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**No. 9 of 2023**

**RODRIGUES**

**FIFTH REGIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**PARLIAMENTARY**

**DEBATES**

**(HANSARD)**

**(UNREVISED)**

**TUESDAY 24 OCTOBER 2023**

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**The Executive Council**

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

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

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**PRINCIPAL OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS**

Mr Chairperson            -            Leopold, Mr Joseph Christian, GOSK

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**

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**Debate No. 9 of 2023**

**Sitting of Tuesday 24 October 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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**SUPPORT/FOLLOW UP – PATIENTS TRANSFERRED TO MAURITIUS FOR  
FURTHER TREATMENT**

(No. B/128) Mrs R. M. F. Gaspard Pierre Louis, C.S.K (Minority Leader) asked the Commissioner for Health and Others whether, in regard to facilities, support, and/or follow-up provided to patients transferred to Mauritius for further treatment if there have been any recent changes thereof and, in the affirmative, to give details thereto?

**Mr Volbert:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, patients needing specialised treatment which are not available in Rodrigues are transferred to Mauritius so they have their treatments the earliest possible. As at date, there is no change in the facilities and support provided to patients transferred to Mauritius. Thank you.

**The Minority Leader:** M. le président, comme le commissaire l'a si bien dit, c'est un *must* d'envoyer nos patients à Maurice pour des soins et nous savons qu'il y a beaucoup de choses qui ont été faits depuis longtemps pour accompagner ces patients. J'ai moi-même eu l'occasion d'accompagner des patients à deux reprises donc, je connais un peu la souffrance de ces gens qui partent à Maurice. On a vu que récemment, il y a eu, on a appris, quand j'ai rencontré des personnes qui nous disent qu'ils ont eu des soucis par rapport au logement. Nous savons qu'il y a d'autres problèmes, *stipend*, logement, transport, le retour, entre autres. Mais est-ce que le Commissaire peut nous dire si par rapport au facilité de logement offert aux patients qui partent pour Maurice, il y a eu des changements récemment parce qu'il y a eu des personnes qui aujourd'hui viennent voir ceux qui s'occupent du dossier pour aller pour des soins, on leur dit qu'ils doivent trouver un logement chez une famille proche, mais deux jours, trois jours après d'autres personnes partent et ils ont le logement que nous avons pris à Sikamifer dans le cadre du COVID, qui continue heureusement. Est-ce que c'est une politique générale, maintenant que ces personnes qui partent pour des soins vont devoir trouver désormais leurs logements, si oui, pourquoi on ne continue pas et sinon comment on compte faire pour que tous ces patients qui partent ont cette facilité, c'est très important ?

**Mr Chairperson:** Yes, thank you. But the Commissioner already answered that there has been no change, unless the Commissioner want to answer this question?

**Mr Volbert:** Oui, laissez-moi répondre, M. le président. Comme la Minority Leader a si bien dit, elle vient de mentionner, c'était une mesure pour la COVID et donc aujourd'hui, nous nous trouvons dans une difficulté. Il y a que Rs 8 millions *budgeted for the transfer of*



*patients to Mauritius* et nous, on paye presque Rs 3 millions mensuellement. On va devoir trouver une solution. C'est ce que nous faisons petit à petit, il y a des cas qui ne sont pas *hardship cases*, donc on demande à ces gens-là d'aller chez des parents parce que ça a été comme ça dans le passé, mais il y a des cas que nous envoyons toujours au Sikamifer.

**The Minority Leader:** Donc, M. le président, il y a eu des changements par rapport à ce service que l'Assemblée Régionale donnait. Je crois que le Commissaire de la Santé serait d'accord avec moi que même si c'est vrai avant les patients partaient chez les parents et puis la situation qu'on a vue pour raison de force majeure avec COVID, on a vu que ça aide parce que trouver des logements très, très loin des hôpitaux, c'est vraiment très difficile pour ces patients. Est-ce que la décision a déjà été prise par le Commissaire par rapport à son souci de budget pour que cette facilité de Sikamifer ne soit plus donnée à nos patients ?

**Mr Volbert:** Si la Minority Leader a écouté. J'ai dit que graduellement, on va prendre des décisions. C'est ce que nous faisons depuis maintenant. On ne peut pas arrêter ça tout de suite quoi qu'on devrait le faire. Parce qu'avec Rs 8 millions, on ne peut pas payer Rs 36 millions dans un an. Vous serez d'accord avec moi. Donc, c'est une mesure qu'on va prendre graduellement et en temps et lieu.

**The Minority Leader:** Le Commissaire de la Santé ne pense-t-il pas que c'est un souci donc fait face les Rodriguais et est-ce qu'il a pris des décisions, par exemple, pour discuter avec le Ministre des Finances et le ministère pour palier à ce problème ? Parce que c'est un problème grave.

**Mr Volbert:** Qui vous a dit qu'on ne l'a pas fait ? Ben, on a fait, c'est pourquoi on dit que graduellement, on va trouver une autre solution. On ne peut pas arrêter du jour au lendemain. Et d'ailleurs, le Sikamifer a été, je ne sais pas comment vous avez pris le Sikamifer, je ne voulais pas dire ça là, mais ce n'était pas dans les règles, excusez-moi !

**Mr Lisette:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to ask the Commissioner for Health whether there have been patients who have been sent to Mauritius lately and who have been provided with only air tickets but no stipend and lodging?

**Mr Volbert:** I am not aware of this problem, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

**Mr Ramdally:** M. le président, dans une réunion, le Commissaire a mentionné concernant le *stipend* offert aux patients qui partent à Maurice, il a imputé la faute à un officier...

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**Mr Chairperson:** I am sorry. Limit your supplementary question to the main question, please. Okay? Limit to the main question.

**Mr Ramdally:** Mais c'est concernant les facilités qu'on donne aux patients, M. le président.

**Mr Chairperson:** You limit it to the main question. Right?

**Mr Ramdally:** Concernant le *stipend* offert aux patients, il a imputé la faute à un officier de la Commission et il a dit qu'il allait faire des changements, donc j'aimerais savoir...

**Mr Chairperson:** This question is not allowed. This question is not allowed.

*(Interruptions)*

Order, please, this question is not allowed.

Next question.

**The Minority Leader:** Non, M. le président, une question très importante par rapport à...

**Mr Chairperson:** Last question. Last supplementary question.

*(Interruptions)*

I have said last!

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

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Chairperson:** You are challenging my ruling? You want to challenge my ruling?

*(Interruptions)*

Member Lisette, you want to challenge my ruling?

**The Minority Leader:** Mr Chairperson, Sir,...

**Mr Chairperson:** Are you challenging my ruling?

*(Interruptions)*

You are challenging my ruling? Are you challenging my ruling?

**Mr Lisette:** You interpret it as you feel like.

**Mr Chairperson:** No, are you challenging my ruling?

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*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Lisette:** You interpret it as you feel like.

**Mr Chairperson:** Okay, so you withdraw yourself from the House. Out!

*(Interruptions)*

Go on with your question. Minority Leader, you go on with your question.

*(Interruptions)*

*At this stage the Members of the Opposition left the Chamber.*

**Mr Chairperson:** Next question?

*(Interruptions)*

Order, please!

*(Interruptions)*

No debate! If you want to withdraw, you go out.

*(Interruptions)*

Next item on...

Any statements?

**STATEMENT BY COMMISSIONERS**

***‘LA CELEBRATION DES 21 ANS DE L’AUTONOMIE DE RODRIGUES’***

**The Commissioner for Youth and Others (Mr V. Ravina):** M. le président, la fête de l'autonomie, aussi connue comme la Journée de Rodrigues ou l'Anniversaire de l'installation de l'Assemblée Régionale de Rodrigues s'est tenue dans la simplicité et la sobriété du 11 au 15 octobre 2023 sur le thème '*Ansanm Anou Konstrir Enn Lavenir Meyer*'. Cette célébration a été encore une belle occasion pour les Rodriguais de démontrer son sens d'attachement à son île et a eu un franc succès avec la présence de l'Honorable Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, Premier Ministre de la République de Maurice comme invité d'honneur et la participation massive de nos compatriotes dans toutes les manifestations organisées.

M. le président, je manquerais à ma tâche si je ne félicite pas votre bureau, qui a donné le coup d'envoi pour les activités marquant les 21 ans de l'Installation de l'Assemblée

Régionale de Rodrigues, le mardi 10 octobre 2023, à travers l'organisation d'une journée porte-ouverte ici même dans cette auguste Assemblée pour les *Senior Citizen* qui avait pour but de donner plus d'information sur le rôle de l'Assemblée Régionale de Rodrigues.

