi sur d'autre espèce, flies, bees, et aussi combien de ces produits qu'on a aujourd'hui ?

Mr volbert: On a suffisamment de produit, on a demandé, on a fait venir par le Dornier et je peux rassurer que c'est *bee-friendly*, *abeille-friendly*. Donc, vous n'allez pas à avoir peur de ça. On a déjà demande pour que les apiculteurs ne perdent pas leurs abeilles.

Mr Chairperson: So, we move to next question.

DEFECTIVE MEDICAL EQUIPMENT – HEALTH INSTITUTIONS/RODRIGUES

(No. B/64) Ms M. N. Raffaut (Second Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner for Health and Others whether, in regard to defective medical equipment in health institutions in Rodrigues, he will enlighten the House on the:

- (a) different equipment not in operation as at date and since when;
- (b) impacts thereof on the treatment being offered thereat, and

Mr volbert: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that the list of defective equipment to date under my mandate are as follows:

- (i) C-Arm in Operating Theatre at Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH) was repaired on 02 June 2023 but unfortunately broken down on 03 June 2023 (Technician is on waiting list Air Mauritius to get a seat for intervention).
- (ii) One ventilator in ICU at QEH broke down on 07 June 2023.
- (iii) X-Ray Printer at Mont Lubin Isolation Ward. (Supplier awaiting spare parts from abroad to attend repairs. Supplier attempt to repair same on 31 May 2023 but was unsuccessful as additional spare parts were required). As it is in Isolation Ward with up to six patients, the X-Ray can be viewed on screen.
- (iv) One portable ventilator – ICU, QEH broke down on 17 June 2022 and was assessed to be beyond repairs. (Tender launched on 07 July 2022, no bidder responded. Tender relaunched on 08 September 2022, no bidder responded). However, two Hamilton Ventilators are available as back up.

As regards to part (b) of the question, Mr Chairperson, Sir, I wish to bring to the attention of the House that it has been common practice during the last 25 years, in case of breakdown of equipment, patients are referred to Mauritius for further treatment. No patients are deprived from treatment.

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Under previous regime, the CT Scan has broken down as follows:

- On 20 May 2019
- On 22 July 2022

What did the previous Regional Government do, not to deprive patient with treatment?
Several patients were referred to Mauritius.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards to part (c), broken down of equipment has occurred since ages and will continue to happen for decades to come.

My commission will do all needful to have broken equipment replaced and repaired. However, most of the time, these equipment and spare parts are not available in Mauritius and suppliers have had to wait for shipment abroad.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, it has been observed that very often visiting specialists report broken equipment as they are not well versed with the new modern equipment available in Rodrigues. My commission has set up a standard procedure in case of breakdown of equipment and same should be reported to the commission within 24 hours.

Upon report of breakdown, Mr Chairperson, Sir, of equipment, the Biomedical Unit submit a report and liaise with the supplier for necessary repairs. Very often, the problem can be solved over the phone or via remote coaching.

In addition, some equipment under warranty should only be repaired by the supplier. Coupled with lack of spare parts and unavailability of seat on Air Mauritius, some minor repairs often took more time than usual.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, when you live in glass houses, you should never throw stones.

The list of equipment broken down between 2018 to 2022 for which no action was taken by the previous Regional government is as follows:

From 2019 to 2021 in the ICU

- (i) Two ventilators Newport – broken down in 2019.
- (ii) Portable X-Ary Model: basic 100-30- broken down in 2020.
- (iii) Automatic GAS System - broken down in 2020.
- (iv) Neonate Ventilator Leoni Plus 2 sensor failure & leakage - broken down in 2020.
- (v) Defibrillator Akupak Battery - broken down in 2020.
- (vi) Blood Gas Analyser Electrode - broken down in 2020.

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- (vii) Portable X-Ray - broken down and obsolete in 2020.
- (viii) Portable Ultra Sound Mysono power supply - broken down in 2021.
- (ix) Stress Test Machine Communication and power supply – broken down in 2021.
- (x) Blood gas analyser sensor module - broken down in 2021.
- (xi) Infant incubator Fanem Vision, complete hood - broken down in 2021.

(Interruptions)

From 2018-2021 the X-Ray of Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH)/Mont Lubin Health Centre (MLHC) broken as follows:

- (i) Carestream Printer - broken down in 2018.
- (ii) X-Ray MLHC - broken down in 2018.
- (iii) X-Ray MLHC short circuited in 2019.
- (iv) X-Ray QEH motor 4 - broken down in 2019.
- (v) Ultra Sound UPS - broken down in 2021.
- (vi) X-Ray QEH motor 9 - broken down in 2021.
- (vii) X-Ray Printer MLHC - broken down in 2021.
- (viii) X-Ray Printer QEH - broken down in 2021.
- (ix) X-Ray Film Processor - broken down in 2021.
- (x) X-Ray Printer MLHC - broken down in 2021.

From 2018-2021 in the Laboratory

- (i) Hematology sysmex - broken down in 2018
- (ii) Hematology sysmex - broken down in 2018.
- (iii) Hematology Beckman coulter needle - broken down in 2019.
- (iv) Biochemistry Indiko basic cooling unit and pressure sensor - broken down in 2019.
- (v) Hematology Beckman...

Mr Baptiste: On a point of order. I understand that the list is very long but I am referring to the question, I do not know if the Commissioner has read the question carefully. Different equipment not in operation as at date and since when. I want to know all the list he is giving is it as at date all these are not working? Or else the question is out.

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Mr Chairperson: Mr Commissioner, I think that we have got the point. The point concerning the question particularly. You were answering part (c) of the question?

Mr volbert: I am going to shorten.

Mr Chairperson: Yes, please.

Mr volbert: What I can say, Mr Chairperson, Sir, we make provision to repair almost all of these equipment. But there are some which need to be repaired as at now.

Mr Chairperson: Okay, thank you.

Mr Baptiste: I would like to ask the Commissioner whether he has the information relating to the number of patients who have been to Mauritius, as he has said, for further treatment as all this equipment are not available in Rodrigues?

Mr volbert: You come with a substantive question, I will reply to you later on.

Mr Ramdally: M. le président, est-ce que je pourrais au Commissaire concernant les patients justement qui vont à Maurice à la suite de ces *break down* des appareils à l'hôpital. Donc, est-ce qu'il y a des mesures qui sont mises en place pour faciliter leurs traitements, leurs examens ?

Mr volbert: Je crois que le respecté Membre a une question, tout-à-l'heure on va pouvoir répondre et poser la question là-dessus.

Mr Chairperson: So, we move to next question.

CONSTRUCTION/UPGRADING OF ROAD – RIVIÈRE COCO TO SONGES

(No. B/65) The Fourth Island Region Member (Mr J. P. Spéville) asked the Commissioner for Health and Others whether, in regard to substance abuse in Rodrigues, he will:

- (a) state if any report has been launched recently in regard thereto and the recommendation(s) thereof;
- (b) briefly outline the actions being taken by his Commission in connection therewith, and
- (c) state if there have been any official cases of death in relation thereto since May 2022 in Rodrigues?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, with your permission, I will reply to this Question, B/65.

With regard to part (a) I wish to inform the House that the report on the “Drug use survey in the Island of Rodrigues” was officially launched on 23 May 2023.

The survey was conducted by the National Drug Secretariat which falls under the aegis of the Prime Minister’s Office in collaboration with my Office in the months of September and October 2022 and its objectives amongst others:

- (i) Measure the prevalence of drug use among the general population of the island;
- (ii) Set a baseline for monitoring the drug use situation in Rodrigues; and
- (iii) Develop appropriate strategies and programmes in order to minimise the drug threat in Rodrigues.

The recommendations of the report are as follows:

- (i) Considering the fact that drug use starts at quite an early age, Drug Prevention Programme should be further strengthened particularly targeting the younger age group.
- (ii) Even if a large proportion of students have been reached with drug prevention programme, some do still indulge in drug use, an evaluation of the prevention programme be conducted and prevention strategies and activities be reviewed.
- (iii) Increase and ongoing media campaign to sensitise the population at large.
- (iv) As a significant proportion of Rodriguans believe that drugs are introduced mainly through foreigners, much vigilance and strict control should be maintained at the point of entry of the island.
- (v) A chain referral sampling methodology that is a Respondent Driven survey be conducted among drug users to better understand the practices and behaviours of drug user populations.
- (vi) Law enforcement Agencies should be empowered with resources and logistics to improve surveillance in forest areas where cannabis is grown.
- (vii) Ensure a well-coordinated and comprehensive approach to the drug problem, it is of utmost importance that a body be set up to ensure the overall

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coordination and implementation of interventions including demand and supply reduction programmes; and

- (viii) Rodrigues develops its action plan against drug trafficking and drug abuse in view to ensure a well-structured response.

I am tabling a copy of the report for the information of the House.

With regard to part (b), I am informed that further to the launching of the report, the delegation of the National Drug Secretariat conducted a two-day workshop with the relevant stakeholders focusing on the following two main aspects:

- (i) Drug situation in Rodrigues;
- (ii) The formulation of an action plan based on the findings and recommendations of the report and deliberation during the workshop.

The action plan is under preparation and once same is finalised, it will be submitted for views and validation by all stakeholders concerned.

I am informed that, in the meantime, the following actions are being undertaken by Commissions:

- (i) Commission for Family Welfare and others is recruiting a consultant for the development of a training manual on drug and substance abuse in Rodrigues, fighting drug and substance abuse in Rodrigues;
- (ii) Sensitisation campaign on prevention of drugs and substance abuse amongst youth is being organised by the Commission for Youth and Sport and others in Rodrigues from March to June 2023;
- (iii) Commission for Health has included drug use and its effects through the various programmes being implemented by the HIV/AIDS and the Non Communicable Disease (NCD) Units.

With respect to part (c), I am informed that since May 2022, no case of death related to drug use has been officially reported to Rodrigues.

Thank you.

The Minority Leader: *Mr Chairperson, Sir*, par rapport à la dernière partie de la question, je pense que c'est du domaine public qu'il y a eu récemment un jeune feu C.C, un jeune de 23 ans qui a malheureusement trouvé la mort dont ses parents ont leur certificat de

décès dû au *substance abuse*. Je trouve ça aberrant que le Chef commissaire n'a pas une telle information aujourd'hui sur un sujet si préoccupant surtout par rapport à notre jeunesse.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I stand by information which has been officially submitted to me. I repeat, no case of death related to drug abuse has been officially reported in Rodrigues. I believe that my office will read the relevant authorities and we got the relevant information. If the Member believes that I am wrong, I invite her to send to me a copy of the death certificate of the person whom she says has died of overdose and I will see to it that things are cleared.

Mr Chairperson: Next question!

SEEDS – RODRIGUES TRADE AND MARKETING COMPANY LTD

(No. B/66) The First Local Region Member of Grande Montagne (Dr. H. Agathe) asked the Commissioner for Agriculture and Others whether, he is aware that planters who have ordered seeds, including potato and garlic, at the Rodrigues Trade and Marketing Company Ltd have received only part of the quantity requested and, if so, to give the reasons therefor?

Mr Perrine: Mr Chairperson, Sir, with your permission, I would like to reply to Question B/66, although the Rodrigues Trading and Marketing Company Ltd. (RTMC) is not under the purview of my Commission but the question has to do with provisional seeds to farmers. Mr Chairperson, Sir, I wish to inform the House that Rodrigues has always sources its garlic and potato seeds from the Agricultural Marketing Board of Mauritius (AMB) which is the Government supplier of certified seeds in Mauritius.

The RTMC is a privileged client of AMB as they have long standing business agreement.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am informed by the Commission for Trade that RTMC faces the problem of short supply for garlic and imported potato seeds from the AMB this year. A request for the two seeds made to the AMB is as follows:-

- | | | | |
|-----|-------------------|---|----------|
| (1) | Garlic seeds | - | 2.2 tons |
| (2) | Imported potatoes | - | 9.8 tons |

The AMB failed to honour this order and finally only one ton of garlic seed and 3 tons of imported potato seeds, representing 45.4% and 38.8% of ordered quantities for the two abovementioned seeds.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I personally intervene with the AMB but I was informed that initially, the supply constraint was due to adverse climatic condition which has affected potato seeds production in Australia.

Being given the above circumstances, the RTMC has to re-adjust orders received in order to meet the demand for a maximum of planters.

They were also advised to store their own seeds to reduce dependency on external supplier/s.

As for potato seeds (local spunta), planters received their full order.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, in addition, with a view to boost agricultural production, my Commission implements the seeds subsidy scheme for the year 2023 on key cash crop as a support to local planters. The scheme was also extended to planters who produce and keep their own seeds every year, particularly for onion, garlicks and local beans. It is important to note that this category of planters was not taken into consideration in previous years. Such initiative must be promoted and encouraged as these planters play a significant role in the conservation and multiplication of our local seeds production, particularly with the advent of climate change and globalisation.

Dr Agathe: Donc, cette situation de rareté de semence est dû à la non disponibilité à Maurice. Ce serait ça?

Mr Perrine: M. le président, c'est un petit peu notre dépendance sur importation de semence. Vous savez, pour nous, la production de semence, c'est notre souveraineté. C'est pourquoi aussitôt que nous avons occupé le poste de Commissaire à l'agriculture, on a pris la décision de redémarrer le *Demonstration and Seed Production Plot* qu'il y avait à Rodrigues et dont... Le gouvernement, je ne blâme pas mais ils ont décidé d'*allocate* ces centres de semences au privé, aux coopératives et cetera mais qui ne fonctionne pas.

Alors, notre politique, c'est que tous nos semences, la majorité doit être produit localement. C'est pourquoi la politique de la Commission à ce moment-ci, c'est récupérer toutes ces terres pour pouvoir produire tout ce que nous avons besoin. Je vous donne un exemple. Par exemple, la semence pour l'oignon, on n'a eu que deux kilos à Maurice. C'est pourquoi vous allez voir, il y aura une baisse au moins 20% à 30% de la production d'oignon à Rodrigues. Pourquoi? Parce qu'il n'y a pas de semence. Mais pourtant, on peut produire semence à Rodrigues. Nous avons des *demonstration plots*, au moins cinq ou six et on peut produire notre propre semence. Et deuxièmement, nous allons venir avec un contrat avec le

planteur qui produit les semences pour qu'on puisse acheter. Les planteurs doivent avoir leurs semences à Rodrigues. Je reviens dessus. C'est un petit peu notre souveraineté de pouvoir produire notre propre semence.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, only 44% of demand was satisfied by AMB. I would like to know from the Commissioner there was the possibility for looking for other sources of *approvisionnement* for garlic and potato apart from AMB.

Mr Perrine: M. le président, vous savez, le AMB, c'est l'importateur de semence à Maurice reconnu par le gouvernement certifié. C'est pourquoi on dépend de l'AMB. Parce que semence, vous savez, il faudrait savoir, que ce soit une semence qui est certifiée par les autorités et on ne peut pas importer de Madagascar n'importe qui, dump tout ça à Rodrigues pour *boost up* production. Mais je dois dire pour *garlic*, il y a beaucoup de Rodriguais qui produisent leur propre semence. Ça veut dire, la demande était pour deux tonnes mais on n'a eu que 44%, moins de 50%. Mais il y a des planteurs que je connais par exemple, un certain M. Swee, à Patate Théophile qui produit la semence de l'ail et qui vend. C'est pourquoi on a enregistrement des chiffres, d'enregistrer ces planteurs qui produisent les semences et faire un contrat avec eux, les aider à produire beaucoup plus pour satisfaire notre demande localement. Parce que notre politique, c'est que Rodrigues doive produire les semences que nous avons besoin au lieu d'importer. Là où on ne peut pas, à ce moment-là, on importe.

Mr Lisette: Yes, Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to know from the Commissioner for Agriculture whether the rationing of the seeds by AMB may also be due to fund availability as regards to debts between the RTMC and AMB.

Mr Perrine: M. le président, je suis un petit peu au courant mais vous savez, c'est une compagnie qui fonctionne et qui a un business plan et cetera. C'est pourquoi on a pris la décision de donner *the subsidy* directement aux planteurs. C'est-à-dire, vous l'achetez où vous voulez et vous apportez votre reçu à Citronnelle et on vous rembourse 50%. C'est justement pour voir que *the subsidy* va directement aux planteurs. Parce que des fois, on voit que l'argent qu'on injecte rentre dans le management et puis comme vous dites avec raison. Et ça impacte un petit peu sur les planteurs. C'est pourquoi on veut que l'aide qu'on apporte, le *scheme* qu'il y a, ça va directement aux planteurs.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am speaking about the debts if ever that exist within RTMC and AMB that has caused AMB to ration the amount of seeds that may be provided to RTMC. This is.... of my question.

Mr Perrine: En tout cas, M. le président, nous avons une communication régulière avec le *Marketing Board*. Nous ne sommes pas au courant. Nous allons investir. I will look into the matter and will let you know. Mais c'est un problème je crois RTMC, elle a l'occasion de faire une demande, de voir un petit peu. Je ne crois pas que c'est un petit peu à cause de problème de financement avec le *Marketing Board*. Parce que le *Marketing Board*, vous savez, le paiement peut être fait après. Ce n'est pas nécessairement de payer tout de suite.

Mr Lisette: In the budget, there are items related to subsidies, specifically for provision of seeds to planters. I would like to know from the Commissioner whether, there has been any correspondence between the RTMC and his Commission or from the Commission that is responsible for RTMC to his Commission regarding the lack of fund for the purchase of seeds from AMB.

Mr Perrine: M. le président, à ma connaissance, non. C'est-à-dire que toute demande concernant les planteurs/éleveurs est prise bien sûr en considération. C'est très important pour nous. S'il y a un arrangement, moi-même, j'ai déjà intervenu auprès de *Marketing Board* pour qu'on *supply* et on va avoir le paiement après. Tout le temps, ils sont tombés d'accord. Mais je n'ai pas eu cette année-ci, je n'ai pas eu...

(Interruptions)

Mr Perrine: Non. En tout cas, on contrôle le crédit. Ne vous en faites pas.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, j'ai entendu le Commissaire parler d'une baisse dans le nombre de semence d'oignon qu'on a eu, ce qui fait qu'il a parlé aussi d'une baisse éventuelle dans la production d'oignon alors que ses officiers récemment à la radio ont expliqué comment il y aura une augmentation dans la production d'oignon cette année. Peut-il nous dire où est-ce qu'on en est? Est-ce qu'on aura une baisse dans la production parce qu'il n'y a pas de semence ou bien il y aura une augmentation? Vous ne pouvez pas me dire que vous n'êtes pas responsables de ce que vos officiers disent parce que c'est vous qui dirigez le comité....

Mr Perrine: M. le président, vous savez, quand on parle de baisse, on fait une comparaison. On peut comparer, on va dire une baisse de ce qu'on a eu l'année dernière mais on peut dire, moi, ce que *I expected*, ce n'est pas ça que j'ai *expected*. Parce que nous, nous visons cette 700 tonnes d'oignons. Dimanche, j'ai passé tout mon dimanche à visiter les plantations et je vous dis qu'il y a par exemple, à Port Sud-Est, même à Mourouk, les gens n'ont pas planté parce qu'ils n'ont pas de semence, surtout semence qu'ils avaient demandée,

pas.... Mais ils n'ont pas eu. C'est pour ça peut-être le respecté membre Ramdally peut parler. Mais attendons voir, on va savoir.

Mr Chairperson: Okay, next question!

Mr Ramdally: Mr Chairperson, Sir, B/67.

ONION PLANTERS – VALLEY OF PORT-SUD-EST

(No. B/67) The First Local Region Member of Saint Gabriel (Mr J. R. Ramdally) 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?

Mr Perrine: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, my Commission is fully committed to ensuring the development and welfare of our farmers' community.

In a spirit of promoting a participatory approach, meetings and field visits are organised with onion planters of the valley of Port-Sud-Est as and when required to find a common agreement on difficulties encountered by the concerned planters.

My Commission is aware that the onion planters of the valley of Port Sud Est were facing water shortage for irrigation due to the following factors:

- The severe drought affecting Rodrigues last since last year up to mid-march 2023.
- The amount of rainfall received in the concerned watershed prior to the start of the onion season is relatively lower as compare to previous years.
- The water collected at Cascade Victoire is used for both domestic and agricultural purposes (irrigation of onion and mixed vegetables). Implying that only water surplus to domestic use is being transferred via a feeder canal to the rainwater harvesting structure at Port-Sud-Est for irrigation purposes.
- With the low rainfall patterns up to now, the water being capture in the water structure at Cascade Victoire is just enough for domestic purposes thus, the lack of water for irrigation.

With a view to provide assistance to the onion planters, officers of the Water Unit and my Commission have effected several visits to look for possible solutions during the months

of February and March 2023. The water source for both domestic and irrigation of Port Sud Est Valley is located at Cascade Victoire. Accordingly, a joint site visit between technicians of my Commission and those for Water Resources was effected on 11 March.

The following measures are being implemented to remedy the solution:

- Domestic water be distributed in the morning as from 07.00 a.m. until noon according to water distribution schedule of the Commission for Water Resources.
- Depending on irrigation requirement, water available will be diverted from domestic line as from noon to fill the agricultural water harvesting structure up to 18.00 hours.

According to information gathered from Planters' Association, common decision taken to share available water for domestic and agriculture is effective as from April 2023 and coupled with recent rainfall, the problem has been solved. The situation is being monitored by the Irrigation Unit of my Commission on a weekly basis.

Mr Ramdally: M. le président, est-ce que je pourrais demander au Commissaire de l'agriculture s'il est au courant qu'il y a des bassins et des tuyaux qui ont été entassés à Port Sud-Est?

Mr Perrine: Vous savez, à Port Sud-Est, il y a 130 lots de plantations et ils sont tous connectés au réseau d'irrigation. Mais comme j'ai expliqué, la retenue qu'on a à Port Sud-Est, une capacité de 6000 m² d'eau est vide et on dépend directement de l'eau domestique pour irriguer les champs en attendant qu'on a la pluie et on peut comme si remplir la retenue pour les planteurs. Les tuyaux et les tanks que vous voyez là-bas, c'était pour un projet qu'on va aller prendre l'eau directement pour venir de quatre points et à partir de ces bassins, refoulement, pour pouvoir être utilisé pour les planteurs.... Mais ça n'a pas pu le faire parce que vous savez, comme je vous ai expliqué, avec la faible pluviosité qu'on a eue et diminuer, prendre de Cascade Victoire pour emmener, séparer de l'eau domestique, ça va impacter sur les familles. Ce qu'on pense faire en ce moment-ci, il y a un *borehole* juste avant la retenue. On va pratiquer le *airfill* de ce *borehole*. A ce moment-là, on va l'utiliser directement pour mettre dans les bassins pour pouvoir supplémer si vous voulez ce que l'eau domestique que nous avons, qu'on sert pour domestique.

Mr Lisette: Yes, Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Commissioner mentioned it: some of the planters did not have the seeds from RTMC. Second, those who have had their seeds in limited quantity are now being deprived of water, meaning that they are about to lose what they have sold. Yes. Somehow, did lose their seeds or their plant itself. In light of this, Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to ask the Commissioner for Agriculture what he envisaged to do to help the planters not with respect to onion plantation itself because normally, there is a season for onion plantation; they are not having the seeds, they are not having the water. What does he envisage to maybe in terms of conversation or any other facilities that can be provided to them? What is his 'align of action' on that?

Mr Perrine: M. le président, je crois que c'est un peu trop tôt to jump to conclusion. C'est que vous savez, l'irrigation, il faut comprendre. L'oignon a besoin de l'eau, la pluie, d'être irrigué pendant un certain moment pour quand on sème l'oignon et aussi quand on fait les transplantations. Moi, j'ai été à Port Sud-Est et Mourouk le dimanche parce que c'est le moment de transplantation. Ils sont en train de transplanter et heureusement, on a la pluie. Et comme j'ai dit dans ma réponse, on n'a pas un problème d'irrigation pour le moment pour la transplantation. Vous allez voir, tous les gens sont dans leurs champs en train de transplanter. *Hopefully*. Maintenant, il faut savoir comment ça va continuer pour arriver à conclusion qu'il y aura un impact sur la production. Ce que moi, je suis régulièrement avec les planteurs et jusqu'à maintenant, ceux qui ont semé vont pouvoir transplanter. Ils ont l'eau et cetera.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, le Commissaire a parlé de sa visite à Mourouk. Un dimanche, probablement, il n'a rencontré personne sur le terrain. Donc, les gens plantent. La plantation est en phase terminale. Jusqu'à vendredi, les gens ont terminé.... Samedi, dimanche, il n'y a pas de plantation d'oignon dans la région Port Sud-Est/Mourouk. Et Mourouk, ce qu'il y a eu, M. le président, en effet, les planteurs ont eu une collaboration entre eux. Ceux qui ont l'eau à Mourouk, certains ont entraîné pour semer et puis, donner un peu de semences à ceux qui sont à Port Sud-Est. Ou sinon il y en a des planteurs à Port Sud-Est qui ont perdu effectivement leur semence. Et moi, je demande, je fais un appel au Commissaire de l'agriculture pour voir parce qu'il vient de dire comment il y a eu moins de semence. Ces gens ont investi, ça coûte très cher. Aujourd'hui, ils ont perdu leurs semences parce qu'il y a eu un problème dans l'approvisionnement d'eau. Je pense que la Commission doit pouvoir aider ces personnes-là. En sus de ça, M. le président, je veux savoir du Commissaire comment explique-t-il le fait que chaque fois qu'on met une question, on avait cette question-là avant pour la session, deux jours avant, les planteurs ont l'eau et puis après, pas d'eau? Là, cette semaine

encore, la question est revenue sur l'agenda. Samedi, les gens ont eu l'eau l'après-midi. Et après, surement, demain ça va couper encore au niveau du jardin. Comment est-ce qu'il explique cela?

Mr Perrine: M. le président, les réponses que je donne, c'est *evidence-based*. Moi, je ne parle pas dans l'air. Vous savez, quand je suis allé à Port Sud-Est, c'est sur l'invitation du président de la vallée. Les membres étaient là, on a visité. Il y a eu des discussions constructifs et non pas politiques pour faire avancer les choses. Parce que moi, je ne vais pas là où je ne suis pas invité. On m'invite, à ce moment-là, je vais.

(Interruptions)

Mr Perrine: Non, mon point, je ne vais pas visiter le champ d'une personne qui n'est pas là. On discute, on voit les problèmes. Moi, ce que je voulais vous dire, c'est que tous les gens qui ont semé, ils ont l'eau, ils ont pu faire la transplantation que j'ai visitée et *I am satisfied* et le Président aussi est satisfait. Maintenant, comme je vous dis, ce n'est pas simplement la transplantation. Il faut voir comment ça va progresser et cetera. C'est là qu'on est en train de voir. En ce qu'il s'agit de semence quand je suis en train de dire qu'il y a eu un manque, ce n'est pas simplement pour Port Sud-Est. Vous savez, on plante l'oignon autour de Rodrigues, partout. Alors, je ne suis pas en train de dire que parce qu'il n'y avait pas ça, il n'y aura pas de baie Larose à Rodrigues. Il y en a baie Larose. Il y a des gens qui produisent leurs propres semences. Mais je vous dis en général, c'est qu'on n'a pas pu. D'ailleurs, j'ai demandé personnellement au Ministère qui nous ont envoyé deux kilos de baie Larose pour la semence. Mais les gens ont planté d'autres semences: fuchsia et cetera. Alors, il ne faudrait pas *jump to conclusion*. Fuchsia. Ce que je suis en train de dire, il faudrait... *jump to conclusion*. Attendons voir. C'est que moi je pense que d'après ce que je pensais pouvoir dire, je pensais pouvoir produire 700 tonnes. Mais si on compare avec l'année dernière que vous avez 350 tonnes, on va dépasser. Mais seulement moi, je vous dis, 700 tonnes, 500 tonnes, attendons voir parce que vous savez, il y a la qualité. S'il y a la pluie, la bonne saison aussi, on peut rattraper sur le poids. Il faudrait voir. Attendons. Je viendrais à la fin de l'année en septembre.

Mr Lisette: Maybe the last question, Mr Chairperson, Sir. I would like to ask the Commissioner for Agriculture whether he is aware that the planters of Port Sud-Est have invested up to an amount of Rs 50,000 to have a network from Grand Paul to Port Sud-Est and if yes, will he be willing to once again, compensate them with respect to that.... that we are making to have water for the irrigation?

Mr Perrine: Yes. *But the problem*, M. le président, le problème que les planteurs de Port Sud-Est ont à faire face, ça ne date pas de cette année-ci. Vous savez depuis deux longues... beaucoup d'années. Non, c'est pourquoi on travaille en collaboration avec le *water unit* et je dois remercier *water unit*. On fait un travail ensemble scientifique et durable et non pas... Vous, ce que vous avez fait, vous me faites contourner. Ce que vous avez fait, vous avez donné des terrains aux gens là-bas qui sont abandonnés. Je ne veux pas parler de ça. Je ne regarde pas le passé. A Mourouk, qu'est-ce que vous avez fait? Le terrain de l'agriculture, vous avez donné à l'Association des femmes. Qu'est-ce qu'ils ont fait? Allez là-bas, allez voir. C'est rempli de piquants. Non! C'est ça, le problème d'un 'best'. Si c'était utilisé pour produire la semence, on aurait pu donner à la population. Maintenant, ne venez pas dire que c'est à cause de ça. Non, moi, je réfléchis à long terme. Je ne regarde pas le passé mais je vous dis le problème d'eau va être réglé avec le *borehole* qui sera utilisé uniquement pour les planteurs.

Mr Chairperson: Okay, next question.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, je voudrais savoir du Commissaire par rapport à la retenue collinaire qui se trouve à Port Sud-Est. Est-il vrai que ça a été abimé et que si oui, y-a-t-il eu des actions entamées pour réparer cette retenue collinaire?

Mr Perrine: A peu près... c'est une capacité de 6000 m². Il y a à peu près 1000 m² dedans, non? ...Mais seulement, c'est l'état de... Il faudrait nettoyer pour l'accès, voir... Mais on a parlé à l'époque de qu'il y aura... On va mettre photovoltaïque flottant dessus mais on attend toujours. Mais l'ancien gouvernement parlait de photovoltaïque sur... ce que les planteurs m'ont dit. Ils attendent maintenant pour pouvoir mettre photovoltaïque flottant sur la retenue. Bon, pour répondre honnêtement, c'est que ça fonctionne. Je ne sais pas quel est le problème. Peut-être ce qu'on nous a dit, *the feeder canal* qui amène l'eau, ça, il y a un problème dessus parce qu'il n'y a pas d'eau. L'eau ne vient pas du tout aussi. On utilise la majorité pour domestique et ça ne *feed* pas la retenue. C'est pourquoi avec le *borehole* qui va directement dans la retenue et tous les planteurs sont connectés avec la retenue à ce moment-là si ça marche.

Mr Chairperson: Next question!

Dr Agathe: M. le président, B/68.

**ASSIGNMENT OF EXTERNAL CONSULTANT
– COORDINATION OF 'ASSISE DE LA PÊCHE'**

(No. B/68) The First Local Region Member of Grande Montagne (Dr. H. Agathe) asked the Commissioner for Fisheries and Others whether, in regard to the assignment of an

external consultant by his Commission for the coordination of the ‘Assise de la Pêche’ held in 2022, he will inform the House on the:

- (a) scope of work thereof;
- (b) number of man-days planned therefor and the outcomes thereof, and
- (c) overall assignment cost, including the consultant’s fee?

Mr Perrine: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, fishing is a major activity in Rodrigues and as a caring Government, it is of vital importance to devise strategies for the sustainable and responsible management of the fisheries resources around the island of Rodrigues.

In this regard, an award for consultancy was made to prepare a sustainable and profitable fisheries strategy of Rodrigues 2023-2032.

As regard to part (a), the scope of works of the Consultancy were:

- (i) Contribute to setting up a High-Level Technical Committee to steer the process of “Les Assises de la Pêche à Rodrigues”, culminating with a multi-stakeholder validation of the intended Sustainable Fisheries Strategy and Costed Action plan of Rodrigues.
- (ii) Finalise a work plan for formulating and validating a sustainable fisheries strategy and costed short-medium terms action plan
- (iii) To make a rapid assessment of the policy and institutional framework and governance system, an understanding of the status of the coastal marine fisheries resources and ecosystems and the prospects and challenges for harnessing the development potential of sustainable and integrated fisheries management as a market-oriented growth sector for shared prosperity.
- (iv) To undertake preliminary interactions with policy-makers, multi-stakeholder collaboration, a focal group discussions influencing the political visionary, strategic orientation, and social innovations to bring about the desired socio-economic transformation.
- (v) To enable cooperation with potential regional multilateral development and donor agencies, including European Union (EU) Delegation to Mauritius, the World Bank Group, FAO, and other bilateral agencies, regarding prospective resource mobilisation and partnership to implement the intended sustainable strategic plan in the Blue Economy of Rodrigues.

Mr Chairperson Sir, as regard part (b) of the question, the number of man-days was 30 days and the outcome is a final report produced on “*A Sustainable and Profitable Strategy for Rodrigues 2022-2032 and a Costed Five-Year Action Plan*”.

I have the pleasure to table a copy of the report for the attention of the House.

Concerning part (c) of the question, I am informed that the overall assignment cost thereof amounted to Rs 820,075 including consultancy fee.

Mr Chairperson: Yes?

Dr Agathe: M. le président, je voudrais savoir auprès du Commissaire quand est-ce que le *consultancy* a commencé.

Mr Perrine: Je pense que, c'est-à-dire on a commencé le 21 novembre 2022.

Dr Agathe: Donc, le 21 novembre et c'était en lien avec les assises qui ont eu lieu. Les assises ont eu lieu quand? Donc, le consultant a commencé son contrat le 21 et les assises ont commencé le 22. Donc, c'est quand même un peu étrange puisque le *consultancy* avait pour objectif quand même de coordonner les assises. Donc, comment se fait-il que, donc, le contrat a démarré la veille des assises?