M. le président, par la suite, nous avons enchaîné avec la lecture du message du Chef Commissaire dans les établissements scolaires et institutions vocationnelles, le mercredi 11 octobre 2023 à 11 heures. Une collation a été distribuée à ses établissements scolaires comme à l'accoutumée. Je remercie les invités d'honneurs qui ont fait le déplacement dans les établissements et ont fait la lecture du message du Chef Commissaire, message qui mettait l'accent sur la prise de conscience de nos élèves, personnels enseignants et non-enseignants pour faire avancer notre autonomie.

M. le président, la date tant attendue, le jeudi 12 octobre 2023, la cérémonie officielle s'est tenue à 14 heures au Stade Jean-Paul II, à La Ferme, comprenant la cérémonie protocolaire, l'allocution du Chef Commissaire et de l'Honorable Premier Ministre de la République de Maurice, la remise de la Médaille de la Reconnaissance Rodriguaise et du titre de citoyenneté d'honneur. Notre cérémonie, M. le président, s'est poursuivie avec un défilé des athlètes et artistes qui ont fait la fierté de notre république aux récents Jeux des Iles de l'Océan Indien à Madagascar et aux Jeux de la Francophonie au Congo et par la suite un spectacle culturel et artistique par nos chorégraphes, danseurs modernes et traditionnels et chanteurs locaux. Cet évènement s'est culminé par la finale masculine de la Coupe de l'Autonomie 2023, opposant l'équipe de football du Centre de Perfectionnement U 20 contre celle de Rodrigues Roche Bon Dieu Saint Etienne Sporting Club et la remise des prix en présence de notre invité d'honneur.

M. le président, la fête de l'autonomie a toujours été une occasion pour mettre en avant nos richesses, spécificités et les talents du rodriguais. Cette année, pour la cérémonie officielle à La Ferme, nous avons mis en avant le travail de nos hommes et femmes, entrepreneurs et artistes pour la décoration de la loge officielle et du terrain de foot. Un collectif d'hommes et femmes qui travaillent en recyclant les produits de tous les jours, comme des bouteilles, papiers, bois et chutes de tissus ou encore l'utilisation de feuilles de bananiers séchés ou palmiers, ont embelli le site avec leurs magnifiques réalisations qui vont être réutilisées par la suite pour d'autres occasions. Cette initiative s'inscrit dans la vision de faire de Rodrigues une île durable et écologique, limitant nos déchets et nos empreintes carbone.

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M. le président, comme vous avez pu le remarquer, les Rodriguais accordent beaucoup d'importance au sport. Ceci étant dit, des activités sportives ont été ajoutées au programme de cette 21<sup>e</sup> célébration.

Comme mentionné, l'un des composants de la cérémonie officielle du 12 octobre a été un défilé d'une trentaine d'athlètes et artistes qui ont participé dans les derniers Jeux des Iles de l'Océan Indien et les Jeux de la Francophonie. L'Honorable Premier Ministre ainsi que le Chef Commissaire n'ont pas manqué de faire l'éloge de nos athlètes qui ont brillé lors de ses rassemblements sportifs.

La Finale et Remise des prix de la finale féminine de football de la Coupe de l'Autonomie 2023 s'est tenue le samedi 14 octobre 2023 à 15 heures 30 sur le terrain de football de Grande Montagne.

La compétition de Régate de l'Autonomie, qui a mis en valeur la régates comme un sport traditionnel et culturel, a eu lieu le dimanche 15 octobre 2023 à 12 heures 45 à la plage publique de Mourouk avec la participation d'une quarantaine de bateaux de régates répartis dans quatre catégories. La compétition s'est terminée avec la cérémonie de remise de prix en présence du Chef Commissaire dans une ambiance très conviviale suivie d'une manifestation vocale et musicale.

Les finales féminine et masculine, suivie de la remise des prix de la Coupe de l'Autonomie de Volleyball 2023, s'est tenue le samedi 21 octobre 2023 à 15h00 au Gymnase de Malabar.

M. le président, cette fête, c'est aussi un événement annuel depuis 2003 pour rendre hommage aux bâtisseurs de l'autonomie de Rodrigues. L'Assemblée Régionale a conféré la citoyenneté d'honneur à trois hautes personnalités de l'île Rodrigues autonome et la médaille de la Reconnaissance Rodriguaise a été décernée à dix de nos concitoyens qui ont œuvré pour le développement de notre île. En même temps, l'Assemblée Régionale de Rodrigues a aussi annoncé le changement d'appellation du Centre Culturel et Loisir de Mon Plaisir comme le Centre Culturel et Loisir Ruy Karl Allas et le Complexe Sportif de Mangues comme le Complexe sportif John Milazar. Toutes nos gratitude vont à ses bâtisseurs de l'autonomie et à leurs familles.

M. le président, la fête de l'autonomie n'aurait pas été un franc succès sans l'implication de nos collaborateurs et partenaires habituels, précisément :

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- Le bureau du Premier Ministre ;
- Le bureau du Chef Commissaire ;
- Le bureau du Clerk ;
- Le bureau de l'Adjoint au Chef Commissaire ;
- Les Commissions (Commission de l'Agriculture, Commission de la Santé, Commission du Tourisme et Commission pour le Développement de l'enfant et autres) ;
- La Force Policière et toutes les forces disciplinaires (Services des Sapeurs-Pompiers et pénitentiaires), Association Scout de Rodrigues ;
- Les partenaires (Rodclean Ltd, Transinvest Construction Ltée, La MBC, Aéroport de Rodrigues Ltd., Mauritius Télécom, Escales Vacances Rodrigues, Wong Sun Wai Ltd) ;
- Le comité d'organisation ;
- Tous les participants, artistes traditionnels et modernes ;
- Athlètes et artistes, Jeux des Iles de l'Océan Indien 2023 et Jeux de la Francophonie 2023, et
- Les compatriotes de Rodrigues.

M. le président, c'est avec un sentiment du devoir accompli que je constate que le peuple de Rodrigues a massivement soutenu la tenue de la fête de l'autonomie. Les symboles de notre autonomie étaient omniprésents, l'hymne aux bâtisseurs '*Se Pou Sa*' a été chantonné et les Armoiries de Rodrigues ont flotté dans toutes nos institutions scolaires et lors de la cérémonie officielle où la population était au rendez-vous. Cette célébration a été une occasion de réunifier le peuple autour d'une même cause, célébrer notre autonomie et de démontrer notre sens d'appartenance à notre île Rodrigues. L'assiduité massive de nos compatriotes à nos rassemblements est une preuve de l'amour que chacun accorde à notre patrie. Poursuivons notre mission de préserver l'âme rodriguaise en s'engageant davantage pour faire briller le sigle et moto de l'Assemblée Régionale de Rodrigues : 'Travail, Solidarité, Fierté'.

M. le président, Vive l'Autonomie, Vive l'île Rodrigues autonome, Vive la République de Maurice. Merci, M. le président.

*(Applause)*

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**ADJOURNMENT**

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I now move that the House be adjourned to Tuesday 19 December 2023 at 10.30 hours.

*Mr Perrine, rose and seconded.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Mr Chairperson:** The House stands adjourned.

*At 10.58 a.m., the Assembly, was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday 19 December 2023 at 10.30 a.m*

**WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS**

**NEW SERVICES OFFERED – LA FERME AREA HEALTH CENTRE/DR  
CHRISTOPHER PRUDENCE AREA HEALTH CENTRE**

**(No. B/129) Ms K. Roussety (Second Local Region Member of Baie aux Huîtres)** asked the Commissioner for Health and Others whether, in regard to the new services offered at La Ferme Area Health Centre, he will enlighten the House on the project, stating the objectives thereof, giving details as from when same are/will be operational?

**Reply:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, we have and still upgrading some Department at Dr. Christopher Prudence Area Health Centre but as at date there is no new service.

**FOYER MARIE MADELEINE DE LA CROIX/BALADIROU  
– INCIDENT RECENTLY OCCURED**

**(No. B/130) Ms M. N. Raffaut (Second Island Region Member)** asked the Commissioner for Child Development and Others whether, in regard to the Foyer Marie Madeleine de la Croix of Baladirou, she will obtain information and state, for the benefit of the House, on if any incident recently occurred thereat and has been reported to the Police and, in the affirmative, indicate any new policy regarding the establishment as a result thereof?