Mr Perrine: Respected Member a été *Adviser*. Il sait comment ça fonctionne. C'est-à-dire qu'il y a eu à préparer le tiroir, avoir le contrat, ça ne va pas commencer...toujours lendemain. Ça a pris du temps et aussi, il faut savoir que les assises de la pêche, ce n'était pas décidé avant. C'est-à-dire, on allait tout discuter, représenter... les *stakeholders* vont présenter ce qu'ils pensaient et à ce moment-là, il y a eu le *validating committee* qui travaillait dessus. Le rapport a été *validated*. Là, on attend. Ce sera en juillet. Il y aura *donours' meeting*. C'est-à-dire, une copie a été présenté à la banque mondiale. Je suis très heureux d'annoncer que déjà, provision a été faite par la banque mondiale pour nous accompagner dans ce rapport 2020/2022/2032. Je dois dire que quand je suis arrivé à la Commission, il n'y avait même pas un dossier pour nous dire où on allait. On naviguait à vue d'œil. La pêche, un secteur important comme ça pour Rodrigues, il n'y avait pas de plan. On ne sait pas qu'est-ce qu'on faisait. On faisait n'importe quoi. C'est pourquoi on a pris du temps, on a discuté avec tout le monde. Là, on vient avec un rapport pour la pêche, relancer, réorganiser la pêche jusqu'à 2032. Et pas tout seul ; avec les organisations. FPA, oui, tous les pêcheurs de l'Océan Indien, les îles de l'Océan Indien, la région. Et la Banque Mondiale, dans son concept note, (je ne vais pas dire la somme) a déjà prévu une somme pour la relance, réorganisation de la pêche à Rodrigues. *You have to wait and see.*

Dr Agathe: J'aimerais pouvoir comprendre, M. le président, le bienfondé de ce *consultancy*. Quand on regarde les termes de références, on voit que beaucoup de tâches qui étaient prévues pouvaient être menées par la Commission. Par exemple, *setting up a committee*, *finalise work plan*, *make a rapid assessment* d'une part. Et deuxièmement, quelle est l'articulation entre ce *consultancy* et le travail qui a été fait dans le cadre de SIDPR qui a pour but justement de fixer des caps sur le long terme.

Mr Perrine: Mais je pense que... Excusez-moi à être méchant mais je pense qu'il faut suivre ce que le Gouvernement régional est en train de faire. En effet, si vous êtes absent et puis, vous pensez, vous posez des questions... Mais tout est fait en coordination. Il n'y a pas... Par exemple, la Banque mondiale fait partie de discussion SIDPR. EU – SIDPR. Tout le monde est dedans. C'est hier. Maintenant, il y a eu *action plan*. Vous allez lire le rapport, vous allez voir. Simplement pour la pêche, ou on va focus et comment les *stakeholders* vont pouvoir intervenir et non pas faire un projet, simplement, les *stakeholders* n'ont pas leur mot à dire. Tout le monde est *validating* et on va vous inviter pour *the donors' meeting*, *respected Member*. Vous allez voir comment ça a été fait avec les pêcheurs, avec les *stakeholders*, avec les Rodriguais, avec les pêcheurs de la région pour qu'on puisse progresser ensemble.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to know from the Commissioner for Agriculture what is the method of procurement that was used for the award of a 820,000 consultancy.

Mr Perrine: Vous savez, il y a section 42, *extract* de PPO regulation. Direct Procurement. C'est cette section que nous avons faite et c'est chapitre 44, section 1 (b). In the case of procurement of work consultancy services or other, the value does not exceed Rs 500,000. The contract...

(Interruptions)

Mr Perrine: No. Including other expenses – 800,000. The contract is Rs 500,000. Mais le fret, alors, il va payer le fret pour organisation des affaires à Rodrigues? Non! Le contracteur va payer *conference room*, *accommodation*, *travel*, *lunch for participant*? Non! The fees for the consultancy fee is Rs 500,000. We have paid it.

(Interruptions)

The Minority Leader: M. le président, est-ce que je peux savoir du Commissaire si ce montant a déjà été payé à ce consultant-là ce jour-là?

Mr Perrine: The work has not been completed. Payment at the end of the contract.

(Interruptions)

Mr Baptiste: By the time we go through the document, I would like to know from the Commissioner whether, there is a defined plan of action from this consultancy report and an implementation schedule.

Mr Perrine: All included in the report. Vous savez, comme je répète, M. le président, quand on est arrivé, il n'y avait même pas de dossier sur ce qu'on allait faire, provision qu'est-ce qu'on va faire dans la pêche. On parle de SIDPR mais SIDPR dormait depuis 2009. C'est maintenant que le Gouvernement régional est en train de relancer tout ça. Même affaire. Je vous dis franchement sans blâmer personne. Mais il n'y a pas de dossier, il n'y avait pas de plan. Comment on peut redémarrer la pêche? Je vous dis, c'est un secteur important. Mais il n'y avait rien. Maintenant, on va prendre depuis le lagon, les zones territoriales et les bancs. A ce moment-là, comment on va à la pêche? Maintenant, il y a aussi l'autre secteur qui est le *Blue Economy*. Ça aussi, on parle de ça. Formation du pêcheur, mis en place d'une académie *Marine Academy, conservation de lagon*, protection de lagon, tout ça. Vous allez voir dedans comment c'est complet, qui devait avoir. C'est une *big* pour les pêcheurs.

Mr Chairperson: Last question.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, regardant (donc rapidement) la copie qui a été déposée, je vois qu'au niveau par exemple de *first consultancy*, c'est un projet qui concerne les pêcheurs. Je pense c'est très important d'avoir les pêcheurs partie prenante de cette consultation. Je vois que pour l'Atelier du 20 décembre, il y a eu une dizaine de pêcheurs. Par contre, la validation, il y a eu une trentaine de pêcheurs. Comment se fait-il qu'ils ne sont pas consultés pour démarrer le projet et puis, ils viennent pour valider? Est-ce que c'est une bonne manière de faire, c'est une nouvelle pratique de travail par rapport à un consultant?

Mr Perrine: Excusez-moi. M. le président, c'est comme si on vient de découvrir l'Amérique. Vous savez, ce sont les représentants. Comment on peut discuter avec tout le monde? On invite 5000 pêcheurs à venir pour discuter avec le consultant? Non. Juste son représentant de pêcheurs.

(Interruptions)

Mr Perrine: Non.

Mr Chairperson: Order, please!

Mr Perrine: Non, non. Vous savez, on ne fait pas, lorsqu'on fait, on critique. C'est ça, le problème avec le Rodriguais. On ne fait rien du tout. Lorsqu'une personne fait le travail, on critique. Soyez constructifs. Vous avez un document, vous pouvez venir. Non. Vous savez, on vous invite, vous ne venez pas et puis, vous posez des questions. En tout cas, nous, nous allons faire le travail. Ce sont les Rodriguais et les pêcheurs qui vont nous juger. Merci.

Mr Chairperson: Thank you, Commissioner. Next question!

Mr Baptiste: Mr Chairperson, Sir, B/69.

Fuel and Oil for Vehicles/Equipment – Commission

(No. B/69) The Second Local Region Member of Grande Montagne (Mr L. D. Baptiste) asked the Commissioner for Agriculture and Others whether, in regard to fuel and oil for vehicles/equipment attached to his Commission, for the financial year 2022-2023, he will state:

- (a) the budget earmarked therefor;
- (b) the total amount already disbursed therefor to service providers as of April 2023 and the amount still due as at date, if any, and
- (c) if there has been any disruption of service as a result of any shortage thereof?

Mr Perrine: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as regard part (a) of the question, the budget earmarked for the item fuel and oil is Rs 4,020,000.

As regard part (b), I am informed that an amount of Rs 4,137,277 has already been disbursed as at April 2023. An amount of Rs 260,099.75 is due.

As for part (c), I am informed that there has been no disruption of service provided, owing to fuel and oil shortage.

Mr Baptiste: I do not know but according to information obtained from certain farmers, they stated that they could not benefit from the service of land mechanisation in due time because there was a problem with the tractors which were lying idle at the Commission for Agriculture due to shortage of fuel. I would like the Commissioner to confirm whether he has got information relating to that?

/UNREVISED/

Mr Perrine: Mr Chairperson, Sir, you know, this is Moly, Poly. Information unfounded. You know, when I take over the Commission, there was a D6 at Montagne Goyave. For two years, the D6 has been there, not repaired.

(Interruptions)

Mr Perrine: No. You know, if you listen, you build your strategies on *'palabre'*, you will not succeed. You know, this is not true and this is... Maybe, I do not know who has talked, given this answer. Je dois vous dire franchement, à la Commission, que les Commissions, les trois, on n'a jamais parlé d'un manque de *fuel* ou bien même s'il y en a, je crois que c'est un petit problème de finance ou bien d'arrangement. On téléphone au *filling* et tout de suite, c'est réglé. Je ne crois pas que les équipements que nous avons, même s'il y a, *'zamai enan'*. C'est nous...

(Interruptions)

Mr Perrine: En tout cas, M. le président, je dois vous assurer qu'il n'y a eu aucun *disrupt of work according to oil and fuel shortage* dans la Commission.

Mr Chairperson: Okay. Next question!

Mr Baptiste: Mr Chairperson, Sir, we have talked about land mechanization but the Fisheries Protection Service also was affected. They could not go for their work surveillance at sea at a certain point in time due to lack of fuel. I would ask the Commissioner to come with the true information and collect information from his officers because these are known to the public, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

Mr Perrine: M. le président, je pense que l'honorable membre a eu ces informations avec un fraudeur parce que nous ne sommes tout le temps là où il y a des fraudeurs.

(Interruptions)

Mr Perrine: Non. Je ne comprends pas du tout. Les officiers, non. *False information. Fake.* Vous savez, nous, nous travaillons comme des professionnels. Ils ont tous les moyens pour traquer les fraudeurs et les fraudeurs vont continuer à protester. Merci.

Mr Chairperson: Next question! Dr Agathe.

Dr Agathe: Donc, B/70.

**'PROGRAMME D'ACCOMPAGNEMENT A LA PROFESSIONNALISATION
DE L'AGRICULTURE'**

(No. B/70) The First Local Region Member of Grande Montagne (Dr. H. Agathe) 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;
- (c) the sum already disbursed therefor, and
- (d) table the names and addresses of the beneficiaries?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, with your permission I answer this question because my office, the EPMU, has been in the lead in this programme together with the Commission for Agriculture.

As regard to part (a) of the question, there are no disbursements per safe monetary in the project. The project bases at assisting young farmers in their material requirements, training and other aspects of their business. The criteria and mechanism established for the section of the beneficiaries which was in the project. They should be:

- Farmers, self-employed, entrepreneurs and farmers' association deriving their livelihood from agricultural activities and farming.
- Applicants with innovative projects aimed at professionalising. The project was aimed at professionalising people who are needing assistance in their respective fields.
- Applicants have to submit a well-structured project of brief/business plan with provision for rainwater harvesting structures.
- Applicants with projects which are in the priority areas of the Commission for Agriculture for doubling production in the next two years.

Part (c) of the question does not arise as there have not been disbursements to date because no beneficiaries have yet been selected. And part (d) also does not arise as a matter of fact. Thank you.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, je voudrais demander au Chef commissaire étant donné que c'est un projet qui avait été annoncé en fanfare dans le discours budget

2022/2023, est-ce que ce projet sera finalisé avant la fin de cette année financière le 30 juin 2023 étant donné qu'il y a eu une dotation budgétaire de Rs30 millions pour ce projet.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the project has been entangled into administrative issues. You know how it is today and public servants are unwilling to sit on boards to preside over selection exercises. We have had to my dissatisfaction, much administrative encumbrances in this project. We are contemplating to simplify the selection criteria and of course, go ahead with the implementation in the next financial year. I must also state that due to other emergency and priority expenditures at the Commission for Agriculture such as supporting the Meat Subsidy Scheme for Farmers, we have reallocated the money to these activities and of course, I must inform that there was a balance. When we took office in March 2022 and overdue balance in our budget, we have had to pay up today, to pay all these outstanding expenditures and of course, a number of projects have had to be sacrificed on this issue. So, we are going to re workout the project and nothing is lost. We will identify the 60 persons, 60 or less or more and then, we will start the training and assistance that needs to be given to them. For example, prioritise them in obtaining their lease, prioritise them in helping them to get training in agribusiness, how to keep their accounts and to make profits out of their business, assist them for example, with the DBM and the Rodrigues Venture Capital and Leasing Fund to secure finance, invest in their training and help make a change of attitude that one can leave and make a living out of agriculture.

Dr Agathe: M. le président, le Commissaire de l'agriculture n'a cessé de nous dire qu'ils essaient de privilégier la productivité. Et voilà un projet qui avait pour objectif de professionnaliser les jeunes, de les permettre d'être plus productifs. Quand on sait la nécessité qu'il y a dans ce pays, on doit vraiment moderniser le secteur agricole. Et là, on voit que ce projet-là, il passe en second plan. Ce n'est plus une priorité. On a donné priorité à autre chose alors que c'était prévu dans le budget. Il y avait un budget dédié pour cela. Moi, je pose une question vraiment sur l'efficacité de ce gouvernement. C'est quoi l'efficacité? L'efficacité, c'est comment on arrive à faire ce qu'on voulait faire dans le part... Oui, je crois qu'il y a un problème d'efficacité du gouvernement quand le Commissaire nous dit que le projet se retrouve épris dans des procédures administratives. Donc, je pose la question sur est-ce que finalement, ce projet n'a pas finalement été victime d'un manque d'efficacité du gouvernement.

The Chief Commissioner: Yes, Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Member is well-placed to know about what I mean, what we mean by efficiency and also, if he reminds his learnings in economics of also efficiency and what I will call, X Inefficiency. I admit that the project has

been entangled in administrative procedures. We cannot force upon public officers to make certain decisions. They have their views and I have told you, there is a reticence from the part of public officers to sit on boards because a number of public officers believe that they sit on boards, they do not disclose enough what is their interest in maybe some beneficiaries who will be benefitting from this and if by error, they do not disclose a certain interest, they may have issues. But, the project is not lost. I will personally see to it that the project is implemented. Money has been appropriated in the next financial year for this project. We are here up to 2027. *Ceteris paribus* unless other things remaining equal and I am sure that beginning of the next financial year, I will see personally to it that this money is being put to what it has been appropriated for but I repeat, there was a surplus of cattle on the island and the Executive Council rightly decided being given that there were some delays in the project to reallocate the funds to pay for outstanding bills and also to support farming community. So, it is not a departure from the original objective. We have supported the community. I would invite the Member to distinguish between regional government and the administration. Okay? He is well aware that we cannot force upon people, the way they work. Information is being shared by top guns of public servants from files. They are sharing information. They are trying to put Commissioners, the reputation and the integrity of Commissioners and other public official at stake. We have preferred to be careful. Shortly, a new exercise will be held to give the chance to more persons but we will simplify the selection exercise, maybe the dossier that needed to be submitted for the selection exercise was too big and we have been advised also that most of the beneficiaries, potential beneficiaries maybe, do not fill in the requirements and therefore, we have been advised due to this to maybe restart the selection exercise. Thank you.

Dr Agathe: M. le président, c'est pour cela je parle de l'efficacité. Pourquoi? Parce qu'on avait un budget cette année. C'était pour réaliser cette année. En fait, un pas dans une démarche d'amélioration de la productivité à travers la professionnalisation mais on n'en a pas fait cette année. Le budget, c'était cette année. On ne l'a pas fait. Donc, l'objectif, c'était de professionnaliser et on ne l'a pas réussi. C'est le gouvernement. Donc, c'est le gouvernement qui est dans le *driving seat*, donc, qui administre, qui manage, qui devrait quand même trouver des moyens pour résoudre à tous ces obstacles. Donc, là, je vois qu'il y avait des obstacles dans la définition des critères, des obstacles dans l'engagement des... Comment se fait-il que les fonctionnaires vont refuser de remplir leurs tâches dans la réalisation d'un objectif du gouvernement? Donc, je pose un problème, là, d'efficacité du gouvernement puisque...

Mr Chairperson: La question est? La question?

Dr Agathe: Donc, la question, c'est un problème d'efficacité du gouvernement et pas un problème de fonctionnaire qui ont bloqué le projet.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, let me remind the Member of one example during the mandate of the last Regional Government where, we had the selection exercise for general workers which were canceled. And, unfortunately, we have two valuable government officers (I think they are female) who are still entangled into the Court system trying to defend themselves. I do not know what will be the outcome. We leave this to the Court. It is not easy today with all the criteria that there exist. For nothing, an ignorance during a deliberation, you can find yourself being questioned, arrested and prosecuted. So, this is the reality of the administration today. People are reticent. Officers who have the technical knowledge for selections, they are reticent to form part of selection boards because there is... You are the example. During your mandate, people have been arrested. A selection exercise has been canceled for general workers and you all know what has happened. You have the example of a retired today employee of the Commission of Agriculture who was found guilty, Mr Chairperson, Sir, guilty by the ICAC... Not by the ICAC; by the Court under the PoCA for allocating... agriculture, allocating things to his relative. Maybe unfortunately, he was not aware. He thought that he was doing good because everybody knows everybody, here. I, myself, comes from the Perrine family very long time ago. I have Perrine blood in my veins. So, can we force on people to do this? We have to decide. Maybe the Opposition can help us. Because we cannot force upon officers. They are worried. They are very reticent to sit on these boards. So, this is why we have had other administrative procedures which I must say, are very cumbersome to my opinion that the project should have been launched. But of course, we have used the money to another very good purpose and we hope to select during the month of July, the beneficiaries and start with the programme. Nothing is lost. We will do things as planned.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, on sait que ce projet avait été lancé, cependant, par la Commission de l'agriculture. Et je voudrais savoir combien de personnes avaient fait application, ainsi de suite. On n'a pas eu ces informations. Et je voudrais surtout aussi savoir le pourquoi du *takeover* du Chief Commissioner's Office de ce projet. Est-ce que c'est au niveau de la Commission de l'agriculture que le problème a surgi et si oui, comment? Donc, parce que c'est un projet de la Commission de l'agriculture, comment est-ce qu'il contemple de simplifier les choses pour que ce problème n'arrive pas? Donc, pourquoi du bureau de l'agriculture au bureau du Chef commissaire? What has happened? Alors que c'est un projet

de l'agriculture et how are you contemplating to simplify things for the project to be materialised very soon?