**Reply:** As the House may be aware, in Rodrigues, there was only one residential care institution/shelter for children victims of abuse, neglect or maltreatment who need to be removed from their home and sheltered in a place of safety following an application to the Court for an Emergency Protection Order. I am referring to the Foyer Marie Madeleine de la

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Croix at Baladirou under the care of the “Congrégation des Filles de Marie” of Saint Denis, Reunion Island.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, with regard to the incident mentioned by the respected Member there is presently a Police enquiry ongoing on the matter and it will not be in order to give any information whatsoever.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to put on record that since my taking of office, discussions were on-going with the “Congrégation des Filles de Marie” of St. Denis, Reunion Island to work on a reform for the Foyer Marie Madeleine de la Croix for the setting up of separate smaller structures (home based) in order to separate the inmates, that is male, female and inmate’s victims of sexual abuse. The proposed reform is also in line with the de-institutionalisation of alternative care institutions in reference to the United Nations (UN) guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children. To note, Mr Chairperson, Sir, before the incident happened, joint site visits were already carried out by representatives of the Foyer Marie Madeleine de la Croix and my Commission to identify potential houses to be rented for the setting up of the separate shelters. Mr Chairperson, Sir, decision was also taken to separate the older boys of the foyer from the other inmates of the foyer, by moving them to a new building.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, the reform of the Foyer Marie Madeleine de la Croix is taking form. A technical committee has been set up with representatives of my Commission and the Foyer Marie Madeleine de la Croix to facilitate and expedite the reform process.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Administrator of the Vicariat Apostolique de Rodrigues has saluted the initiative and effort of my Commission to create the annex shelter for boys since this was long awaited. The sisters of the Foyer are very satisfied that the reform is progressing and this is having positive impacts on the inmates and the staff of the foyer.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I wish to reassure the House that my Commission will leave no stone unturned so that the reform of the Foyer Marie Madeleine de la Croix be implemented in the shortest delay for the best interest of the inmates.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson, Sir.



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

**(No. B/131) Mr J. R. Ramdally (First Local Region Member for Saint Gabriel)** asked the Commissioner for Environment and Others whether, in regard to the project of relocation of the stone crushing plant at Grand La Fouche Corail, he will inform the House where matters stand thereto?

**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, as at date, several options are being envisaged and consultative meetings with the Commission for Environment, State Land and Public Infrastructure on the way forward are still ongoing.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, following a joint site meeting held in March 2022 by myself, 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.

A meeting was held under my chairmanship to decide on corrective measures as follows :-

- (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.

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**Reply:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, my Commission is presently studying the possibility of proposing the new site at Mte Plate given that the company has raised some issues with the Mte Croupier site.

The views of the Planning department are being awaited to proceed with the best option available.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, may I reassure the House that I am giving special attention to this matter as I am very familiar with the problem that existed with the location of this plant. Thank you Mr Chairperson, Sir.

**EARTH EXCAVATION WORKS**

**(No. B/132) Dr H. Agathe (First Local Region Member for Grande Montagne)** asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to applications for Earth Excavation Works for the construction of buildings, he will, for the benefit of the House state the:

- (a) clearances needed as prerequisites, and
- (b) control system in place to ensure compliance with the permits?

**Reply:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I wish to inform the House that there is an established procedure for dealing with applications for earth excavation.

As regards to part (a) of the question, I am informed that Clearance for Excavation is issued by the Environment Division of my Commission. First, the applicant has to make a request at the Environment Division whereby appropriate form is filled together with submission of a copy of land lease or building permit.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am further informed that following submission of dully signed forms with supporting documents such as building permit and land lease, Technical Officers of the Environment Division carry out site visit to assess the sites and potential threats of the excavation activities to the environment before making recommendations to issue the clearance.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, upon approval of the Excavation request, depending on the site sensibility, related conditions are laid down on the Clearance Certificate for the applicant to abide. The said clearances are issued to the applicants with copies to Commission for Environment and 'Police de l'Environnement' for proper monitoring and supervision.

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Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards to part (b) of the question, the same control system which has been set up since the advent of autonomy is still in place.

The Technical Officers of the Environment Division carry out site visits to monitor the excavation activities for better monitoring of excavation activities with each Technical Officer of its division is assigned a respective region.

As copies of the excavation clearance is also issued to ‘Police de l’Environnement’ for necessary inspection and in case of any infringement of the conditions attached under the clearance necessary action taken by ‘Police de l’Environnement’.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that the Rodrigues Regional Assembly does not have enough legal capacity that allows its officers to take action against reported cases of illegal excavation. This is why, Mr Chairperson, Sir, my Commission will come shortly with appropriate Regulation to empower Rodrigues Regional Assembly to better control and monitor land excavation in Rodrigues and take appropriate legal actions.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

**GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE ALLIANCE PLUS (GCCA+), CLIMATE-SMART  
AGRICULTURE PROJECT – MT DU SABLE & ANSE ALI**

**(No. B133) Mr L. D. Baptiste (Second Local Region Member for Grande Montagne)** asked the Commissioner for Social Security and Others whether, in regard to the Global Climate Change Alliance Plus (GCCA+), Climate-Smart Agriculture Project at Mt du Sable and Anse Ali, headed by his Commission, he will give details and inform the House on:

- (a) any progress of work made since July 2022 to date, and
- (b) the procurement procedures carried out, if any, and their outcome, together with the expected dates of completion thereof?

**Reply:**

**Structural project implementation at Anse Ali:**

Mr Chairperson, Sir, concerning the progress of work made from July 2022 to date, let me first start with the project of Anse Ali, that is, the setting up of lime and honey farm at Anse Ali, which implies the development of adequate infrastructure to enable

resources mobilisation on site, efficient project implementation and effective handing over to beneficiaries.

Likewise, 978 metres of track road has been constructed to provide access to the project site and the planting areas have been duly fenced. The land has been de-rocked and ploughed. A plants nursery has been constructed for seedlings production and hardening of plantlets. The infrastructure housing the plants nursery comprises also of store for equipment, two toilets and changing room for beneficiaries.

As regards to the irrigation system, a rainwater harvesting pond has been duly constructed and supply water to ten water distribution tanks. A survey was conducted on 18 October 2023 to initially connect the distribution pipes with the distribution tanks. Furthermore, two water tanks are also in place for the collection of rainwater from the roof of the nursery infrastructure for the toilet system, watering of plants on the nursery and/or as the case maybe for watering of plants on the farm by watering can. Besides, 30 beehives and bee colonies are already in place at Anse Ali and all equipment for bee keeping have been procured.

***(a) Site preparation of 3.25 hectares for production of lime and honey at Anse Ali***

Site clearance have been completed except for additional terraces that will be carried with the assistance of the Commission for Agriculture and the honey is already in place and is being presently nourished with sugar while awaiting the flowering of *pongamia*. Honey harvesting is being expected for January 2024

***(b) Purchase of lime and melliferous plantlets (Anse Ali)***

Part of the lime trees have been planted and parts are in being hardened for plantation as well as the melliferous plantlets. The Commission for Agriculture will provide additional plants as may be required.

***(c) Setting up of agroforest through the plantation of plants acting as windbreaks at Anse Ali and Montagne du Sable; fruit trees and other plants of high economic value.***

After visits on both sites, it has been agreed to cover the terraces where appropriate with the very resistant ‘*vetiver*’, that is, a plant of high economic value for the handicraft industry of Rodrigues. Further, apart from lime, adaptable fruit plantlets have already

been brought on both sites. The Commission for Agriculture will continue to provide plants resources and extension services to the beneficiaries accordingly.

***(d) Setting up of a rainwater harvesting structure (1000 m<sup>3</sup>) with storage tanks and distribution system at Anse Ali***

The rainwater harvesting structure of 1000 m<sup>3</sup> have been duly constructed on the upper ground at Roche Bon Dieu/Pointe Coton and connected to ten distribution tanks just above the plantation site. The water distribution system is being reviewed by Irrigation Officers of the Commission for Agriculture following a visit on 18 October 2023. The Commission will separate the water connection of the two ponds (one is for the planters of the valley) to allow the beneficiaries to have a continuous supply of water.

***(e) Installation of solar photovoltaic panels for renewable energy (pumping, irrigation etc) at Anse Ali***

Water system at Anse Ali is based on gravity and photovoltaic system would not be required.

***(f) Construction of a store/toilet on both sites***

Construction at Anse Ali has been completed, and procedures for Mt du Sable was initiated but due to time limit cannot be implemented under the project (tender documents ready for launching and will be taken care by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly).

**Structural Project Implementation at Mt Du Sable**

As regards to Montagne du Sable, a track road leading to the project site has been duly constructed. The area is fenced except for a new realignment that will be done to close the fencing work by the Commission. The ploughing of land and derocking works have been completed. A rainwater harvesting structure of 10,000 m<sup>3</sup> has been fully completed and the Irrigation Unit of the Commission for Agriculture has conducted a visit on 19 October 2023 for the connection of the distribution pipes for the watering chili plantlets and other fruit trees already on site and also to prepare an irrigation network design.

In addition, five sheds more small ruminants have been constructed and a scope of work is being prepared for the filling of slurry passage present in the structure and the work will be done in house.

**(a) Rehabilitation of the site has been done, but the Commission for Agriculture will** create new drains and realignment of retaining wall. An additional portion of land has also been identified within the boundary of the project for cultivation. The work will be done in house and is expected to be completed over two weeks.

**(b) Mulching of the land plots targeted for chilli cultivation:**

The plantation of 6000 chilli plants is expected to start on 24 October 2023 and the beneficiaries have been mobilized accordingly.