The Chief Commissioner: Yes, Mr Chairperson, Sir, if the Opposition, the person asking the question wants a specific information, they should put the specific question, that is, the number of beneficiaries. For the sake of government information, we cannot table the names and addresses of beneficiaries to people, the more so that nobody has been selected. Why is it that the Chief Commissioner's Office has been piloting the project? – It is because it is more of an aspect of professionalization and of course, of promoting financial autonomy, financial feasibility of these agricultural projects over the long term and the Commission for Agriculture does not have technicians on...

(Interruptions)

The Chief Commissioner: Either you listen to me or you want to speak in my place, which I do not think will happen very soon.

Mr Chairperson: Order!

The Chief Commissioner: So, I have stated the reasons for the ça. We are honest in this House. We are honest with people. Okay? We do not hide information. Look at the information we have been communicating on the dengue fever. We are not hiding information. Okay? We say that there are administrative procedures and there are administrative delays and we understand about these administrative delays. We are not magicians. Okay? Out of eight, nine, ten, it may happen that one project may not be fulfilled and of course, we take remedial actions. We are not super politicians. We do not have superpowers and it may happen that some projects do not move ahead but it is up to us to make the challenge and make the things work. Thank you.

Mr Chairperson: Okay, next question!

INDIAN OCEAN ISLAND GAMES 2023

(No. B/71) Mr J. P. Spéville (Fourth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner for Youth and 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 thereat, indicating all facilities being provided by his Commission to those preselected therefor to secure their participation therein?

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Mr Ravina: Mr Chairperson, Sir, as the House may be aware, the 11th Indian Ocean Island Games is scheduled to take place in Madagascar from 23 August to 03 September 2023. Athletes from Rodrigues will participate in these games under the delegation of the Republic of Mauritius, following a selection exercise conducted by the respective sports federations in Mauritius.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, as far as my commission is concerned, the preparation for Indian Ocean Games has started since April last year. Even though the list of disciplines and the country of organisation were not confirmed yet. Our actions were focussed on providing the required support and assistance to all sport disciplines so that our athletes could resume performance after the COVID-19 restriction period. Since then, my commission has left no stone unturned to ensure the participation of our athletes in national and international competitions and also has given the necessary backup for the organisation the local competitions and trainings.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I wish to inform the house that the pre-selection or selection is an ongoing process. Competitions and evaluation sessions are still being scheduled in some disciplines to set pre-selections.

As per information obtained from the different Sport Committees and the Ministry for Youth Empowerment Sports and Recreation, I am pleased to announce that as at date 82 athletes from Rodrigues have been pre-selected for the games. It should be noted that the above figures may increase or decrease depending on the ongoing evaluation of performance of athletes.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, the detailed list of pre-selected athletes is as follows:

Athletics	: 18 athletes, of which 9 men and 9 women
Mentally handicapped	: 3 athletes of which 1 man and 2 women
Rugby	: 7 men
Wrestling	: 12 athletes, of which 6 men and 6 women
Volleyball	: 11 athletes, of which 7 men and 4 women
Karate (Shotokan)	: 5 athletes, of which 3 men and 2 women
Judo	: 16 athletes, of which 11 men and 5 women
Boxing	: 2 men
Handball	: 9 athletes of which 7 men and 2 women

Weight lifting : 5 athletes, of which 2 men and 3 women

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I had a meeting with the representatives of all disciplines who are represented in the Indian Ocean Island Games on 03 March 2023, whereby all stakeholders were requested to make their proposals for the intensive preparation of their athletes. Further to the submission of specific request from each committee, my commission agreed to extend the following facilities: -

- (i) Extension of transport facilities to cater for additional and new intensive training programmes;
- (ii) Provision of technical personal sport equipment as per specific needs of the discipline;
- (iii) Medical screening to all pre-selected athletes;
- (iv) Provision of massage and physio services on sessional basis;
- (v) Provision of vitamins and other food supplements;
- (vi) Continued assistance for training camps, locally, and
- (vii) Organisation specific courses for coaches and officials locally.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I wish to inform the House that selections have not been finalised and in the meantime my Commission has provided assistance for the participation of athletes and coaches in qualifying competitions for the games namely Judo, Athletics, Karate, Wrestling, Boxing, Handball and Weight Lifting.

With regard training of coaches, a training course in physical preparation has already been held on from 25 to 30 of April for some 30 coaches. The course was delivered by the performance specialist Eddy Boyer, who was a former physical preparator for Manchester United. A special session for preselected athletes was also organised on 29 April 2023 with a view to initiate our elite athlete to advanced techniques of physical preparation. Based on feedback obtained from the participants we are sure that this course has met its purpose to upgrade the level of our coaches the optimal preparation of our athletes.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, the services of a Mental Preparator is also being sought to empower our coaches and athletes. The House will concur that mental preparation is a very important element in the achievement of high performance. We believe our athletes and coaches will take advantage of this course which will definitely have a direct impact on their performance.

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Mr Chairperson, Sir, I wish to inform the House that I was on mission in Mauritius from 02 to 05 May 2023 accompanied by my Departmental Head and the Head for Sports. Further to a meeting with the Honourable Toussaint, Minister for Youth Empowerment Sports and Recreation and his staff, it has been agreed that the Ministry will: -

- (a) cater for all expenses related to preparation of selected athletes once selections are confirmed;
- (b) consider our request for the recruitment of a physio and two masseurs on sessional basis to support the preparation of athletes locally; and
- (c) provide vitamins and other food supplements to athletes as from June 2023.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I wish also to inform the House that an anti-doping education session for preselected athlete was organised at

Le Chou Gymnasium on Saturday 03 June 2023 in favour of preselected athletes and coaches. This session was organised in collaboration with the National Anti-doping Agency and my Commission.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, following the visit of the Minister for Youth Empowerment Sports and Recreation on 17 to 18 May 2023, the ministry has put at our disposal sport equipment to consolidate the preparation of our athletes, including footballs, volleyballs, nets and a hammer net which is crucial to upgrade safety of our athletes at Daniel André Stadium.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, in light of all the efforts being put by my commission along with the hard work from the coaches and athletes, I am confident that athletes from Rodrigues will have an outstanding performance in the coming Indian Ocean Island Games 2023. Thank you, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

Mr Spéville: Mr Chairperson, Sir, while listening to the Commissioner of Sports, he mentioned a list of disciplines where the discipline of football was absent. Can the Commissioner give details if any preselection exercise has been undertaken in Rodrigues concerning football?

Mr Ravina: Yes, Mr Chairperson, Sir, I have just received information that five players have been preselected for football and are leaving Rodrigues for Mauritius.

Mr Baptiste: The Commissioner has talked about specific equipment given to different disciplines. Can we know what are these equipment, which have been provided so far to the athletes of different discipline?

Mr Ravina: For the time being I cannot say exactly the list of equipment but I can say that there is different equipment has been issued to all different disciplines, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

Mr Lisette: I would like to ask the Commissioner for Youth and Sports whether his commission is satisfied with the way the preselection exercise was done with respect to the football discipline in Rodrigues?

Mr Ravina: Yes, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

Mr Baptiste: I do not know because we know that the preparation, as you have rightly said started in April 2022, because we know that it is very important for the athletes to have a continuous support so that they can get the best conditions. You have talk, for example, about the net for hammer and, I know that as at last week these were not available. May I know when all these requests were made by different disciplines and why there have been such a delay to make all these available. It is not only about this one but that one is visible there.

Mr Ravina: Mr Chairperson, Sir, by the end of this month all this equipment will be available in Rodrigues.

Mr Lisette: I would like to ask the Commissioner being given that his answer to my previous question is yes, is he aware that the preselection of our footballers were done within only two matches for a weekend from *les sélectionneurs à Maurice*, how is it that other players were not considered for the selection?

Mr Ravina: Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards to the selection it is at the discretion of the MFA of Mauritius, it is not under my discretion as far as the preselection are concerned.

Mr Lisette: I do agree that it is not under your discretion but at least you have a word to tell them if ever there is the feeling of discrimination with respect to other players. This is why my question is and I reset the question. Is the way that the selection has been done with respect to the footballers in Rodrigues has been done in the right way?

Mr Chairperson: The Commissioner already answered that he is satisfied. The answer is yes.

(Interruptions)

Mr Ravina: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am not a technician to say whether it is... I am not a technician.

/UNREVISED/

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: Next question.

Mr Baptiste: I would like to ask the Commissioner being given that now the training session will be more intense and regular and being given also that some of the athletes are not necessarily having a permanent job or earning a fix revenue. I would like to ask the Commissioner whether he is envisaging to give, to provide any stipend to some athletes and coaches?

Mr Ravina: Mr Chairperson, Sir, same will be looked into.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, je veux savoir du Commissaire des Sports, est-ce qu'il est au courant que du 27 mai au 30 juin il y a des sessions d'entraînements pour les volleyeuses présélectionner, peut-il nous dire si les volleyeuses de Rodrigues présélectionner font partie de ces sessions d'entraînements, sinon pourquoi ?

Mr Ravina: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I do not have the answer.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, est-ce que je peux savoir du Commissaire des Sports s'il y a eu des soucis majeurs par rapport au déplacement des athlètes dans le cadre de la présélection pour les Jeux des Iles, par exemple, on a compris qu'il y a eu des athlètes qui devaient prendre part à des exercices de présélection dans l'après-midi, jusqu'à la veille au très, très tard au soir ils n'avaient pas leurs billets et ce n'est que le lendemain qu'ils ont pris les billets pour après aller faire leurs présélections. Est-ce qu'il trouve cela normal ? Est-ce qu'il est satisfait de cette manière de faire ?

Mr Ravina: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am not aware of this situation.

Mr Baptiste: I would like to ask as we know that this is a very important event for all the athletes and they are awaiting for that. What is the budget earmarked for the rest of this preparation period to ensure that all the necessary equipment and requirements are being made available to enable these athletes to have the best performance and to be selected and bring medals to Rodrigues and Mauritius?

Mr Ravina: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I need notice for this question.

Mr Chairperson: So, we are going to break for lunch.

At 12.58 p.m., the sitting was suspended for one hour.

On resuming at 2.08 p.m. with the Chairperson in the Chair.

Mr Chairperson: Member Spéville?

NATIONAL ATHLETICS CHAMPIONSHIP/MAURITIUS - 20 MAY 2023

(No. B/72) Mr J. P. Spéville (Fourth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner for Youth and Sports and Others whether, in regard to the national athletics championship held in mainland Mauritius on Saturday 20 May 2023, he will inform the House on if athletes from Rodrigues participated therein and, if not, to give reasons therefor?

Mr Ravina: Mr Chairperson, Sir, in response to question B/72, allow me to inform the house on the guidelines in place at my Commission for processing of requests from regional committees and associations for participation in national and international competitions in Mauritius and abroad. These guidelines were discussed and agreed with all regional sports committees and sports associations prior to its implementation in view to facilitate and expedite process of file at the Commission for Sports.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, for activities organised at local and national level, requests from Regional Committees and Associations should reach my office three clear weeks in advance to enable timely processing of files.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, allow me to mention the pathway for processing of requests at my Commission: -

- (a) Firstly, upon reception of the request by the commission same is filed for recommendation of the Sports Department and appropriate clearance by the finance Section.
- (b) Then submitted for approval of the Departmental Head and the Commissioner,
- (c) Thereafter a mission form is filled with all details and description of the activities and transmitted to the Chief Commissioner's Office for approval by the Island Chief Executive and the Chief Commissioner, and
- (d) Finally, subject to approval of the mission form, confirmation of air tickets is issued by the Chief Commissioner's Office to Air Mauritius.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards to the request for participation of athletes in the National Championship (U18 Pepsi Cola), my Commission received a letter on 12 May 2023 which was dated 11 May 2023 from the Mauritius Athletics Association inviting a team of 10 athletes and two accompanying officials (one from each gender) to participate in the Pepsi Cola U18 National Championship which was scheduled for 20 and 21 May 2023 at Maryse Justin Stadium in Mauritius.

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The invitation from the Federation was recommended to my Commission on the same day by the Rodrigues Athletic Association. Being given that the invitation to participate in the competition reached my office only one week prior to the event, it was not possible to cover all the steps mentioned above in such short delay.

I wish to inform the House that subsequently I had a meeting with the Rodrigues Regional Athletic Committee on 24 May 2023 at my Commission and they have acknowledged themselves having received the invitation late and an appeal has been made that their request reaches my office within the prescribed delay in order not to penalise athletes in the future.

I wish to inform the House that there will be a U20 competition shortly were they will have the opportunity to participate in Mauritius and thus, maintain their chance of being qualified for the competition in Mauritius. Thank you, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, j'ai entendu le Commissaire des Sports énonçait toute une liste de procédure pour que des athlètes puissent participer à ces manifestations. Je voudrais savoir est-ce que, ce sont des nouvelles procédures parce que ça fait mathusalem depuis qu'on envoie les athlètes pour les compétitions. Est-ce que, ce sont des nouvelles procédures ou bien c'est les procédures existantes. Qu'est-ce qui à changer ?

Mr Ravina: M. le président, c'est les procédures existantes.

Mr Lisette: I understand that there are guidelines that has to be followed, without doubt, for good administration and procedures but the crux of the problem is that and, if I understand what you said in your answer, the correspondence emanates from the MAA, this means probably, Mauritius Athletics Association. We very well know that there are some federations in Mauritius, I mean, Sports Federation, who sometimes penalise our athletes and jeopardise the chance of participating in international competition. You will agree with me that if you are to follow your guidelines of three weeks, there is much chance that many federations are going to use this to prevent our athletes from participating in international competition. I would like to have your views on this.

Mr Ravina: Il faut passer par tous ces *steps* d'abord pour pouvoir... [recordings problem]

Mr Lisette: I understand your point but if the correspondence for invitation when the invitation whether correspondence for invitation emanates from the federation sometimes through the Regional Committees and the Regional Committees have the invitation within two

weeks or one week. Does it mean that all these competitions will not be financed by the commission?

Mr Ravina: M. le président, il faut voir les dépenses. S'il y a deux ou trois athlètes faire un tracement mais s'il y a autant d'athlètes... ça dépend aussi s'il y a de la place sur l'avion. [recordings problem]

(Interruptions)

Mr Baptiste: Yes, if I understand they did not follow the procedures because it was only one week and this was already an established procedure and the commission for Youth and Sports knew very well that the delay was too short. Why then were they informed only on the day that this has not been approved, why not before? Is it not a lack of respect to these athletes? Some of them did not even go to school, is the Commissioner aware of this?

Mr Ravina: M. le président, j'ai envoyé la lettre à l'Administration. C'est à la dernière heure que j'ai reçu la lettre, c'était trop tard, je n'ai rien pu faire, M. le président.

The Minority Leader: Est-ce-que le Commissaire peut nous confirmer que ce n'est pas une question *d'availability of funds* par rapport au déplacement de ces jeunes ?

Mr Ravina: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I wish to inform the House that there are certainly limited funds but until now we have met all expenses rest in my commission subject that they are in line with the policy of my commission.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I wish to add that the budget for the Rodrigues Athletic Committee was earmarked for Rs 500,000 but so far, the commission has already spent Rs 1.2 m. to support their activities including sending athletes to Mauritius.

Mr Baptiste: Yes, but I think that there must be a problem in the commission itself and I would ask the Commissioner to look into the matter. Because this is not only related to this specific discipline even for preselection for 'Jeux des Iles', the same thing happened. So, there is a problem with your procedures. Would the Commissioner sit down with his team and review so that we do not keep these athletes like that *comme-cii en suspense jusqu'à la fin*.

Mr Ravina: Necessary action will be done with my team and the Departmental Head also to have this situation ..., Mr Chairperson, Sir. [recordings problem]

The Minority Leader: M. le président, le Commissaire des Sports a mentionné l'organisation d'un U20 très bientôt, est-ce qu'il peut nous confirmer que cette compétition est de la même envergure que celle que les jeunes ont raté ?

Mr Ravina: It will be the same, yes, Mr Chairperson.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, funds have always been an issue when reckon to sports activities. It has already been an issue since I was the Commissioner for Sports in 2002, it has always been like this. I would like to ask the Commissioner for Youth and Sports whether there is a calendar of activities that is submitted that is submitted by each Regional Committees to determine their priorities during a particular financial year?

Mr Ravina: Mr Chairperson, Sir, ... been request from different organisation but until now they have submitted ... [recordings problem]

Mr Chairperson: Next question.

**MONTHLY INTERNET PACKAGE – GRADE 13 & POST SECONDARY
STUDENTS**

(No. B/73) Mr N. Lisette (First Local Region Member for Baie aux Huitres) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the monthly internet package allotted to Grade 13 and post-secondary students, he will inform the House on:

- (a) the number of students concerned per institution, together with the total monthly cost of the project, and
- (b) if all students concerned are actually benefitting therefrom?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that the monthly internet package allocated to Grade 13 and post-secondary students have been introduced as follows:

- (1) All post-secondary students studying in Mauritius are provided since year 2019 with an allowance of Rs 300 as monthly internet package on a monthly basis.
- (2) The provision of internet education pack of 2GB to Grade 13 students on a monthly basis through the topping up of pre-defined mobile numbers was implemented in June 2020 so that to ensure that students were able to have access to internet and online educational programmes at home during the outbreak of COVID-19.

With regard to part (a), I am informed that since the setting up of the new executive council in March 2022, 241 Grade 13 students were provided with an internet package of 4GB

at the monthly rate of Rs 152.17 per student. The amount of Rs 36,672 for period September 2021 to June 2022.

- Mont Lubin College - 10
- Le Chou College - 58
- Marechal College - 43
- Rodrigues College - 130
- Total - 241

With respect to post-secondary students, I am informed that 160 students are at present benefitting from the monthly allowance at Rs 30 thus, a total cost of Rs 48,000 per month in Mauritius, students who are registered institutions in Mauritius. However, the number of post-secondary students benefitting from the scheme varies on a monthly basis and merits a maximum of Rs 274 per month.

With respect to part (b), I am informed that the scheme for post-secondary students is meant for all students provided that they have studied at least three years at primary level and either Grade 10 to 11 or Grade 10 to 13 in Rodrigues. They should be enrolled on a full time post-secondary course in an institution which is recognised by the MQA or the Higher Education Commission in Mauritius and should not be employed with any monthly remuneration. I am informed that payment for the monthly allowance of Rs 300 which is effected at the end of each month has been made up to May 2023 save for the month of April 2023. Necessary action has been taken to adjust the payment accordingly in the forthcoming month. Thank you.

Mr Lisette: I understand from the answer of the Chief Commissioner that he has not mentioned about Grade 13 as regards to part (b) of the question.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, Grade 13, we have said if all students concerned are actually benefitting. I have given the figures for Grade 13 – 241 Grade 13 are provided with an internet package of 5GB, total 241.

Mr Lisette: I mean that from the answer of the Chief Commissioner the figures mentioned, dated up to, if I understand well, May, for 2023 applies for post graduate but for Grade 13 the allocation of the internet package has ended by June 2022. What about for the batches, the actual batches of Grade 13 students? Have they been given the internet package access as from previous years?

The Chief Commissioner: I do not have this information, Mr Chairperson, Sir. If the member wanted a specific information, he should have stated this in his question. What

information I have is that payment of monthly allowance of Rs 300 is effected at the end of each month as been made up to May 2023. This is for those who are in Mauritius. As regards his question whether the new batch of HSC students have been provided, I do not have this information at hand. If the member wants this specific information, he should have mentioned it in his question or I invite him to come with a substantive question.

The Minority Leader: Dans sa réponse, le Chef commissaire a parlé d'un contrat de septembre 2021 à juin 2022. On est aujourd'hui en juin 2023, est-ce qu'il y a eu un autre contrat lancer depuis juin 2022 à ce jour ?

The Chief Commissioner: I do not this information, Mr Chairperson, Sir. If they wanted information on specific contract date which was awarded, this should have been put into the question. I am not here to answer for information which have not been sought for and I regret it but it is like this.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the question relates to internet package to Grade 13 and post-secondary students as at now, as we stand right now on the 13 June, I would like to know from the Chief Commissioner whether these students who are in Grade 13 right now have been provided with the internet package and, if not, why not?

The Chief Commissioner: The information I have relates to the period September 2021 to June 2022. During this period there has been 241. I understand that, Mr Chairperson, Sir, the monthly internet package meant for Grade 13 students is being revamped as the House is aware, access to internet facilities for students have both its advantage and disadvantage. Okay? The commission is embarking parents in this projects so that to ensure that they play their role at home in monitoring their ward to become more internet responsible users. The scheme will be extended to Grade 11 and 12 in line with my budget speech 2023-2024 and a bulk procurement exercise will be carried out shortly for the provision of monthly internet package for secondary and post-secondary as from July 2023. We must stress that this measure was taken because of the COVID-19 situation where students were not being schooled.

The Minority Leader: Mr Chairperson, Sir, given that the Chief Commissioner is stressing on the fact that this measures have been taken with regard to COVID when the students were out of school. I would like to know whether according to his policy this will be maintained since we are in June 2023 students are about to take their examination in few months, students of Grade 13 and they are not actually being provided with this. Whether this will be done before the end of the academic year or he has decided not to go ahead with the project?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, when I sat for HSC, there were no teacher for Economics, for example and there were no internet and we had only one book being shared. This did not prevent us from having good results. Okay. So, it is true that the internet helps students but as I have said there are cost implications. We need to introduce within Rodrigues selection criteria based on wealth of parents, income of parents so that we target really those needy students, only the people who need assistance from the Regional Assembly. We cannot, for example, we have been talking about this with other Commissioners, a practice that you started paying people and putting them in hotels in Mauritius where the bill is how much? *Par mois?* Rs 1.7 m. per month only for one hotel in Mauritius and indiscriminately they are sending people to be housed, lodged at this hotel not considering their income. If you have a retired person obtaining the basic retirement pension, which is about, I think, Rs 12,000 and he is benefitting from a retirement pension of about Rs 30,000, he has rental property, he is getting income, why is it that the Regional Assembly is sending him to Mauritius free of charge for medical reasons to meet his medical needs and then we have to put his relatives in the hotel at our cost whereas this person is already to the standard of Rodrigues, I would say, have enough money or have even houses in Mauritius. So, we have to stop with this practice of spending government money as if it is helicopter money. We have to put criteria and ensure for example that may be some students they already internet at home and they are not using the data. I will seek the information about the financial year which has just lapsed.

The Minority Leader: I have a last question to this issue, Mr Chairperson, Sir. I would like to know from the Chief Commissioner whether he can enlighten the House about the students living at the Student House in Mauritius whether they are benefitting from this monthly internet package for those post-graduate students?

The Chief Commissioner: They are not post-graduate, Mr Chairperson, Sir, they are post-secondary and normally they should be in the list of 160 that are in Mauritius. But in any case when I visited the Student House in Mauritius, the internet there was down, the internet for the building. We have given instruction for the internet there to be instated because it is less expensive to have WIFI connected than having mobile packages which are more costly.

Mr Chairperson: Okay, next question.

HOT MEAL PROJECT FOR SCHOOLS

(No. B/74) Mr N. Lisette (First Local Region Member for Baie aux Huitres) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the 'Hot Meal Project' for schools, he will inform the House on:

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- (a) the amount of funds disbursed therefor up to date, and
- (b) if all payments due have already been made to selected caterers as at date?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, with respect to part (a) of the question, I am informed that grants to the tune of Rs 7,548,299 have been disbursed to date to Parent Teachers' Association of primary schools and Association des Ecoles Maternelles de Rodrigues to payment to selected caterers in connection with the Hot Meal Project, for period 27 February to 31 May 2023.

As regards to part (b), I am informed that there is no grant due to Parent Teachers' Association of primary schools and Association des Ecoles Maternelles de Rodrigues for provision of hot meal by the selected caterers as at to date. Thank you.

The Minority Leader: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am astonished to hear that there is no grant due to the PTAs in the different schools because recently the Deputy Chief Commissioner and I think that he was acting as Chief Commissioner, he held a meeting with the caterers providing the foods to students and since that date he promised that in few days the payment will be done and up to now no payment has been done. So, how come the Chief Commissioner can come and say that there is no payment due to the PTA's.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Minority Leader has to believe official information. She cannot come here and question official information. As at today, there is no grant due to the PTAs association. If the Minority Leader does not want to believe, it is her right but I invite here to believe. Thank you.

The Minority Leader: Can the Chief Commissioner then inform the House on which date same transfers have been done to PTAs?

The Chief Commissioner: information I have, Mr Chairperson, Sir, is that it was done two days ago.

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: Thank you, Chief Commissioner, next question. Member Lisette?

**COMMISSION'S POLICY – CERTIFICATION OF RODRIGUES AS A GREEN
DESTINATION**

(No. B/75) Mr N. Lisette (First Local Region Member for Baie aux Huitres) asked the Commissioner for Tourism and Others whether, in regard to his Commission's policy for the certification of Rodrigues as a green destination, he will:

- (a) state the compliance criteria required therefor;
- (b) indicate the position of Rodrigues for each compliance requirement as at date, and
- (c) highlight the measures being taken and to be taken by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly to avail Rodrigues thereof?

Mr Wong So: Mr Chairperson, Sir, at the very outset, I would like to inform the House that the green destination programme is being advocated and implemented by the Green Destination Foundation with the view to promote the concept of sustainable tourism development as the principle vector to achieve the 17 sustainable development goals put forward by the United Nations.

The Green Destination Programme is in line; we have a vision to make Rodrigues '*une île créole écologique*' through the sustainable development of its tourism as well as other economic sectors. In this perspective one of the strategic objectives of my commission is the certification of Rodrigues as Green Destination by the year 2025.

In the context of the implementation of the programme, the foundation organization has set standard as a tool to measure, monitor and improve the sustainability profile of destinations and regions which means that it recognises progress in sustainable destination management policies and political leadership.

The Green Destination standard is owned by the Green Destination Foundation. I wish to inform the House that the Deputy Chief Commissioner and myself had the opportunity to be part of the Mauritian delegation who attended the green destination and future of tourism summit that took place from 26 to 29 September 2022 in the city of Athens in Greece. During the conference, I met the co-founder of the programme, Mr Hugo De Jonge, where a concept paper from the certification of Rodrigues as a pilot destination was handed over to the organisation.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, the certification and award programme are structured by the sustainability management guidelines of the green destination standard which is recognised by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council known as the GSTC,

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to cover globally agreed sustainable requirements. The green destination standards consist of 84 criteria, that is, 75 are mandatory and nine are optional, covering the six main themes, namely:

- (1) Destination management;
- (2) Nature scenery;
- (3) Environment and Climate;
- (4) Culture and Tradition;
- (5) Social wellbeing, and
- (6) Business and Communication.

Each theme has different criteria which is considered either as being primary core criteria or secondary core criteria or optional or if not applicable.

- (1) Concerning the destination management include the following criteria the:
 - (i) commitment and the organisation;
 - (ii) planning and development;
 - (iii) Visitor management;
 - (iv) Monitoring and reporting, and
 - (v) legal and ethical compliance.
- (2) Nature and scenery, comprise of the following two criteria:
 - (i) Nature and conservation, and
 - (ii) Nature and animal experience.
- (3) Environment and climate under which we have five criteria:
 - (i) Land use and pollution;
 - (ii) Water management;
 - (iii) Waste and recycling;
 - (iv) Energy and sustainable mobility and climate change, and
 - (v) Climate change adaption.
- (4) Culture and tradition which includes:

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- (i) Cultural heritage, and
 - (ii) People and tradition.
- (5) Social wellbeing consists of:
 - (i) Human respect;
 - (ii) Community participation;
 - (iii) Local economy;
 - (iv) Socio-economic impact, and
 - (v) health and safety.
- (6) Business and communication concerns:
 - (i) Business involvement, and
 - (ii) Information and marketing.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, my commission has recently been registered for the Green Destination Award and Certification Programme on 01 June 2023. A meeting has been scheduled with representative of the foundation on Wednesday 14 June 2023, that is, tomorrow to discuss on the way forward. In the meantime, on the basis of the programme manual, we will have to go through the following four stages to fulfill the award and certification programme:

- (1) Engagement and reporting stage, which will include an induction training course on destination sustainability to stakeholders involve in the project. We expect to complete this activity including officers of my commission by end of August 2024.
- (2) The above activity will be immediately followed by the evaluation stage where technical checks and an independent audit will be carried out to determine our compliance with the prescribed standard of sustainability.
- (3) The certificate stage which is expected to be implemented during the course of 2025 where a certificate committee from the Green Destination Programme will evaluate the auditors' conclusion and issue the award or certification which will remain valid for two to three years, respectively.

- (4) An action plan report to be submitted by the certification committee that will provide for recommendation, guidance and good practices.

With regard to part (b) of the question, Mr Chairperson, Sir, I can indicate the position of Rodrigues for each compliance requirement only after the technical checks and independent audit report which we expect to receive in August 2024 as indicated earlier. Nevertheless, I am of the humble opinion that our tourism destination early already had a good profile for green destination award.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (c), I must inform the House that the Rodrigues Regional Assembly has already taken several initiatives towards achieving the goals of sustainable development and which qualify Rodrigues as being a green destination base on the foundation criteria. Examples, ... of action taken are as follows among many others:

- (i) Revamping of the sustainable integrated development plan for Rodrigues (SIDPR).
- (ii) Development of a new tourism master plan which was officially launched on 11 May 2023. These two documents provide strategies on how to sustainably develop the island.
- (iii) We have also the Rodrigues Climate Change Committee under section 5 of the Climate Change Act 2020 has already been set up by the Deputy Chief Commissioner who is responsible for environment. We had the visit of Mr Gianni Chianetta in March 2023, the founder of Greening the Island and CEO of the Global Solar Council who has made a report on the different environmental action implemented by the RRA. We have also introduction of the waste segregation at the level of household level by the Deputy Chief Commissioner and responsible for environment.
- (iv) We have the integration of the rain water harvesting scheme
- (v) Implementation of renewable energy programme
- (vi) A new budgetary item has been introduced in the estimates of my commission for the forthcoming year to cater for the development and promotion of sustainable tourism. An amount of Rs 2 m. has been allocated under this item.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I wish to inform the House that my commission has already initiated the necessary procurement procedures to recruit a consultant and to set up the

appropriate institutional structure to cater for the proper implementation of the project. The consultant is expected to be awarded the appropriate contract during the forthcoming days and thereafter, a project team will be set up. Moreover, a project steering committee to be co-chaired by the Deputy Chief Commissioner and myself will also be set up to spearhead and give direction to the project implementation process. I thank you, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

Mr Lisette: I thank the Commissioner for Tourism for his answers. It is quite concise, nevertheless, I have two or three supplementary questions. The first is about of the cost implication of the project itself.

Mr Wong So: M. le président, concernant le cout du projet, ce qu'il faudrait savoir c'est que tout a été déterminé par le Green Destination Programme où le cout a été clairement mentionné que ce soit au niveau de l'enregistrement ça va être 5,000 Euro et ainsi de suite. Ce qui me fait dire, nous aurons la chance d'avoir un consultant de qualité qui permettrait de pourvoir élaborer largement au niveau du programme pour venir de l'avant pour mettre en place cette structure de green destination.

Monsieur les Membres de l'Opposition et ceux de l'Assemblée de l'époque du gouvernement ici, vous avez très que c'est un projet qui nous tiens à cœur et que Rodrigues va être gagnant par rapport à ce projet de Green Destination. Il va de soi, c'est une certification qui permettrait à Rodrigues comme une destination, l'île Maurice en tant que pays n'a pas la possibilité, je le dis bien, M. le président, l'île Maurice en tant que pays n'a pas la possibilité de pouvoir envisage d'être décréter comme une destination verte. Ce qui se passe en ce moment-ci au niveau du ministère du Tourisme, c'est qu'ils sont en train de militer pour qu'un établissement dont en l'occurrence, Bel Ombre soit décréter comme un établissement 'green' mais le pays, non. Ce qui me fait dire que bon notre cause est juste et noble. On est en train de militer pour que Rodrigues comme destination, non pas un hôtel ou un parc ou un zoo. C'est que le pays en lui-même soit reconnu sur le plan mondial parmi une destination verte. Donc, c'est les implications concernant éventuellement le plan financier, on viendra de l'avant pour vous dire combien ça va couter. Merci.

Dr. Agathe: J'ai bien écouté le Commissaire, mais je ne vois pas trop le lien entre ce label et la dimension créole. J'ai bien des doutes quand même, je me demande pourquoi vous avez choisi ce label en particulier ? Parce que c'est un label qui vise à donner de destination macro, par exemple, ce n'est pas adressé spécifiquement à permettre à des opérateurs atteint d'un certain niveau. Pourquoi vous avez ce label-là et pas un autre ? Alors qu'on sent bien que

quand même il y a 75% qui sont obligation dans ce que vous avez mentionné la gestion des déchets et même s'il y a eu quand même un travail de tri qui a été mise en place ici. Mais quand même on est très, très loin d'avoir une gestion de déchet qui soit durable.