**(c) Setting up of a rain water harvesting structure (800 m<sup>3</sup>), distribution tank and distribution network (At Montagne du Sable):**

The rainwater structure has already been constructed and connected with a solar photovoltaic panel for water distribution. The connection of distribution pipes has been done on 19 October 2023 to allow for irrigation of chili. However, an officer has been assigned the duty to prepare a proper distribution networks with all materials (including the appropriate number of distribution tanks) that need to be procured.

**(d) Ruminants**

The Commission for Agriculture has already delivered five sheep for the project. After discussion it has been agreed that the Commission for Agriculture will provide 35 additional heads.

Dry season since September 2022: Water problems affecting the whole island and Foot and Mouth disease has prevented the timely implementation of the purchase of small ruminants. Clearance to export ruminants has only been release for Rodrigues in August 2023.

**(e) Access Road (on both sites)**

Access roads of both sites have been completed.

**(f) Fencing of Land (on both sites)**

Fencing Works have been completed at Anse Ali but at Montagne du Sable an additional 100 metres of fence will be installed with resources already available at the Commission for Agriculture. This will permit the securing of an additional portion of land. Presently, a small corridor of about 1.5 metre to an adjacent to the fencing of a

farmer is still opened and will be easy closed to allow the planation of chili. An officer has been assigned the work to prepare an appropriate scope of work.

**(g) Plantation of alternative crops which are resistant to emerging challenges including dry seasons, insects and diseases (Montagne du Sable)**

The fruits plants are already on the spot. The Commission for Agriculture, following our visit of Monday 16 October 2023, has identified the appropriate sites for planting of these crops and the Commission will also provide the necessary seedlings accordingly.

**(h) Construction of Compost Pad for Compost Production (Montagne du Sable)**

Following a site meeting with Officers of the European Union, officers of my Commission and officers from the Commission for Agriculture, the right place has been identified to build a compost pad to store the manure collected from the sheds and the construction will be done shortly.

**(i) Installation of solar photovoltaic panels for renewable energy at Montagne du Sable**

Solar photovoltaic panels have been installed and is functioning.

**Training for beneficiaries of both projects:**

The training programme in Climate Smart Agriculture, small chilli, lime and small ruminants' production, pasture, nursery and seedling management, disease and treatment and honey production has been completed for beneficiaries of both Anse Ali and Mt du Sable. The beneficiaries of the projects are being followed by Mr Julien Colin, Technical Supervisor of the Project.

**Overall Assessment of the results of the Action so far**

My Commission is very positive that both projects will start to show positive results in the next two months. Both team of beneficiaries are now motivated.

The Commission for Social Security and that for Agriculture have started to established a good working arrangement. Since, Friday 13 October 2023 a committee consisting of the Manager of the Agricultural Resources and Extension Services, the Administrative Officer of the Commission for Social Security, Land Survey Technicians, Water

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Networking Technicians, Animal Production Technicians, Plant Calendar and Business Plan Technicians under the instruction of both Departmental Heads have been set up to follow the project.

Each survey team has already conducted site visit on both site on Friday 13 October 2023 and the whole team has further effect visit on site for better understanding of the situation.

The water networking for watering of plants have been done on both sites on 18 and 19 October respectively. Plantation of chilli is due to start on 24 October 2023 at Montagne du Sable and watering of plants will now be possible at Anse Ali following the current rainfall that would cause the water pond to accumulate much water.

Besides seedlings of vegetables will be donated to the beneficiaries at Anse Ali to allow for a continuous source of revenue before the lime could become productive and the honey harvesting started (due in January 2024).

Since the remaining components are purely agricultural, the Agricultural Services has already started the taking over of the project and better extension services will be provided.

Moreover, the five ruminants already being reared at Montagne du Sable are showing positive sign of quick adaption with two females are showing sign of pregnancy. The beneficiaries have been grouped in team for rearing of the animals every day.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards to part (b) of the question several items have been procured as listed below:

**List of Items purchased for GCCA+**

Sn	Description	Quantity	Cost ( Rs )
1	PVC Elbow 50 mm	01 unit	70.00
2	PVC Pipe 50 mm (pressure)	09 units	6525.00
3	Septor Female ½”	10 units	293.20
4	PE COUPLING Septor ½	15 units	425.70
5	PE Polypipe ½”	16 rolls	17308.96



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<b>Sn</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Quantity</b>	<b>Cost ( Rs )</b>
6	PE Reduce 32 to 20 mm Polypipe	10 units	455.50
7	Seal Tape	05 units	70.50
8	Polypipe Stop ½”	15 units	1875.00
9	Elbow Polypipe ½”	05 units	160.00
10	Tee Polypipe ½”	05 units	250.00
11	Chain for chainsaw	02 units	4800.00
12	Watering Can	06 units	3450.00
13	Sugar White	500 kg	27000.00
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>62,683.86</b>

Mr Chairperson, Sir, the project initial completion date was the 26 August 2023 but following a visit of officers of the European delegation in Rodrigues on 11 and 12 October 2023, two months’ extension has been given to complete all outstanding work on both sites.

**PROJECT OF ADDITIONAL WATER PRODUCTION  
– DESALINATION IN RODDRIGUES**

**(No. B/134) Mr N. Lisette (First Local Region Member for Baie aux Huîtres)** asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the project of additional water production by desalination in Rodrigues, he will inform the House on:

- (a) the estimates for the capital expenditure cost of the project indicating the sites to be involved giving details as to the cost of all ancillary works required to be performed thereto;
- (b) if an analysis of all existing infrastructures has been made islandwise to maximise their use, and
- (c) the energy demand for the electricity requirement during peak hours for all the desalination plants, indicating the source therefor?

**Reply:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (a), the strategy of my Commission and the Rodrigues Public Utilities Corporation (RPUC) is to make all desalination plants fully

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operational by the end of this year and to install additional plants to provide an additional 4050 m<sup>3</sup> of desalinated water per day by December 2024, provided that funds are made available on time to the RPUC by the Mauritius Investment Corporation (MIC).

The new desalination projects consist of the following:

Design, supply, installation and commissioning of three containerised Reverse Osmosis Units of 350 m<sup>3</sup> per day each, to be installed at Pointe Venus, Pointe Coton and Caverne Bouteille. The contractual period is six months. Tenders have already been floated and evaluated. The estimates of expenditure for the three containerised units will be Rs 65.8 m. plus VAT.

Secondly, 3x1000 m<sup>3</sup> per day ROT units at Pointe Coton where the quality of seawater is good and discharge of diluted brine to open sea is possible. This new development will comprise: -

- new seawater intake borehole
- new building of 1045 m<sup>2</sup>
- two new storage reservoirs of 1000 m<sup>3</sup> capacity each
- 3x1000 m<sup>3</sup> per day ROT unit
- pumping station at Pointe Coton
- new transfer line from Pointe Coton to Mt Piquant reservoir (contract for the reservoir already awarded by my Commission for Rs 24,978,356.51 VAT exclusive of VAT).

Mr Chairperson, Sir, tenders have been floated by the RPUC for the new building of 1045 m<sup>2</sup> and two reservoirs of a total of 2000 m<sup>3</sup> at Pointe Coton. The bids have been evaluated and contract will be awarded upon receipt of funds from the MIC. The estimates for the two projects will be Rs 89 m. plus VAT.

Tenders for the other components of the new desalination plants to be installed at Pointe Coton have not yet been launched. It will therefore not be appropriate to disclose the cost estimates at this stage.

Thirdly, a project for the supply, installation, commissioning, maintenance and operation of 2x1000 m<sup>3</sup>/day containerised desalination plants has been approved by the BOT Office as a potential PPP project on 14 March 2023. The project value is known only when the promoters submit their bids. Financial clearance has been sought from the Ministry of Finance

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and Economic Development (MOFED) for the financing of transaction advisory services. The Request for Proposal is being finalised for the appointment of a transaction adviser for the project.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (b), yes, my Commission and the RPUC have taken the most responsible decision to do a complete audit of all ROT units of the five existing desalination plants at Baie Malgache, Pointe Venus, Songes, Pointe Coton and Caverne Bouteille.

When I took office, ProFive Ltd was requested to make a full audit of all desalination plants. Only three out of six ROT units were in working conditions whilst the four remaining units were in breakdown due to a multitude of bad operational practice and poor maintenance.

We undertake to put back all six ROT units into service. Both ROT Units at Pointe Coton are now working, producing some 700 m<sup>3</sup> of water per day. Four units are currently operational; the fifth ROT unit at Songes will be put into operation by early November 2023. A contract has already been awarded to Impact Water Solution (IWS) for the sum of €70,543.20, approximately equivalent to Rs 3.3 m. for the repairs of Caverne Bouteille desalination plant which will be commissioned around 15 December 2023.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, the RPUC now has the engineering capacity and plant operators trained to run these desalination plants effectively, which was not the case in the past. Preventive maintenance is now planned in a systematic scheduled manner and all missing parts, example, dosing pumps have been introduced.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (c) of the question, even though we do not have the exact figures yet, it is known that indeed the energy demand will be high. All plants will be run on CEB power. There is no anticipated problem for the CEB to provide power to operate desalination plants. The RPUC is in close liaison with the CEB regarding electricity supply to the future ROT units in terms of the containerised 3x350 m<sup>3</sup>/day and the 3x1000 m<sup>3</sup>/day to be installed. The CEB whose local Branch Manager is a director of the Board of the RPUC has confirmed availability of power for these units.

Nonetheless, Mr Chairperson, Sir, the RPUC is also investigating a green strategy to exploit renewable energy for the desalination plants with the construction of a 1 megawatt solar farm at one or two locations in Rodrigues. The RPUC has already written for approval from the CEB and will endeavour to benefit under the Neutral Carbon Industrial Scheme of the CEB. Discussions are under way and there are strong indications that the request will be acceded to.

**DRILLING OF NEW BOREHOLES – MT PITON, ARAUCARIA, CHAMPS,  
MON PLAISIR & NASSOLA**

**(No. B/135) Mr N. Lisette (First Local Region Member for Baie aux Huîtres)** asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to drilling of new boreholes at different sites in Rodrigues namely at Mt Piton, Araucaria, Champs, Mon Plaisir and Nassola as stated by the Executive Council meeting of Friday 01 September 2023, he will state to the House:

- (a) how the sites were identified;
- (b) if any investigations were carried out and, in the affirmative to table a copy of the recommendations thereof, and
- (c) if the impact on nearby ecosystem and downstream of the borehole sites has been assessed and, if yes, to table a copy of same?

**Reply:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, the actual water production in Rodrigues is less than 5,000 m<sup>3</sup> per day, with some 1,200 m<sup>3</sup> from desalination plants and 3,800 m<sup>3</sup> from onland water including borehole water. There is overexploitation of the existing 26 boreholes and yield has considerably decreased in the last months. With climate change, the situation is likely to worsen if no major rainfall spells reach Rodrigues soon. Experts say that boreholes are not necessarily interconnected. It therefore makes sense to drill new boreholes to complement existing ones in view of optimising ground water production in Rodrigues.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, all studies/reports such as BRLi, Luxconsult (Mtius) Ltd, the Water Resources Unit of the Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities, BRGM etc., have indicated that there is an under-exploitation of the underground water potential of Rodrigues in its central caldera and western caldera. In view of optimising production to meet an estimated demand of 12,000 m<sup>3</sup> per day, it has become imperative to drill new boreholes to obtain 3,000 m<sup>3</sup> as additional yield per day.

The RPUC will use technology for monitoring of boreholes. It will install sensors in all boreholes and operations will be remotely controlled from Pointe Venus technical offices which will act as a command centre for all new water production sources operated by the RPUC. An underground water management plan and monitoring will be put in place to ensure safe and responsible operations of boreholes. Not all drilled boreholes are to be used all the time.

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The RPUC will drill boreholes at a depth of 80 metre and environmental damage in the proximity of these boreholes will be minimal and will be closely monitored by its engineering team.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (a), the potential sites were identified by the Principal Hydrogeological Officer of the Water Resources Unit of the Ministry of Public Utilities in collaboration with the Hydrological Unit of my commission. They conducted a desk study based on previous geophysical investigation reports, drilling reports and monitoring reports of existing boreholes followed by site renaissance.

The RPUC is not considering Mon Plaisir site for the time being due to access difficulties.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (b), for borehole drilling, no investigation on sites is carried out. It is essentially a paper exercise based on available maps and past experience of boreholes in the vicinity of selected sites. The preliminary site investigations are conducted prior to taking a final decision to drill at a particular location.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, in addition to the boreholes to be drilled by the RPUC, there will be eight other boreholes identified by Luxconsult along the main transfer primary pipe network. The aim is to have some 3,000 m<sup>3</sup>/day of water from borehole drilling by 2024.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (c), the RPUC will drill boreholes to an approximate depth of 80 metre and the ecosystem will not be affected by the systematic engineering controlled exploitation of these boreholes. We do not foresee adverse effects on the immediate ecosystem as borehole water comes from the confined aquifers not ordinary small water veins below the ground surface. In addition, as I stated, Mr Chairperson, Sir, there will be close monitoring of boreholes from RPUC technical control centre and through site visits by qualified trainee engineers to assess the impact on the immediate environment, if any. This constitutes a new underground water management framework to be implemented by the RPUC.

### **IMPORT/RECRUITMENT – FOREIGN NATIONALS TO WORK IN RODRIGUES**

**(No. B/136) Mr L. D. Baptiste (Second Local Region Member for Grande Montagne)** asked the Commissioner for Labour and Others whether, in regard to the import/recruitment of foreign nationals to work in Rodrigues, he will obtain information and state, for the benefit of the House on:

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- (a) if there has been any change in policy/procedures for the grant of work permits recently and, if in affirmative, since when, and to give details thereof, and
- (b) where matter stands as regards to any decision taken thereto?

**Reply:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, the answer to part (a) of the question is No. There has been no change in policy and procedures regarding the grant of work permit for the importation and recruitment of foreign nationals to work in Rodrigues. The established procedures for this purpose are as follows: -

- (1) The Applicant submits an application on line to the Ministry of Labour, Human Resource Development and Training at the address [business.edbmauritius.org](http://business.edbmauritius.org);
- (2) The application shall be made in accordance with guidelines issued by the Ministry;
- (3) The Ministry of Labour, Human Resource Development and Training refers the application to my Commission for views and comments;
- (4) The Employment Information Centre of my Commission therefore examine the grades and skills required by the applying Company on the basis of its data base of jobseekers.
- (5) The Employment Information Centre then submit its report to my Commission.
- (6) If the grades and skills are available in Rodrigues, my Commission informs the Ministry of Labour, Human Resource Development and Training accordingly and requests that the applying company gives priority to employ the local labour.
- (7) At the same time, upon submission of its report, the Employment Information Centre also sends a list of potential candidates to the applying company for its selection purposes;
- (8) In case the employer has not obtained the required candidates from the list, the Employment Information Centre request the employer to advertise the vacancies on social media, newspapers, radio and TV and to furnish written evidence of such advertisements;
- (9) When the required grades and skills are not available in Rodrigues, the matter is referred to the Executive Council;

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- (10) If approved, my Commission will issue a no-objection to the Ministry of Labour, Human Resource Development and Training on the conditions that the company complies with all related legal provisions including the requirement for a Lodging and Accommodation Permit.
- (11) The Ministry will request the employer to apply for a Lodging and Accommodation Permit (LAP) at the Occupational Safety and Health Unit of the Ministry in accordance with the provisions of the Occupational Safety and Health (Employees Lodging Accommodation) Regulations 2011;
- (12) Upon reception of a Lodging and Accommodation Permit, the Ministry of Labour, Human Resource Development and Training will issue the Work Permit to the Employer to import the required foreigners to work on specific project in Rodrigues.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (b) of the question, my Commission has since the month of April 2023, noticed that there is an increase in the number of request for the employment of foreign labour in Rodrigues. We foresee that such tendency will continue in view of the several major projects which are in the pipelines and which will be implemented in Rodrigues.

There is need to strengthen the monitoring and control of foreign workers in Rodrigues. My Commission is contemplating the setting up of a Foreign Workers Monitoring Committee whose roles shall be as follows, among others: -

- (1) To make such guidelines as deemed appropriate on the procedures to be followed for the recruitment and transfer of foreign workers in Rodrigues or on any matter related thereto;
- (2) Advise and make recommendations on policies, legal issues and any other matter relating to the employment of foreign workers in Rodrigues;
- (3) Assess and make recommendations on applications concerning the employment and/or transfer of foreign workers to Rodrigues;
- (4) Investigate into complaints of illegal practices in relation to foreign workers;
- (5) Recommend on legal and administrative actions required with regard to the employment of foreign workers.

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The committee will be chaired by the Departmental Head of my Commission and will be composed of representatives from the Employment Information Centre, the Labour and Industrial Relations Department, Occupational Safety and Health Department, Passport and Immigration Office, Public Health Department, Fire and Rescue Services.

I thank you for your attention.

**PARTICIPATION OF RODRIGUES AS AN ENTITY  
– INDIAN OCEAN ISLAND GAMES**

**(No. B/137) Mr J. P. Spéville (Fourth Island Region Member)** asked the Commissioner of Sports and Others whether, in regard to the participation of Rodrigues as an entity of its own in the Indian Ocean Island Games, he will enlighten the House on the steps his Commission envisage to take with respect thereon?