Mr Wong So: M. le président, le slogan 'Ile Rodrigues Créole Egologique' a été justement dans le document phare de cinq ans que le Chef commissaire a énoncé ici dans cette auguste Assemblée. Il est de mon devoir en tant que Commissaire du Tourisme de pouvoir garder cette appellation. Mais nous, on est en train valeur du jour de dire qu'on est en train de militer pour un Green Destination. Donc, ne mélanger pas les *issues* et de faire en sorte a ce que le côté créole prend le dessus. Nous, on est en train de militer pour que Rodrigues soit *a green destination*. Le *respected Member* doit comprendre la philosophie. Ne mélanger pas les *issues* de dire que parce qu'on est en train de dire Ile Créole Ecologique, on est en train de mélanger un peu les choses, les pédales.

Dr. Agathe: Non, ma question est toute simple. Je ne vois pas le lien entre la dimension créole et ce label tel que vous l'avez expliqué. C'est ça que je suis en train de dire. Je ne dis pas que je mélange. Je ne vois pas le lien. Je vous demande d'expliquer ce lien.

Mr Wong So: A vrai dire, M. le président, je dois vous dire qu'on est en train de militer pour le pays. Peut-être si vous n'êtes pas dans cette philosophie de penser, vous n'allez pas comprendre ce qu'on est en train de faire. Nous on est en train de dire que Rodrigues sera décréter comme une destination verte et point à la ligne. C'est que maintenant vous dites, qu'est-ce que la créolité vient faire dedans ? Mais bien sûr ça englobe le tout. Ecoutez, vous n'avez pas compris la chose.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to frame up one thing. I understand the concept of Rodrigues as a green destination but within Rodrigues as a green destination, the tourism institution should also go green. We cannot say that Rodrigues we are inviting tourism to come to Rodrigues as a green destination but when they go to our hotels, the practice of green destination certification is not being applied. I would like to know from the Commissioner for Tourism, how far are the tourism operators will be involved in that process?

Mr Wong So: Au fait, M. le président, je dois dire pour l'information des Membres de l'autre côté de la Chambre. On est en train de militer pour que Rodrigues, je ne parle pas du secteur touristique, il faudrait comprendre la chose. Mon Dieu, c'est que Rodrigues doit être décrété comme une destination Rodrigues. Ce n'est pas le secteur touristique seulement. Entre autre, le secteur touristique va bénéficier. Alors, je vais vous expliquez, le secteur touristique

comment il va bénéficier justement de cette élan-là. C'est qu'on va demander au operateur de bien vouloir faire en sorte a ce que les critères qui ont été mentionné *they adhere to these criteria*. C'est tout à fait normal. Pas seulement sur le secteur touristique. On a parlé de *Rain Water Harvesting*, il n'y a pas que le secteur touristique. Le tri de déchet pas que le secteur touristique. Ce qui fait que c'est l'ensemble du pays qui doit marcher de pair. C'est pourquoi, j'ai mentionné le Deputy Chief Commissioner's Office, parce que justement tous cet aspect doit éventuellement le faire. Le Green Destination Award n'est pas que le secteur touristique. D'ailleurs, je précise, M. le président, il faut qu'on soit clair dessus, le Green Destination Label, ne s'applique pas aux hôtels, aux établissements, c'est la destination de Rodrigues dont je parle en tant que Commissaire du Tourisme. Merci. Il ne faudrait pas nuancer les choses.

(Interruptions)

De quelle coque vous parlez ? C'est du pays qu'on parle, Madame !

Mr Chairperson: Next question.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, je veux savoir du Commissaire du Tourisme, il a parlé longuement de son projet Green Destination, un moment il faisait beaucoup référence à un projet de 'One Visitor One Tree'. Aujourd'hui, il a fait abstraction de ce projet dans la réponse. Est-ce que ce projet de 'One Visitor One Tree' fait partie intégrante de ce projet ?

Mr Wong So: M. le président, merci de m'avoir donné l'occasion de parler de 'One Visitor One Tree'. C'est un projet qui nous tient à cœur et on va de l'avant avec le projet. Ce qui fait que rien n'a changé depuis, simplement c'est une question d'orientation que nous nous voudrions quand même que Rodrigues dans son ensemble bouge concernant ce programme. C'est tout.

The Minority Leader: Une dernière question, M. le président, dessus. Par rapport à ce projet justement de Green Destination et 'One Visitor One Tree' je voudrais savoir du Commissaire, est-ce que c'est un projet porter par tous le Conseil Executif, étant donné que, je suis sure, que vous savez il y avait une réunion récemment préside par le Commissaire de l'Agriculture où il a parlé à ces personnes qui ont eus des terrains, qui vont avoir leurs terrains repris dans le cadre de 'One Visitor One Tree'. Est-ce que tous le Conseil Executif porte ce projet parce qu'il paraît que le langage n'est pas cohérent et qu'on a même dit à ces personnes-là de faire attention, de ne pas signer, parce qu'il risque de ne pas avoir un terrain. Est-ce que tous le Conseil Exécutif porte ce projet ou bien il y a divergence au niveau de la commission par rapport à ce sujet ?

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Mr Wong So: M. le président, affirmative. J'ai le support de tous le Conseil Exécutif pour aller de l'avant concernant ce projet.

Mr Chairperson: Time is over. The Chair has been advised that PQ B/76 and B/81 have been withdrawn.

SPACE AVAILABLE – FIRST FLOOR OF PORT MATHURIN MARKET

(No. B/76) The Minority Leader (Mrs R.M.F. Gaspard Pierre Louis, C.S.K.) asked the Commissioner for Health and Others whether, in regard to the space available on the first floor of Port Mathurin Market, formerly used as a snack, he will state if same has been recently allotted for the running of entrepreneurial activity and, if so, to state:

- (a) the criteria and the mode of selection used therefor;
- (b) the terms and conditions attached thereto, and
- (c) if any renovation works have been undertaken thereat and, if so, by whom and the total cost thereof?

(Withdrawn)

GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE ALLIANCE PLUS (GCCA+)

CLIMATE-SMART AGRICULTURE PROJECT

(No. B/81) The Second Local Region Member of Grande Montagne (Mr L. D. Baptiste) asked the Commissioner for Social Security and Others whether, in regard to the Global Climate Change Alliance Plus (GCCA+) Climate-Smart Agriculture Project, headed by his Commission, he will, for the benefit of the House, state any recent actions and the progress of work as regard to the project located at Mt du Sable?

(Withdrawn)

STATEMENT BY COMMISSIONERS

**AIRPORT DEVELOPMENT PROJECT AND RELOCATION OF
INHABITANTS/AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES**

The Chief Commissioner: Yes, Mr Chairperson, Sir, thank you for allowing me to make a statement on the Airport, most specifically, the runway development project, which is so crucial for the long-term socioeconomic development of Rodrigues.

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The project as at to date, consists of the construction of a new 2.1 km long and 45 m wide in martial asphalt including shoulders and turn pads for A21 Neotype aircraft.

Construction of 15 m wide new Code C taxiways with shoulders to link the existing runway to the new runway. Rehabilitation and strengthening of part of payment of existing runway to be used as a taxiway for A321 Netotype Aircraft. Construction of three new aircraft parking stands for A321 Neotype Aircraft including the two connecting taxiways. Construction of an isolated apron including the connecting taxiway. Provision of storm water drains alongside new runways and taxiways. Provision of a dual and control system for the new runway. Provision of new surface markings and millimetres ‘signages’ to the runways, taxiways and apron. Provision of flood lighting and ground power units or apron. Provision of NAVAIDs for the new runway and relocation of.... Access road from the new rescue and firefighting station to runway.

Building infrastructures and services including the following facilities: new control tower comprising of all.... facilities. New rescue and firefighting station with all associated amenities. Boat house, ramp and jetty. New meteo building, quarantine building, power centre, cold storage, incinerator building with all associated amenities, new perimeter road, service road, fencing, gate post and access roads, new access road, car park and landscaping works and new power supply system and water supply system. Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regard the allocation of the inhabitants of Sainte Marie, all 15 have been resettled in their new houses and have been granted land leases by the Cadastral Office. The Consultant is working on the bidding documents for the new housing units of Montagne Travers for launching of bids by the end of this month. The relocation of the Cultural Services has been completed at 70%. The main difficulty has been the site at La Boucherie invaded by Acacia Nilotica for which the Deputy Chief Commissioner’s Office has just completed the removal of such invasive species.

The Commission for Agriculture has been requested to put its D6 to contribution for the disposal of Acacia Nilotica in an orderly manner in view of enabling pegging, fencing, plowing and other work for the beneficiaries to resume their cultivation. A pasture will also be met in the region to provide fodder to the ruminants of the farmers. Fishing lockers have already been provided to the fishers concerned so that they can store their fishing equipment and practise their fishing activities at Les Salines, which is near the new places of resettlement rather than going to ‘Banzilik’ where their fishing boats were moored. Mr Chairperson, Sir, there is a strategy and action plan for the protection and preservation of native and endemic

plants through an MoU between the RRA and the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation. Seed propagation cloning and transplantation of trees are ongoing.

The conservation and preservation strategy for vulnerable plants in nearby reserves – Anse Quittor and François Leguat, has been put in place. These actions are led by the NWF, financed by the RRA. If everything goes according to plan, Mr Chairperson, Sir, all relocation will be completed by December 2023, except for the relocation of species which according to the experts, will have to be performed during the next rainy season next year. Care has been exercised to maximise the chance of survival of the species. Mauritius Wildlife Foundation is having the expert services of Mr Brian Galligan, Vice-President of Horticulture at Naples Botanical Garden who was on mission to Rodrigues in March this year and is closely monitoring the project to make it a success story.

As regard the financing of the project, a working session was held in Rodrigues on 27 March 2023 at my office with representatives of the World Bank to discuss all aspects in terms of water, security, environmental and socioeconomic issues, tourism, energy, agriculture inter alia relating to the project. The World Bank is actually in the appraisal stage for the consideration of a loan to the Government of Mauritius for the financing of this project. GIBB (Mauritius) Ltd. has submitted the final cost estimate of some Rs 6.6 b. exclusive of VAT. ARL has transmitted same to the World Bank to finalise the dossier of the Airport Development Project. Project will be presented to the World Bank in June 2023 for a decision on its financing. It is to be highlighted that this opportunity cannot be missed given that in the next fiscal year, for the World Bank Airports Projects will not be considered. As per the project planned submitted by GIBB (Mauritius) on 15 March 2023, the milestone date for the project are as follows:

- July 2023 – submission of draft detailed design report
- August 2023 – submission of final detailed design report
- October 2023 – final tender document submitted
- October to December 2023 – floating of tenders for works provided funds are secured
- February 2024 – start of construction works
- Mid 2026 – Completion of construction works

Mr Chairperson, Sir, the next important milestone is the former submission of a draft detailed design report in July 2023. With regard to the financing of the project in August 2022,

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the AFD informed Government that it will no longer finance the runway project at Plaine Corail. MOFED, Minister of Finance made a request to the World Bank in September 2022 to finance the project. The financing of the project through a sovereign loan is under consideration by the World Bank. The loan will be accompanied by grant from the EU, which was formally also included in the AFD loan. Following the increase in project cost as per the ongoing designs, the proposed budget enveloped for the project is estimated at \$ 200 b. of which \$ 184 b. would be from the World Bank and € 16 m. as a grant from the European Union.

We are thankful to the European Union and to Mr Degert, the Ambassador in Mauritius for having accepted to negotiate the transfer and securing the € 16 m. grants for the project. Gibb has committed to deliver the final design by April 2023. This, however, has been recently postponed to August 2023. The project preparation timetable has therefore been revised accordingly and to allow the sufficient time for the completion of design and World Bank loan approval is now scheduled for end of September early October 2023 on the premise of the timely submission of quality design, detailed design by August 2023 as committed by the Consultant Gibb. During the presentation made by GIBB (Mauritius) Ltd. to the Executive Council and other stakeholders on 06 May 2023, Mr Chairperson, Sir, I have insisted that no further delays be accepted.

The final design has to be submitted in August so as to not delay the financing and implementation of the project. Mr Chairperson, Sir, the whole population of Rodrigues has been waiting for the Airport Development Project which is long overdue. It will be a key milestone for Rodrigues' development and connectivity to fully integrate us in the global village. We have been disappointed with the AFD not going ahead with the financing of the project. With the commitment of the World Bank, the Government of Mauritius and the Executive Council, we now have all reasons to be very optimistic and it will become a reality soon. I wish to thank all stakeholders including the Government of Mauritius, the personal involvement of the Minister for finance, Honourable Padayachy, for giving consideration to this important project which will define the destiny of Rodrigues for the years to come. I hope we are successful, Mr Chairperson, Sir, and this project will be the single 'most' biggest infrastructure project which will be implemented in Rodrigues. Thank you.

‘ESPACE INOCCUPE AU MARCHE DE PORT MATHURIN’

The Commissioner for Health (Mr Volbert): M. le président, avec votre permission, je souhaite faire la déclaration suivante sur un espace inoccupé au marché de Port Mathurin

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octroyé à la compagnie Eco Ballade Ltd temporairement comme décidé par le conseil exécutif du 14 avril 2023.

Permettez-moi de faire un petit historique sur ladite compagnie. Eco Ballade Ltd est une compagnie qui existe depuis 2012 et est engagée dans la promotion du tourisme et des activités écologiques autour de l'île. Les activités engagées consistent à fournir des informations, la promotion et l'organisation d'activités d'écotourisme.

Permettez-moi, M. le président, de mettre en lumière les conditions par lesquelles ma commission à attribuer temporairement, comme stipulé dans les correspondances, cet espace inoccupé au rez-de-chaussée du marché de Port Mathurin à cette compagnie.

Avant d'être relocaliser au marché de Port Mathurin, la compagnie tenait ses activités touristique et écologique dans un kiosque situé devant le bâtiment Alfred North Coombes. Une espace dédiée aux entrepreneurs.

Toutefois, M. le président, suite à plusieurs plaintes reçues, certaines datant de plusieurs années, selon lesquelles le kiosque existant attribué à Eco Ballade Ltd fuit et nécessite des réparations urgentes, il a été proposé qu'en attendant ces réparations hautement nécessaires soient menées, elle sera relocalisée temporairement dans cet espace inoccupé. Cela dans le but qu'elle puisse mener à bien ses activités.

M. le président, j'aimerais informer cette assemblée que ce n'est pas la première fois que cette compagnie est relocalisée dans cet espace au rez-de-chaussée du marché de Port Mathurin.

En 2016, cela a été le cas mais malheureusement après plus d'un an, la compagnie est retournée dans son kiosque, qui n'avait hélas fait aucune réparation.

Je suis heureux d'informer la Chambre qu'à la suite de nombreuses discussions avec l'Adjoint au Chef commissaire, les réparations du kiosque ont pu se faire et cela même pas en trois semaines, alors que pendant de nombreuses années rien n'avait été faits.

Ces réparations ont permis à la compagnie de reprendre place dans le kiosque alloué par l'Assemblée Régionale de Rodrigues. Merci, M. le président.

ADJOURNMENT

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I move that the House be now adjourned to Tuesday 22 August 2023 at 10.30 hours.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner, rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Mr Chairperson: The House stands adjourned.

At 3.03 p.m., the Assembly was, on its rising adjourned to Tuesday 22 August 2023 at 10.30 a.m.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

PATIENTS SENT TO MAURITIUS – FURTHER TREATMENT

(No. B/77) The First Local Region Member of Saint Gabriel (Mr J. R. Ramdally) 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 accompaniers;
- (b) number of patients and/or accompaniers accommodated at the selected hotel and/or at their parents' dwellings, and
- (c) difficulties faced by the accompaniers and/or the patients, if any, and, if so, to state the measures his Commission is envisaging to remedy the situation?

Reply: Mr. Chairperson Sir, I wish to inform the House that the total number of patients sent to Mauritius from September 2022 to date is 791 and the number of accompany relatives is 787.

The total number of patients per illness is detailed below:

Total No. of patients sent per illness:

Specialities related to illness	No. of Patients
Orthopaedic	196
Cardiac	85
Surgery	72
Cancer	98
Gynaecology	17
Eye	38
Maxillo-facial	8
ENT	15

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Specialities related to illness	No. of Patients
Nephrology	17
Vascular Surgery	23
Neurosurgery	26
Endocrinology	13
Physical Medicine	1
Brown Sequard/EEG	27
Oral surgeon	1
Burns Unit	4
Orthopaedic Workshop	5
Gastroenterology	8
Chest Physician	4
Imaging	23
Speech Therapist	4
Skin	3
Medical	24
Paediatric	6
TOTAL	718

Mr. Chairperson Sir, I am also informed as regard to part (b) that patients who made their own arrangement while being sent for treatment in Mauritius is still being compiled.

The option of whether to stay at Sikamifer or making their own arrangement rest with the patient.

Mr. Chairperson Sir, irrespective of being accommodated at Sikamifer Hotel or making their own arrangement, the scheme approved by the previous regime is as follows:-

- Rs 1500 upon departure

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- Rs 300/day upon admission in hospital only

.Mr. Chairperson Sir, the number of patients and/or accompany relatives accommodated at Sikamifer Hotel is as follows:

Months	No. of Patients	No. of Relatives
September 2022	93	92
October 2022	86	83
November 2022	97	97
December 2022	105	105
January 2023	78	78
February 2023	64	64
March 2023	60	60
April 2023	80	80
May 2023	106	106
As at 7 June 2023	22	22
Total	791	787

Mr. Chairperson Sir, as regard to part (c) of the question, there is no official complaint of patients and accompany relatives at the level of my Commission.