**Reply:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, as the House is aware, the brilliant performance of our athletics once again in the 11<sup>th</sup> Edition of Indian Ocean Island Games in August last in Madagascar has rekindled the wish for Rodrigues to participate in the games as an island.

As you may be aware, there was a cry from the civil and sports society a few years ago as an attempts to open the dialogue with the government of Mauritius in that respect.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, the motion to allow Rodrigues to participate in the Indian Ocean Island Games as an autonomous island has been put forward by the Executive Council headed by the Chief Commissioner.

This is not a new motion, the Members at the other side of the House bears testimony to this. Hence, during the recent visit of the Hon. Pravind Jugnauth, Prime Minister in Rodrigues in the context of the 21<sup>st</sup> Anniversary of Rodrigues Day, this issue was brought up during the official working session between the Executive Council and the Prime Minister.

During his official speech on the 12<sup>th</sup> October 2023, the Prime Minister has stated clearly his stand with regard to our plea.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, you will concur that it is a sensitive issue which needs to be addressed diplomatically. However, I wish to reassure the House and the sports community that my Commission will continue to support our athletes whatever be the outcome of this long dialogue.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson, Sir.



**CASH PRIZE AWARDED TO ATHLETES – OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCES**

(No. B/138) **Mr J. P. Spéville (Fourth Island Region Member)** asked the Commissioner of Sports and Others whether, in regard to cash prize awarded to athletes by his Commission for outstanding performances, he will, for the benefit of the House, state and table the:

- (a) type of competition taken into account thereof;
- (b) eligibility criteria to benefit therefrom, and
- (c) name and number of athletes benefitting from same, if any, since March 2022 to date?

**Reply:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I wish to inform the House that the allocation of cash prizes has always been a practice of my Commission in view to reward athletes having made outstanding performances in International Competitions. This acts as a motivator to encourage athletes to endeavour for excellence in their respective disciplines.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, with respect to part (a) cash prizes are allocated to medallists, of the following International Competitions: -

- (i) regional level competitions (Indian Ocean Island Games);
- (ii) continental level competitions (African Championship, African Games), and
- (iii) World Level Competitions (World Games, Commonwealth Games and Francophonie Games).

Mr Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (b) of the question, the eligibility criteria for allocation of cash prize are as follows: -

- (i) The athletes should be a medal winner from a recognised competition.
- (ii) For major competitions such as Commonwealth Games, Francophonie Games, CJSOI Games and Indian Ocean Games, special participation cash prizes are also allocated to participants.
- (iii) Cash prizes are also allocated to respective coaches whose athletes have obtained medals.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, with respect to part (c) of the question, I wish to inform the House that since March 2022, my Commission has awarded cash prizes to 99 athletes for different sports competitions.

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I am tabling the list of athletes as per respective competitions for which cash prizes have been awarded since March 2022

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

**LOCAL MARET FOR EGGES**

**(No. B/139) Mrs R.M.F. Gaspard Pierre Louis, C.S.K. (Minority Leader)** asked the Commissioner for Agriculture and Others whether, in regard to the local market for eggs, he will, for the benefit of the House, state and table:

- (a) the list of local producers together with their respective capacity of production;
- (b) the monthly number of eggs imported from Mauritius, if any, together with a breakdown per individual/company, and
- (c) to inform the House about the policy of his Commission regarding same?

**Reply:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards part (a), according to latest data available more than 3,500 farmers are producing eggs on their farms of which more than  $\frac{2}{3}$  rearing less than 10 layers prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Currently a database on egg producers is not available. I wish to highlight that the poultry sector was under the purview of the Commission for Trade which was under the aegis of the then Commissioner for Women's Affairs before 2022. A consultant was even recruited to accompany from September 2018 to September 2019. Surprisingly, they did not deem it necessary to set up a database of producers nor to assess our level of self-sufficiency in eggs production.

With the current provision of farmers' card to all local producers, we expect to have a database of all local producers early 2024.

Based on available records, 185,220 hatching eggs have been imported in 2022 including 8,460 for layer production.

As for the details on monthly number of imported eggs by individual/company, it is not ethical to reveal individual data. However, I wish to inform that based on figures obtained from the Statistical Office, there are 7,136 cartons of eggs which have been imported for the year 2022, according to Cargo Manifest.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, during my previous tenure of office as Commissioner for Agriculture (2007 to 2011), I had prepared a Strategic Plan for the development of the agricultural sector in Rodrigues with a view to increase local production and cut on imports.

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The egg production sector suffered a lot with the COVID-19 pandemic when the cessation of flights to Rodrigues halted the import of layer chicks and hatching eggs. This not only open doors for import of eggs to meet local demands but also cause numerous local eggs producers to close their enterprises. After the pandemic, several small producers fail to restart their farms.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, since I took office, I have been encouraging all farmers to increase their production volumes; whether it be crops or livestock products. Rodrigues should increase its level of food self-sufficiency; we have no way out.

I am pleased to inform that, following negotiations with our partners in Mauritius, we have been able to:

- 1) allow Rodriguan farmers to benefit from all agricultural incentive schemes which were available to farmers in Mauritius only;
- 2) provide all local farmers to obtain its national farmer's card free of charge so that they can be recognised as a farmer and benefit from numerous facilities attached to it; including an insurance cover for their life and product losses consequent to natural calamities.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, my Commission is in the process of reviewing the whole livestock sector in Rodrigues. We expect to have a concise document on how to address the major weaknesses of the sector and to path the way for a more prosperous livestock sector

### **ONION PRODUCTION - RODRIGUES**

**(No. B/140) Mrs R.M.F. Gaspard Pierre Louis, C.S.K. (Minority Leader)** asked the Commissioner for Agriculture and Others whether, in regard to onion production in Rodrigues, he will state to the House:

- (a) the expected harvest for this year;
- (b) if the Rodrigues Regional Assembly is providing a guaranteed market for the produce, in the affirmative, to give details thereof, and
- (c) any other facilities provided to the planters?

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**Reply:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, the information is as follows: -

- (a) The cropping season 2023 for onion starts from the month of March to October 2023. This year, the area under cultivation was 19.0 hectares and the yield was 260 tonnes.
- (b) Mr Chairperson, Sir, further to the negotiation my Commission had with the Agricultural Marketing Board, same price was offered to onion growers both in Rodrigues and in the Island of Mauritius. The price per kilogram onion bulb was:
  - Bellarose and Local Toupie - Rs 55,600 per ton
  - Francia - Rs 39,200 per ton
- (c) The facilities provided to planters are:
  - free mechanization.
  - seed subsidy scheme: refund of 50 % on the cost of seeds. This year the scheme has been extended to planters who produce their own seeds.
  - seed production program for variety Bellarose at the Commission for Agriculture.
  - provision of bird nets for protection of seedlings and onion seed production plots from attacks by birds and poultry.
  - desilting of wells and dams to provide water for irrigation.
  - facilities/scheme for connection to CEB network to have electricity.

### **SILTATION OF THE LAGOON**

**(No. B/141) Mr N. Lisette (First Local Region Member for Baie aux Huîtres)** asked the Commissioner for Fisheries and Others whether, in regard to the siltation of the lagoon, he will state on the work undertaken by his Commission since February 2022 to date, specifying the scope thereof, the number and the site of navigational channels and/or boat passes that has been desilted?

**Reply:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, the siltation of the lagoons of Rodrigues is a long standing problem which is imputed to severe land erosion as a consequence of the topography of the island and overgrazing. However, we are witnessing, in addition to the siltation of the lagoons, the occurrence of beach accretion and beach erosion in certain regions around the Island.

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These phenomena are interlinked and they might contribute to the clogging of natural passes and navigational channels hence causing navigation of fishers' boats in and out the lagoons difficult and tedious.

In order to address this serious issue, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between the Mauritius Oceanography Institute (MOI) and the Rodrigues Regional Assembly previous government in 2016. A joint committee was set up and the two parties agreed for the setting up of a sub office of the MOI in Rodrigues. Unfortunately, nothing was done and I am tabling a copy of the MOU for the information of the House.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I must therefore say that my Commission is fully aware of the situation occurring in our lagoon and is taking this issue very seriously. However, desilting of lagoon without proper understanding of the issue may further aggravate the problem.

In this regard, my Commission requested the expert advice of Dr Olivier Pasnin for his expertise in Marine Conservation in the region. Dr Pasnin holds a PhD in Marine Conservation and over ten years of experience in the marine field. He has a good knowledge of the island as he was born and grew up in Rodrigues. He worked for the Mauritius Oceanography Institute (MOI) as Scientist and has assisted the Government of Mauritius on various research projects within the Exclusive Economic Zone of Mauritius. He also acted as a biodiversity expert under the UNDP project "Mainstreaming biodiversity into the management of the coastal zone in the Republic of Mauritius".

Mr Chairperson, Sir, Dr Pasnin was in Rodrigues in November 2022 where he carried out a desktop study, gathering information pertinent to sedimentation in the lagoon of Rodrigues. He analysed available technical and scientific reports followed by a series of meetings with relevant stakeholders namely the Chief Commissioner, the Deputy Chief Commissioner, representatives of the Commission for Fisheries, Shoals Rodrigues and the Fishermen Community, to gather as much knowledge as possible on the subject.

In January 2023, Dr. Pasnin submitted a report where a series of recommendations were proposed. Among those recommendations, Dr. Pasnin advised that it is not recommended for any dredging using heavy machinery until a proper understanding of the lagoon hydrodynamics, with a model depicting the current circulation is available. This cautious approach is essential to prevent unintended consequences and ensure the long-term health of the lagoon's ecosystem.

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However, Mr Chairperson, Sir, to alleviate the issue of boat passage within the northern and western lagoon, Dr. Pasnin recommended that it is feasible to manually dredge the existing channels. Manual dredging provides a more controlled and less invasive approach that can help facilitate boat passage in the short term without causing ecological harm.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, my Commission is currently evaluating the possibility of desilting the existing channels manually and we are committed to commencing this work at the earliest possible opportunity. We understand the importance of ensuring sustainability of the lagoon's ecosystem while addressing the immediate needs of the fishing community. We will also continue to seek expert advice and engage with relevant stakeholders to ensure that our actions are well-informed and in the best interest of both the environment and the people of Rodrigues.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to inform the House that during the recent visit of Honourable Sudheer Maudhoo, Minister of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping to Rodrigues, we have discussed lengthily about this issue.

I have been informed that the Director and a team of Scientists of the MOI will be in Rodrigues from 08 to 14 November 2023 to carry out an array of surveys such as current pattern and bathymetric mappings in order to have better understanding of the hydrodynamics of the lagoons of Rodrigues. MOI will advise my Commission on the way forward.

**EX MONT VENUS HOTEL**

**(No. B/142) Dr H. Agathe (First Local Region Member for Grande Montagne)** asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the ex-Mont Venus Hotel, he will state to the House, the planned future uses of the site and buildings and if cost and benefit analyses have been undertaken for alternative uses with a view to ensure the efficient use of public money?

**Reply:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I wish to inform the House that last year when my colleagues of the Executive Council and myself visited the ex-Mont Venue Hotel, we were horrified to see how the complex have been left in an abandoned state. All the fittings and openings have been looked and carried away and that people are using the complex to keep animals. The buildings were completely degraded and devalued warranting renovation.

In view of these circumstances and considering the acute shortage of office space at the level of most Commissions; to such an extent that we are renting private buildings at high cost to house offices of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, as per my reply to Question B/75 of

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September 2022 the Executive Council decided not to proceed with the sale of the building. The premises will be renovated for use as per requirement of the different Commissions.

To date the Rodrigues Public Utilities Company (RPUC) has already renovated one of the building which is being used by its technical unit and as a store. Other blocks of the hotel have been allocated for rehabilitation and conversion as: -

- REDCO Headquarters.
- Offices for the Commission for Woman's Affairs, Child Development, Family Welfare, Consumer Protection and Price Fixing.

It is also proposed to build the new House of Assembly on the site within the premises north to the hotel complex. The global consultant is working on the design.

As regards to the question of efficient use of public money, it is to be noted that in his report for year 2016/2017, the Director of Audit made the following adverse comments on the initial acquisition of the ex-Mont Venus Hotel namely: -

- no feasibility study was carried out at the outset to determine the extent to which the buildings were suitable and satisfied the required criteria for the setting up of a "Technopole", and
- Had a proper feasibility study been conducted, this might have influenced the Rodrigues Regional Assembly decision whether to acquire the complex or not.

### **SECTIONS 11A, 12, & 13 – EDUCATION ACT – ACT NO. 12 OF 2023**

**(No. B/143) Mrs R.M.F. Gaspard Pierre Louis, C.S.K. (Minority Leader)** asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to Sections 11A, 12, and 13 of the Education Act amended by way of Act No 12 of 2023, he will obtain information, as to where matter stands regarding the implementation of same in Rodrigues, giving details on the criteria for selection, the scheme of duties and the conditions attached to the recruitment among others, if any?

**Reply:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed by the Management of Rodrigues Educational Development Company (REDCO) Ltd that the Private Secondary Education Authority (PSEA) as per Circular No 41 of 2023 dated 14 September 2023 has informed that Sections 11 A, 12 and 13 of the Education Act which have been amended by way of Act No 12 of 2023 are related to the Registration of Managers for Private Aided Secondary Schools

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and that it has been decided that henceforth, a Manager shall not be registered for more than one school.

As the House is aware, there are eight secondary schools in Rodrigues out of which seven are managed by the Rodrigues Educational Development Company (REDCO) Limited which operates under the aegis of the Commission for Education and one namely Rodrigues College is managed by the Catholic and Anglican Church. However, all schools are exercisable by the PSEA.

As regards the implementation of the new amendments to the Education Act, I am informed that only REDCO schools are concerned by these amendments since there is one registered Manager for all the seven REDCO schools whereas Rodrigues College requires simply one Manager and the latter is already in post.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am further informed of the following with respect to the status regarding the implementation of the amendments to Rodrigues, details on the criteria for selection, the scheme of duties and the conditions attached to the recruitment:

The matter was discussed during the Special Board Meeting of REDCO Ltd held on 06 October 2023 and the Board of Directors has approved that six additional Managers be recruited on a part time basis to comply with directives issued as per the mentioned circular from the Private Secondary Education Authority.

The criteria for selection are being finalised by the Human Resource (HR) Committee of the Company.

The scheme of duties and responsibilities of Managers will be as per guidelines issued by the PSEA on 28 December 2021 whereby a Manager of a Private Secondary School shall be responsible for the administration of the school, provision of educational facilities needed for the proper running of the school, the maintenance and upkeep of the school infrastructure including property and the supervision of the staff and pupils.

The Manager shall also be responsible for the:

- i) the conduct of correspondence with the authority, and
- ii) all the liabilities incurred by the school before his registration with regard to the teaching and non- teaching staff employed by the school and any grant paid to the school.



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The salary, terms and conditions of employment of part time Managers are being finalised by the Human Resource (HR) Committee of the Company.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, it is expected that the existing Manager and the six new ones to be recruited by REDCO Ltd will submit an application to the PSEA for their Registration as Manager by 30 November 2023.

**PLACEMENT PROGRAMME – CHILD DAY CAREGIVERS IN MAURITIUS**

**(No. B/144) Mr L. D. Baptiste (Second Local Region Member for Grande Montagne)** asked the Commissioner for Child Development and Others whether, in regard to the placement programme for Child Day Caregivers in Mauritius, she will obtain information and state to the House as to where matters stand with regard to Rodrigues as at date?

**Reply:** Mr the Chairperson, Sir, in view of ensuring quality Early Childhood Education and Care in Rodrigues, my Commission has obtained the approval of the Executive Council for the organisation of a training programme in Early Childhood Care, Development, Protection and Education and a placement programme in the “Centres D’Eveil” of the *Fondation pour l’Enfance Terre de Paix* in Mauritius for Child Day Care Givers.

I wish to inform the House that the training programme which was delivered for 12 Child Day Care Givers and two staff of the Foyer Marie Madeleine de La Croix by the *Fondation pour L’Enfance Terre de Paix* started on 14 May 2023 and was delivered over a period of five days per month, spread over four months and was completed on 08 September 2023. The certificate award ceremony was held on 08 September 2023. In order to ensure effectiveness of the placement programme, the Child Day Care Givers undertake their placement in the Centres D’Eveil after they have completed their training since the objective of the placement programme is to deepen the knowledge they acquired during the training programme by promoting self-reflection. That is why some have been rescheduled for periods January 2024 and February 2024.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I wish to inform the House that my Commission is working towards a new Policy for Early Childhood Development in Rodrigues. I wish also to reassure the House, that my Commission will continue to extend the necessary supports to Child Day Care Centres in Rodrigues in view of their professionalization and to facilitate their registration.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

**CONVERSION – AGRICULTURAL PERMITS INTO LEASES**

**(No. B/145) Dr H. Agathe (First Local Region Member for Grande Montagne)** asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the conversion of Agricultural Permits into leases, he will state to the House on the:

- (a) policy and procedures put in place thereof, and
- (b) number of leases and the extent of land awarded since February 2022 as at date?

**Reply:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards part (a) of the question, I am informed that the Cadastral Department conforms to guidelines, including Policies and Procedures which date back to Year 2011 for the issue of Agricultural lease. It is the policy of the government to grant agricultural leases to individuals, companies or cooperative societies. The agricultural leases may be for mixed farming, foodcrop/cane planting, flowers and fruit trees.