On 3 occasions, I have visited those patients at Sikamifer and the response has been that they are all satisfied with the present arrangement.

However, Mr. Chairperson Sir, an amendment to the present scheme is being worked out and will be submitted to the Executive Council for approval. Also, my Commission has sought quotation from different hotels in the vicinity of Rose Belle, Port Louis and Pamplemousse to facilitate assistance to patients by their accompaniers. However, Mr. Chairperson Sir, we have not been able to secure a decent accommodation inclusive of breakfast, lunch and dinner for the price range of Rs 900-1500. All quotations exceed Rs 2500 excluding breakfast, lunch and dinner compared to Sikamifer presently at Rs 1125 all inclusive.

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Mr. Chairperson Sir, a Committee is working on ways and means to improve the services given to patients and companions sent to Mauritius.

I thank you, Mr. Chairperson Sir.

**DRUGS– QUEEN ELISABETH HOSPITAL,
AREA HEALTH CENTRES AND HEALTH CENTRES**

(No. B/78) The First Local Region Member of Saint Gabriel (Mr J. R. Ramdally) asked the Commissioner for Health and Others whether, in regard to drugs in the drug stores of Queen Elisabeth Hospital, area health centres and other health centres in Rodrigues, he will state and table the list of medications which are currently not available or being rationed, giving the reasons therefor and the impact thereof on the services provided?

Reply: Mr. Chairperson Sir, I am hereby tabling the list of medications which are currently not available for use in Rodrigues and the reasons thereof are enclosed herein.

Mr. Chairperson Sir, I am informed that there is a long list of drugs as listed by the Drugs and Therapeutic Committee of the Ministry of Health and Wellness which is not available at the level of the Ministry since the pandemic of COVID 19.

However, my Commission is procuring those drugs on the local market explaining the shortlist of drugs not available in Rodrigues.

At the level of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, given the non-autonomous status in the Health Sector, the Commission for Health cannot initiate procedures for drug not listed by the Ministry of Health and Wellness. Procurement of Drugs are done by the Ministry of Health and Wellness based on drugs list as established by the Drugs and Therapeutic Committee.

Mr. Chairperson Sir, for example, Maxylase – Alpha Amylase syrup and tablet has been de-listed by the Ministry of Health and Wellness. This means that this drug will not be delivered to patient in Public Health Institution. Therefore, same are not procured by the Central Supplies Division.

However, these drugs are still available in Private Pharmacy.

Mr. Chairperson Sir, given the specificity of Rodrigues, my Commission is making effort on humanitarian ground despite it is not listed by the Ministry of Health in Public Health Institution in Mauritius to make it available in Rodrigues particularly in Hospital through procurement on local market.

Mr. Chairperson Sir,

- (i) Drugs are received on a daily basis at the Central Supply Division (Mauritius) and the pharmacy section are notified immediately.
- (ii) Not all drugs can be sourced on local market as there are restriction on certain drugs.
- (iii) When drugs are not available from CSD, we are notified and tentative date of delivery is provided.
- (iv) Local purchases are given priority.

Mr. Chairperson Sir, as regard to the impact of same on the services, my Commission is doing needful to ensure that our patients are not deprived of their treatment that is why drugs substitutes are being purchased or patients are referred back to doctors for alternative treatment.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson Sir.

ADMISSION OF PATIENTS – HEALTH INSTITUTIONS

(No. B/79) The First Local Region Member of Saint Gabriel (Mr J. R. Ramdally) 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?

Reply: Mr. Chairperson Sir, as regards to the admission of patients in the health institutions in Rodrigues, I am informed that the bed capacity in each admitting institution has remained the same since year 1990's and are as follows:

SN	Name of Institution	Bed Capacity
1.	Queen Elizabeth Hospital	171
2.	Mont Lubin Isolation Health Centre	32
3.	La Ferme Area Health Centre	17

After 22 years of autonomy, the bed capacity has not changed irrespective of the government who has been in charge of the RRA.

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Concerning part (B) the average occupation rate per institution since January 2023 are:

SN	Name of Institution	Jan	Feb	March	April	May
1.	Queen Elizabeth Hospital	62.97%	62.54%	57.50	60.82%	69.23%
2.	Mont Lubin Isolation Health Centre	2.37%	0.46%	0.27%	2.12%	5.28%
3.	La Ferme Area Health Centre	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

PATIENTS DIAGNOSED WITH PSYCHIATRIC AILMENTS – RODRIGUES

(No. B/80) The First Local Region Member of Baie aux Huîtres (Mr N. Lisette) asked the Commissioner for Health and Others whether, in regard to patients diagnosed with psychiatric ailments in Rodrigues, he will, for the benefit of the House, state and table the:

- (a) number of new cases per classification thereof per sex diagnosed per year for the past five years;
- (b) number of patients per different age groups, and
- (c) number of patients being followed as at now?

Reply: Mr. Chairperson Sir, I am informed that information concerning psychiatric compilation by the Government Health Services Statistics office in Mauritius is not available in term of sex and age group.

I am also informed that all records on patients have to be vetted by the Government Health Services which records only sessions, new cases and follow ups.

I have further been informed that same is being done to avoid discrimination and stigmatisation of people living with psychiatric problems.

Therefore, I can only reply with available information provided by the Government Health Services Statistics annual reports.

Mr. Chairperson Sir, I am informed that the information are as follows:

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Year	QEH		Mont Lubin		La Ferme		Total Follow up	Total New cases
	Follow Up	New cases	Follow Up	New cases	Follow Up	New cases		
2019	1383	117	1092	65	685	40	3,160	222
2020	1304	102	990	44	723	42	3017	188
2021	2141	103	1309	85	1068	75	4518	263
2022	1772	112	1169	72	1036	41	3977	225
Up to April 2023	-	146	-	64	-	114	-	324

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson Sir.

**MEDICAL BOARD AND DOMICILIARY VISITS
– PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

(No. B/82) The Second Local Region Member of Grande Montagne (Mr L. D. Baptiste) asked the Commissioner for Social Security and Others whether, in regard to medical board and domiciliary visits to persons with disabilities, he will state the:

- (a) budget earmarked for the financial year 2022-2023;
- (b) respective fees paid to Board members/ Medical Practitioners per session/visit respectively, and
- (c) total amount already disbursed and amount still due therefor as of May 2023?

Reply: Mr. Chairperson Sir, as regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that the budget is as follows:

Vote Item 5106/22120001

Social Protection Fees for medical

Board and Domiciliary Visit

Voted Provision: Rs 8,800,000

Mr. Chairperson Sir, the respective fees paid to board members/medical practitioner per session/visit are as follows:

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Fees are paid as set in the PRB report as hereunder

Grades			Allowances per session of 3 hours
Specialist Tribunal	servicing	Medical	Rs 1705
Specialist Board	servicing	Medical	Rs 1460
General Practitioner Medical Board	servicing		Rs 1215

Please note that Fees for Domiciliary Visits as set out in Recommendation 9 of the PRB Report 2021 paragraph 25.1.38.

We recommend that the allowance (inclusive of travelling), per claimant visited, payable to doctors employed on sessional basis for effecting domiciliary visit should be revised to Rs 650.

Mr. Chairperson Sir, as regard to part (c), I am informed that the total amount already disbursed is

Rs 4, 571,954.00 and amount still due as for March is Rs 974,200.00 and for April is Rs 998,650.00.

CONTRIBUTION SOCIALE GENERALISÉE (CSG)

DISABILITY ALLOWANCE

(No. B/83) The Second Local Region Member of Grande Montagne (Mr L. D. Baptiste) asked the Commissioner for Social Security and Others whether, in regard to the Contribution Sociale Generalisée (CSG) Disability Allowance, he will obtain information for the benefit of the House and state:

- (a) when same was introduced;
- (b) the number of beneficiaries in Rodrigues and the respective amount disbursed therefor to date, and
- (c) the eligibility criteria therefor?

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Reply: Mr. Chairperson Sir, as regard to part (a), I am informed that Contribution Sociale Generalisée (CSG) Disability Allowance is a measure announced in the National Budget 2022-2023 and came into effect as from July 2022.

Mr. Chairperson Sir, the CSG Disability Allowance is payable under Sub part (iii) of the Social Contribution and Social Benefit Act to any person who suffers from a loss of physical faculty ranging between 40-59% resulting from an injury or medical condition.

It is to be noted, Mr. Chairperson Sir, that the only authority to access this is the Medical board.

As regard to part (b), I am informed that as to date only one beneficiary has benefitted from same and has been paid an amount of Rs 25,000.

I am also informed that five other applications are at processing stage.

Mr. Chairperson Sir, I am informed that the eligibility criteria are as follows:

- (i) Any person of less than 60 years old of age, and not in receipt of a Basic pension under the National Pensions Act can fill an application for CSG Disability Allowance;
- (ii) The applicant will have to be medically boarded to assess the degree of disablement which should range between 40-59%; and
- (iii) The following injuries or medical conditions are considered as being permanent:
 - (a) Loss of arm at elbow
 - (b) Loss of arm between wrist and elbow
 - (c) Loss of hand at wrist
 - (d) Loss of 4 fingers and thumb of one hand
 - (e) Loss of leg between knee and hip
 - (f) Loss of leg below knee.

These other conditions are considered for a reviewable period of not less than two years:

- (a) Paralysis of a whole limb (with some mouvements)
- (b) Paraplegia/Hemiplegia (with some movements)

(c) Grand Mal Epilepsy.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson, Sir.

SHELTER FOR VICTIMS – DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

(No. B/84) The Second Island Region Member (Ms. M. N. Raffaut) asked the Commissioner for Family Welfare and Others whether, the shelter for victims of domestic violence is actually operational and, if not, to give details thereon?

Reply: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, yes, the Shelter for victims of domestic violence is operational.

YOUTH MOBILITY PROGRAM

(No. B/85) The Minority Leader (Mrs R.M.F. Gaspard Pierre Louis, C.S.K.) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the Youth Mobility Program, as announced in the budget speech 2022/2023, he will inform the House on the status thereof?

Reply: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the House would recall that in my budget speech for the financial year 2022/2023, I announced the introduction of a Youth Mobility Programme in a bid to encourage the training and development of the youth in Rodrigues as our Regional Government firmly believes that international mobility is a unique and invaluable experience in a youth's life and professional journey.

The objectives of the programme are to:

- Empower the youth of Rodrigues by promoting their skills and providing them with job exposure through internship programmes at national and international levels;
- Improve the employability of youths through both hard and soft skills development;
- Develop local youth work practices and contribute to capacity building for quality youth work;
- Create employment through upgrading of existing and development of new professional enterprises;
- Professionalise the economic sectors in Rodrigues;

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- Increase skilled Labour availability/ Building Human Capital in the labour market;
- Encourage innovation thus fostering business and economic growth;
- Foster equity and inclusion; and
- Create exposure to social, linguistic and cultural diversity.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the eligibility criteria for youth to be eligible under the Youth Mobility Programme are as follows:

- Should be a resident of Rodrigues;
- Should have studied in Rodrigues;
- Be aged between 20 and 35 years; and
- Have a professional career plan; or
- Be willing to set up or consolidate a business

Initially, the first criterion was “Born in Rodrigues except for proven medical reasons”. However, following an appeal from interested candidates who were born in Mauritius but are somehow linked to Rodrigues through their family or schooling and are now residing in Rodrigues, the Executive Council at its meeting held on 13 January 2023 has decided to amend the eligibility criterion “Born in Rodrigues except for proven medical reasons” to “Residents of Rodrigues and who have studied in Rodrigues”.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, under the Youth Mobility Programme, the following assistance are provided to eligible beneficiaries travelling to Mauritius or abroad for a period not exceeding one year:

- (i) Payment of round-trip air tickets up to a maximum of Rs 7,000 to Mauritius and Rs 60,000 abroad;
- (ii) A monthly all-inclusive allowance to meet living, lodging and transport costs up to a maximum of Rs 20,000 in Mauritius and Rs 50,000 abroad
- (iii) An equipment allowance up to a maximum of Rs 5,000 in Mauritius and Rs 10,000 abroad, if applicable;
- (iv) A travel Insurance Cover up to a maximum of Rs 3,000 in Mauritius and Rs 10,000 abroad; and

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- (v) Registration, Participation, Tuition and Exam fees up to a maximum of Rs 75,000 in Mauritius and Rs 250,000 abroad.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, following the Executive Council's approval regarding the modalities for the implementation of the Programme at its meeting held on 11 November 2022, the Programme was launched on Thursday 17 November 2022 during the Global Entrepreneurship Week which was held from 17 to 19 November 2022.

I am further informed that at the closing date set for submission of applications on 17 February 2023, twenty-four (24) applications were received.

The Screening and Selection Committee, which is co-chaired by the Departmental Heads of the Commission for Industrial Development and the Commission for Youth, met on 30 March 2023 for the assessment, evaluation and selection of applicants.

I am also informed that as per the report of the screening exercise, out of the twenty-four (24) applications received, twelve (12) did not meet the eligibility criteria. Subsequently, the Screening Committee has shortlisted twelve (12) applications out of which four (4) were recommended and the remaining eight (8) were put on hold pending the submission of required documents.

The Screening Committee has also observed that only a few youth has applied for assistance under the Youth Mobility Programme. This figure can be attributed to two main factors as follows:

- (i) The scheme was new and many youths were unaware of it; and

Applicants were requested to submit a letter of acceptance from a training institution or a company along with their application form. However, many have failed to obtain this compulsory document before the closing date.

Therefore, with a view to attracting more eligible youth under the Youth Mobility Programme, the Executive Council at its meeting held on 28 April 2023 has approved that the conditions of the Youth Mobility Programme be reviewed in line with the recommendations of the Screening Committee as follows:

- (i) Applicants enrolling for seminars and short training courses will no longer be required to submit a business plan but should submit only a motivation letter and a career plan;

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- (ii) In the absence of a letter of acceptance, applicants producing a letter of offer or a quotation from a training institution can also be considered; and
- (iii) Applicants embracing the entrepreneurial pathway will be required to submit a business plan as per the format worked out by Invest Rodrigues.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I would like to inform the House that the Executive Council at its meeting held on 28 April 2023 has also approved that financial assistance be provided to four (4) eligible applicants to cater for the cost of air tickets, accommodation, stipend and any other expenses that are covered under the Youth Mobility Programme.

However, same was not processed as the period applied for internship or training has lapsed. Subsequently, they will be advised to apply anew.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, a new call for application under the Youth Mobility Programme will be launched in July 2023 and it is expected that with the revised criteria, a larger number of youth will apply and will become eligible beneficiaries under the programme.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I would like to inform the House that in the same vein, the Executive Council at its meeting held on 31 March 2023 has decided to approve that financial assistance be provided to secondary schools to organise study tours in Mauritius and abroad with a view to provide early exposure to national and international way of doing things so as to ultimately develop their skills, as well as to trigger an entrepreneurial culture among the youth.

NATIONAL TRAINING AND RE-SKILLING PROGRAM (NTRS)

(No. B/86) The Minority Leader (Mrs R.M.F. Gaspard Pierre Louis, C.S.K.) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the National Training and Re-skilling Program (NTRS) held in collaboration with the Human Resource Development Council (HRDC) since 2022, he will obtain information to state and table to the House on the:

- (a) training programs agreed on and the respective number of trainees targeted;
- (b) training programs completed together with the number of beneficiaries, the mode of training and the cost breakdown, and
- (c) institutions /trainers /mentors involved in the various training programmes?

Reply: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, government, as per the cabinet decision of 23 October 2020, announced the implementation of the Economic Recovery Programme which comprises

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a package of measures aimed at boosting GDP growth, protecting jobs and creating new ones, reducing dependence on imports and improving the well-being of the population.

One of the Economic Recovery Programme's key components is the implementation of the National Training and Reskilling Scheme (NTRS). The NTRS is a national programme which aims to provide training to unemployed individuals. The NTRS targets the training and reskilling of some 9,000 unemployed persons of which 1,000 for Rodrigues.

The NTRS is being implemented by the Ministry of Labour, Human Resource Development and Training and the Human Resource Development Council (HRDC), in collaboration with stakeholders from both the public and the private sectors. Participants under the NTRS would receive a monthly training stipend of Rs 10,575 on pro-rata based on respective training hours for the duration of their training up to a maximum period of six (6) months.

Funds for the implementation of the NTRS in Rodrigues are provided by the Ministry of Finance Economic Planning and Development. For the financial year 2021/2022, a provision of Rs 65 M was made under the National Resilience Fund (NRF) for the NTRS to provide training to 1,000 unemployed in Rodrigues.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that the Commission for Vocational Training in March 2021 was entrusted with the responsibility to facilitate the implementation of the National Training and Reskilling Scheme (NTRS) in Rodrigues in collaboration with the lead agency Human Resource Development Council (HRDC) and other Commissions of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am further informed that one thousand (1,000) unemployed beneficiaries were targeted in four (4) fields by the then Regional Government as follows:

- (i) 500 in ICT/BPO;
- (ii) 300 in Construction;
- (iii) 100 in Agro-Industry; and
- (iv) 100 in Fisheries – Outer Lagoon and Modern Fishing Method

Mr. Chairperson, Sir,

- (a) With regard to **part (a)**, I am informed that to date, six (6) training programmes have been approved by the Human Resource Development Council (HRDC) for Rodrigues

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of which three (3) in the ICT/BPO sector are being implemented by the Commission for Information Technology and Telecommunications and three (3) training programmes in the fisheries sector by the Commission for Fisheries as follows:

- (i) **Cisco Certified Network Administrator (CCNA)** targeting one batch of 12 trainees.
- (ii) **Fundamentals for ICT/BPO Business** targeting 200 trainees - eight (8) batches of 25 trainees each.
- (iii) **Fundamentals for ICT/BPO Business** approved on 26 May 2023 targeting 200 trainees – 10 batches of 20 trainees each.
- (iv) **Outboard and inboard motor mechanic** targeting one batch of 10 trainees.
- (v) **Construction of fibre glass boat** targeting one batch of 10 trainees; and
- (vi) **Construction and repair of wooden boat** targeting one batch of 10 trainees.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am also informed that eight (8) training programmes were run by the Mauritius Institute of Training and Development (MITD) Training Centre in Rodrigues under the NTRS for 107 trainees. These programmes are:

- (i) Automotive Mechanic and Electronics;
- (ii) Garment Making;
- (iii) Welding Techniques;
- (iv) Basic Food Production;
- (v) Domestic Electrical Installation Works;
- (vi) Basic Course in Carpentry for Formwork and Shuttering;
- (vii) Landscape Maintenance; and
- (viii) Install, Maintain and Repair Domestic Plumbing System and Solar Water Heating Systems.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir,

- (b) With regard to **part (b)** of the question, I am informed that out of the six (6) programmes being implemented by the Commission for Information Technology and Telecommunications and the Commissions for Fisheries, five (5) have been completed as follows:

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- (i) Cisco Certified Network Administrator (CCNA)
- (ii) Fundamentals for ICT/BPO Business
- (iii) Outboard and inboard motor mechanic
- (iv) Construction of fibre glass boat; and
- (v) Construction and repair of wooden boat.

Moreover, the eight (8) programmes which were being run by the MITD Training Centre have also been completed.

A total of 303 beneficiaries have followed training under the NTRS.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I wish to inform the House that my Commission intends to start a training programme in building construction targeting some ninety (90) unemployed candidates. Following consultation with the MITD to develop a tailor-made programme under the NTRS, the MITD has obtained approval from the Mauritius Qualification Authority for the delivery of Basic Courses in Masonry. It is expected that the programme will start in October 2023.

The conduct of training programme has been delayed due to unavailability of MITD to run the training in parallel to other training programmes mentioned earlier under the NTRS Scheme.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, with respect to training programmes being implemented by the different Commissions of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and by the Mauritius Institute of Training and Development (MITD), I am tabling training programmes agreed on and the respective number of trainees targeted including training programs completed together with the number of beneficiaries, the mode of training and the cost breakdown per training and institutions/trainers/mentors involved in the various training programmes.

**SERVICE PROVIDERS – RODRIGUES DAY 2022
AND INDEPENDENCE DAY 2023**

(No. B/87) The Second Island Region Member (Ms. M. N. Raffaut) asked the Commissioner for Arts and Culture whether, in regard to service providers for the celebration of Rodrigues Day 2022 and Independence day 2023, he will inform the House on if payment has been effected for both occasions and:

- (a) in the affirmative, to table the list of payments effected, and

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- (b) in the negative, (i) to table the list of those concerned and the respective amount to be paid, and (ii) state when payment will be effected?

Reply: Mr Chairperson Sir, with regards to the celebration of Rodrigues Day 2022, I am informed that 99% of bills, amounting to Rs 7.3 M has already been settled. Only 1% of the total amount representing a sum of Rs 84,400 is still outstanding.

I am further informed that the reason behind the outstanding bills is attributed to the late submission of claims from suppliers. The 11 outstanding claims have been submitted to my commission in February 2023 and will be paid shortly.

Mr Chairperson Sir, with regard to the National Day Celebration, 55th Anniversary of the Independence and 31st Anniversary of the Republic of Mauritius an amount of Rs 1.7 M was earmarked under my commission.

Thereafter, in a correspondence dated 21st December 2022 from the Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage, my Office had been informed that an amount of Rs 2.0 M additionally was approved from the Ministry exceptionally for the National Day Celebration in Rodrigues.

The following activities were organized in the advent of the National Day: -

- (a) the golden bat night trail on 4th March 2023;
- (b) official ceremony and reception on 12th March 2023;
- (c) football Republic Cup men and women;
- (d) the volleyball Republic Cup men and women;
- (e) Youth activity 12th April 2023; and
- (f) Drama Festival in Kreol Language on 20th May 2023.

Mr Chairperson Sir, based on records at my office, an amount of Rs 1.1 M has already been paid to suppliers. I am informed that the Ministry is disbursing the approved fund of Rs 2.0 M to my commission early next week. Hence, the outstanding claims would be settled by end of June 2023.

Mr. Chairperson Sir, I am hereby tabling the requested information.

Thank you Mr. Chairperson.

**TRAINING – PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF CHINA
– STAFF OF FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES DEPARTMENT**

(No. B/88) The Second Local Region Member of Baie Aux Huîtres (Ms K. Roussety) asked the Commissioner for Fire Services and Others whether, in regard to the training in the People's Republic of China awarded to staff of the Fire and Rescue Services Department by the competent body, he will obtain information for the House and state the:

- (a) criteria set for this training;
- (b) number of firefighters who applied therefor, and
- (c) number of applicants who were eligible therefor?

Reply: Mr. Chairperson Sir, I am informed that the selection of officers to attend training in the People Republic of China was done at the level of the Executive Council.

Therefore, part (a) (b) and (c) of the question are not relevant.

Thank you Mr. Chairperson Sir.

EDUCATIONAL TOUR PROJECTS – SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

(No. B/89) The Second Island Region Member (Ms. M. N. Raffaut) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to educational tour projects for secondary school students, he will, for the benefit of the House, state:

- (a) and table the list of schools having submitted their project/s for the year 2022 and 2023;
- (b) the criteria applied for the selection thereof, and
- (c) the mode of financing therefor?

Reply: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I would like to inform the house that the Executive Council at its meeting held on 31 March 2023 has approved the introduction of the Study Tours Project in Mauritius and abroad for the Secondary Sector in a view to promote students' exposure as well as enhance their knowledge and skills.

The project provides for an early exposure to national and international way of doing things so as, to ultimately develop their skills, as well as trigger an entrepreneurial culture among youth. It is being implemented under the Youth Mobility Programme which was launched in November 2022 with the main objectives to empower the youth of Rodrigues to improve their employability through both hard and soft skills development and to develop local youth work practices and contribute to capacity building for quality youth work.

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In addition, it is expected that the Study Tours will also serve to provide an insight of the work environment to students particularly for Enterprise and Business Studies.

(a) Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as regards **part (a)**, I am informed that as at to date, four projects have been received as follows:

- (i) Mont Lubin College submitted a project for an Educational Tour to Mauritius for the Business Studies-Enterprise Department for period 04 to 10 May 2023;
- (ii) Mont Lubin College also submitted another project for a Study Tour in Bangkok, Thailand in line with their participation to “The Asia World Model United Nations (AWMUN)” for period 27 to 30 May 2023;
- (iii) Grande Montagne College submitted a project for an Educational Tour to Seychelles for the Art and Design Department for period 17 to 27 July 2023; and
- (iv) Marechal College submitted a project for an Educational Tour for Students of Grade 9 to Mauritius for period 03 to 13 December 2023

I am hereby **tabling** the list of schools, which have submitted their project for the Study Tours with details of the eligibility quantum and status of their application.

(b) Mr. Chairperson, Sir, with respect to **part (b)**, the Study Tour project is open to all students of a secondary institution.

However, assistance will be provided for a maximum of two (02) study tours, one (01) in Mauritius and one (01) abroad with participation limited to 50 students and 05 accompanying staff per school during each Academic Year.

In addition, the Rector and the Manager of the College should recommend the project and a detailed programme of the Study Tour should be submitted.

(c) Regarding **part (c)**, the Commission for Education will bear the costs of air tickets to Mauritius and up to Rs 20,000 for overseas travel as well as meet costs related to living expenses at the rate of Rs 1,000 in Mauritius and Rs 2,000 abroad up to a maximum of 10 days.

As it is the case for all projects being implemented at the level of schools, all funds for the organisation of the Study Tours will be disbursed to the Parents Teachers Association (PTA) of the respective School upon submission of their Grant Memorandum and Application

for Disbursement of Funds. This will enable schools to meet payment of expenditures related to the organisation of the Study Tours.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, in a view to ensure timely disbursement of funds, I make an appeal to all schools to submit their project proposal well in advance so as to ensure timely processing of their request and disbursement of funds.

**PARCELLING ON STATE LANDS – RECLAIMED LAND AREA
– BAIE AUX HUÎTRES AND BAIE LASCARS**

(No. B/90) The Second Local Region Member of Baie Aux Huîtres (Ms K. Roussety) 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?

Reply: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I would like to inform the House that the reclaimed land at Oyster Bay comprises two subdivisions namely subdivision 1 which comprises 62 lots and subdivision 2 comprising 27 lots whereas there is only one subdivision of 22 lots at Baie Lascars.

The House will also note that there are several pending requests for a lot as well as complaints received at the level of my Office regarding the non-processing of rental fees in respect of lots at the reclaimed land at Oyster Bay.

As a matter of fact, I am informed that the then Executive Council at its meeting held on 20 March 2015 has decided to convey approval to the Cadastral Office to proceed with the repossession of undeveloped sites at Oyster Bay in view of the construction of a SME Park and Cyber Tower. The Cadastral Office was further instructed not to accept any rent for the related cases. However, to date no such development has taken place at Oyster Bay.

This decision is considered as irrational and may be construed as being illegal. I deplore that such decision was taken just to jeopardize the projects and to the promoters' detriment which in turn has impacted negatively on the economic development of the island.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, in view to restoring confidence in the Regional Government, meetings were held since my taking of Office with the Cadastral Department to take stock of

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commercial/industrial leases that have been drawn at the mentioned sites including the status regarding the development of the sites as well as the last payment of rental fees.

Subsequently, in a bid to optimise the sites at the reclaimed land at Oyster Bay and Bay Lascars and take an informed decision regarding allocation of sites to new potential lessees so as to boost the economic development of the island, the Executive Council at its meeting held on 17 February 2023 has approved to:-

- (i) claim arrears of rent due without interests for all cases where Lease Agreement was drawn up and arrears of rent have not been claimed from the lessees in accordance with the provisions in the Lease Agreement and the State Lands Act;
- (ii) waive approval conveyed in the letter of intent in cases where neither payment has been effected nor lease Agreement been drawn up;
- (iii) strike off lots reserved or earmarked from records where no payment has been effected to date;
- (iv) cancel leases in the names of defunct companies by way of a “where as” deed; and
- (v) ensure that the lessees comply immediately with all conditions of their leases.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that neither any lot has been resumed per site nor any new beneficiary has been granted a lot at the reclaimed lands.

However, the Cadastral Office has issued letters on 17 April 2023 to applicants for lease or lessees concerned who have been given a delay of one month to settle all arrears and to comply with all conditions of their leases as from issue of the letter. I am informed that to date twelve (12) lessees have settled the arrears due.

**RELOCATION OF STONE CRUSHING PLANT
– GRAND LA FOUCHE CORAIL**

(No. B/91) The First Local Region Member of Grande Montagne (Dr. H. Agathe) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the relocation of the stone crushing plant situated at Grand La Fouche Corail, he will state to the House on where matters stand as at date?

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Reply: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that following several complaints of the residents in the vicinity due to air pollution, the then Regional Government has approved in principle the relocation of the Stone Crushing Plant situated at Grand La Fouche Corail to a site located at Montagne Croupier. The Company was informed of this decision by letter dated 26 July 2021.

However, up to my taking of Office in March 2022, no arrangement was reached between the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and the Company and there were still consultative meetings with the Commission for Environment, State Land and Public Infrastructure on the way forward.

I am further informed that following a joint site meeting held in March 2022 by the Deputy Chief Commissioner, the Manager of the Company and technical Officers of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, it was observed that the crushing plant was still causing considerable problems to the nearby community despite the temporary remedial measures taken by the plant to minimise dust pollution. I am informed that at present, the Commission for Environment is monitoring the situation.

However, Mr Chairperson Sir, I am concerned that relocating the Stone Crushing Plant will not solve the pollution problems associated with this industry but will shift the pollutions to a new site.

I believe instead that more pollution control measures should be imposed on the stone crusher Company to cut down the dust pollution such as:

- i. Water spray system to suppress dust from the crusher conveyors and other points in the process;
- ii. Dust collection system to capture dust emissions from the crusher and conveyors;
- iii. Regular maintenance and cleaning of the crusher, conveyors and other equipment to minimise dust emission; and
- iv. Use of enclosures on plants and equipment.

Mr. Chairperson Sir, my Commission is presently studying the possibility of requesting the Company to have a covered structure in a view to mitigate dust pollution in the vicinity of Grand La Fouche Corail and on more enforcement aspects related to stone crushers.

OCTOPUS' FISHERY CLOSURE – FEBRUARY TO MARCH 2023

(No. B/92) The Second Local Region Member of Baie Aux Huîtres (Ms K. Roussety) asked the Commissioner for Fisheries and Others whether, in regard to the octopus' fishery closure held from February to March 2023, he will inform the House on the:

- (a) sum disbursed as fees to fishers, local and regional supervisors, respectively, and
- (b) main outcomes of the study conducted by the consultant hired to analyse data resulting therefrom?

Reply: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, since my tenure of office in March 2022, I have noted that the Fisheries Sector in Rodrigues was not functioning to satisfaction of each and everyone. Concerning the Alternative Livelihood Programme during the Octopus Closed Season, I have noted that there were several shortcomings which were preventing their activity to run smoothly and bring better satisfaction to the Octopus Fishers engaged in the activity.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, first of all, the Fisheries Department was not in the presence of information related to the number of persons involved in the Octopus industry (fishers and non-fishers). An estimated figure of 800 fishers/non fishers was considered as the total fishers/non-fishers population.

I have requested that a fresh registration process be run so that we can have an updated statistics and these results turned out to be 1452 fishers and non-fishers in total, meaning an increase of 81.5% of the initially estimated population. Opportunities for registration were given to all those earning a living from the octopus fishing.

A daily stipend of Rs. 250 was being paid to fishers/non fishers per working day. This low stipend was not in line with the National Policy to provide workers with a decent income. I took an immediate decision with the concurrence of my colleagues of the Executive Council to double this daily stipend from Rs. 250 to Rs. 500.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, there was a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Rodrigues Council of Social Services (RCSS) to recruit Supervisors and Regional Supervisors for the Octopus Closed Season period. Decision was also taken to cancel the existing MOU and to replace it by a Procurement Mode by way of Expression of Interest for the recruitment Process which is more transparent and fair.

In the same vein, the number of Supervisors has been increased from 45 to 74 to cope with the increase in population of fishers/non-fishers meaning that more people can earn a

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living from this activity. Equally, the stipend for Regional Supervisors and Supervisors have been increased from Rs. 700 to Rs. 800 and from Rs. 400 to Rs. 600 respectively.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, for better coordination of the Alternative Livelihood Programme, the services of a Coordinator were hired.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as regard to part (a), a sum of Rupees Eleven Million, Seven Hundred and Fifty-Four Thousand, Six Hundred and Nineteen (Rs. 11,754,619) was disbursed as fees to fishers, Local and Regional Supervisors.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the first closure of Octopus Fishery was done in August 2012 following the coming into force of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Octopus Closed Season Regulations 2012. From thereon, there has been ten (10) years that the Octopus Closure period has been performed and it is regretful to note that there has been a lot of financial and human resources involved and there has been no assessment of the Project to guide future decisions.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as regard part (b), as a responsible Government, my Commission has hired the services of a well-recognised expert to assess the octopus fisheries in Rodrigues. The expert visited Rodrigues in February 2023 to take stock of the local situation. The expert will be in Rodrigues this week to discuss and finalise draft report.

EMBARGO IMPOSED – SALE OF LIVE ANIMALS

(No. B/93) The Fourth Island Region Member (Mr J. P. Spéville) 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?

Reply: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, it should be noted that the ban on exportation of cloven foot livestock was partially lifted in January 2022.

As at date, **781 bulls, 1678 rams and 1497 bucks** have been exported to the Mauritius Meat Authority (MMA), the sole authorised importer breeders register animals ready for sale at the Public Relations Unit (PRU) at Citronelle. On a first come first serve basis, blood is collected from the registered animals by the Veterinary Officers for ELISA tests. Only NSP negative animals being exported.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, Mauritius and Rodrigues are considered as two different epidemiological units as the animal diseases status of the two islands are not similar. The percentage of infected animals (NSP+ve) in Rodrigues is higher than in Mauritius.

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Therefore, animals from Rodrigues have a different disease status. Based on same the Mauritian Authority has informed that restriction on movement of FMD susceptible livestock cannot be lifted completely at this stage.

However, in view of relieving further Rodriguan farmers, a stricter protocol is presently being elaborated by the Livestock and Veterinary Division of the Ministry in collaboration with the Commission for Agriculture (RRA), to enable association of registered butches shipped livestock for slaughter only.