In accordance with the State Land Act and the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act, the approval of the Chief Commissioner is sought before an agricultural lease is drawn up between the Regional Government as the lessor and the beneficiary as the lessee.

The procedures are as follows:

- i) Any person, company or society that is willing to undertake agricultural/farming projects may apply for state land at the Commission for Agriculture.
- ii) The applicant would be granted in the first instance an Agricultural Permit by the Commission for Agriculture which authorises the applicant to use land for a period of one year for agriculture/farming purposes.
- iii) As soon as the Commission for Agriculture determines the applicant is genuine and has started operations or at the end of the period of one year, the Commission makes a recommendation to the Commission for State Land for granting of Agriculture Lease to the applicant.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I am further informed that according to records from the Cadastral Department, no agricultural lease has been awarded for the last seven years, that is, since year 2016.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, as the House is aware as mentioned in my reply to Question B/101 of the RRA Sitting of 22 August 2023, the Executive Council at its meeting held on 11 August 2023 has approved the setting up of a Joint Working Group for the allocation of agricultural permit/lease. The aim thereof is to ensure synergy and to harmonise the work between

concerned Commissions for a more sustainable development of land within an updated and relevant legal framework.

The first meeting which was held on Wednesday 30 August 2023 under my chairmanship was very fruitful. It has been observed that for the previous years, the Commission for Agriculture has been working in isolation for the grant of Agricultural Permits and that the mapping of the Cadastral Department was not being updated with boundaries of the agricultural permits granted. This has resulted into conflicts and land disputes between parties involved as agricultural permits are being allocated on state land earmarked for residential purposes by the Cadastral Office.

Subsequently, it has been decided that each Commission should be responsible to provide committed data as regards land earmarked under their respective Commissions to the newly Centre for Integrated and Sustainable Development at Ex-John Resto at Bois d'Olive to be input on the Geographical Integrated System (GIS). This system is a valuable tool for managing resources and will help to empower the agricultural sector to take informed decisions, reduce waste, increase productivity and contribute to more sustainable and efficient farming practices.

In addition, Mr Chairperson, Sir, the updated Rodrigues Land Use Plan is intended to provide more specific guidance on how land should be used to achieve the goals set out in the Rodrigues Local Plan. It also provides a guidance to public authorities and bodies on how to approach policies on land use among others calibrated to respond to the challenges of climate change. The aim of the land use policies is to guide the development of the island in a sustainable manner, balancing economic growth with the protection of its natural environment and unique character. These policies identify and prioritize the use of land for different purposes, such as residential, commercial, industrial, and agricultural uses. They also set out the criteria for the allocation of land uses and the conditions that must be met for development to take place. The policies aim to optimize land use, while protecting soil health and reducing the negative impacts of farming on the environment.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to inform the House that the Executive Council at its meeting held on 20 October 2023 has approved the grant of agricultural leases to six applicants who are genuine farmers/planters in view to encourage them to increase production in line with my Regional Government policy to improve food security. These cases will be referred to the Cadastral Department for drawing of Agricultural Land lease.

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The House will also note that an updated guideline for the issue of Agricultural Site Lease is being finalised.

**DIGGING OF WELLS USING MACHINES – PRIVATE & PUBLIC/RIVERS,  
STREAMS & UPHILL**

**(No. B/146) Dr H. Agathe (First Local Region Member for Grande Montagne)**  
Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the digging of wells using machines by private and public entities in rivers and streams, uphill, he will state to the House on the policy and measures of control in force thereof?

**Reply:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, with your permission, I will reply to this PQ since it relates to water management, which falls under my responsibility.

The topography of Rodrigues favours rapid transportation of storm water to the lagoon, with all the environmental nuisances arising from soil erosion, pollution of the sea, causing damages to the marine ecosystem. But worse of all, the storm water is wasted and not retained onland.

In the 1960's, all the rivers in Rodrigues had running water and the agriculture department built small dams to impound the water for all domestic, agricultural or farming activities. Unfortunately, with climate change and the bad practice of cutting trees for firewood in the past, all the rivers have dried up and most of the 'barrages' are now out of use or badly damaged.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, there have been several recommendations to consider the recharge of the water table and no previous government has devoted significant attention to these recommendations. With the operationalisation of the RPUC, things have changed. Engineering thinking and design govern all improvement measures in the water sector. One of the urgent measures put forward was the setting up of many retention basins at selected locations to collect storm water, allow the water to percolate to lower levels and eventually to recharge the water table within the aquifers identified by consultants in previous reports. What is not known is the volume of water in these aquifers which can be exploited safely in an engineering manner. A request has been made for a study by BRGM with the financing of the AFD accordingly.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner's Office in collaboration with my Commission and the RPUC undertook major excavation works to build 20 such retention basins, mainly in the western region which has a more flattened topography. The total volume of these basins is

20,000 m<sup>3</sup> but the volume of water to be retained and percolated downwards is estimated to be more than 50,000 m<sup>3</sup>.

The RPUC has awarded a contract to desilt some 7,000 m<sup>3</sup> of silt from Anse Raffin dam. This project is in line with the same philosophy of retaining a maximum of rainwater onland.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, it is the policy of this Regional Government to continue with the setting up of retention basins and '*retenues collinaire*' for agricultural purposes. The effects of this initiative will be felt during the next spells of heavy rainfall or even cyclones. Already, the persons having agricultural plots near these retention basins are benefitting from the presence of water in these basins after rainfall.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Environment Unit, the Hydrological Unit and the RPUC are all involved in the project for technical advice and monitoring purposes. It is a prerequisite that the Environment Unit gives clearance for any excavation works, including guidelines to be followed to minimise the environmental consequences.

Before embarking on any excavation works in rivers and uphill, site visits are conducted by officers of the Hydrological Unit of my commission, the RPUC and Commission for Environment. Continuous monitoring is done to ensure that the works are performed properly to minimise the impact on the environment.

As regards digging of wells by private individuals, there are enforcement officers at the Commission for Environment as well as the Police de l'Environnement who enforce environmental laws and regulations in cases where no authorization was sought and obtained or when precautionary measures and guidelines have not been followed to minimise the effects on the environment. Thank you, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

#### **SUBSTANTIAL INCREASE – STRAY DOGS**

**(No. B/147) Mr J. R. Ramdally (First Local Region Member for Saint Gabriel)** asked the Commissioner for Agriculture and Others whether, in regard to the substantial increase in stray dogs, he will inform the House about the actions taken by his Commission to remedy the situation?

**Reply:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, the estimated dog population in Rodrigues is about 15,000 which means on average there is one dog per household. It is increasingly important for any country to deal with stray dogs in a humane manner. The World Health Organisation (WHO),

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the Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and the Council of Europe, have recognised the need for countries to control dog populations while avoiding the unnecessary suffering of dogs. Guideline with international standards on stray dogs has been adopted in May 2009 by OIE.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, when I took office in March 2022, I took cognizance of the control of stray dogs files and I have noted that nothing has been done to control straying dogs, despite that there was a working agreement with MSAW and even that there was significant amount of funds earmarked in the three last budgets but have not used for the purpose of control of stray dogs in Rodrigues.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I will give details of funds earmarked in the last three years:

<b>Financial Year</b>	<b>Funds Earmarked (Rs)</b>	<b>Amount Spent (Rs)</b>	<b>Balance left (Rs)</b>
2019/2020	2 million	44,439.85	1,955,560.15
2020/2021	500,000	61,452.54	438,547.46
2021/2022	1 million	125,000	875,000

Surprisingly, Mr Chairperson, Sir, there was an old van lying dormant in the yard of the Commission of Agriculture at Citronelle which was meant for catching of dogs but has never been used. The van could not obtain Road Worthiness Certificate since it was aged more than seven years allowed in the former Regulations which was introduced to impose a ban on import of vehicles older than seven years in Rodrigues. Consequently, the van was shipped back to Mauritius. Mr Chairperson, Sir, in my opinion, if the old van was used for dog catching, it would have broken down.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, to me, the problem of stray dogs is a very serious issue, not only because it is a tourist issue but principally because of recurrent losses being faced by breeders because of stray dogs. Being faced to the pain expressed by farmers due to animal losses, I met the Hon. Manesh Gobin, former Minister for Agro Industry and Food Security and the Director MSAW with a view to initiate necessary action for the control of stray dogs in Rodrigues.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, actions initiated by my Commission for the control of stray dogs in Rodrigues so far are: -

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- (i) A Memorandum of Understanding signed between the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and MSAW signed in December 2022 in view of the setting up of a structure for the implementation of the National Sustainable Project of Dog Population Control in Rodrigues;
- (ii) The setting up of an Animal Welfare Dog Unit at Citronelle;
- (iii) An agreement with Rodclean Ltd. for dog catching;
- (iv) New dog shelter and grooming at Solitude to cater for a maximum of 50 dogs at a time;
- (v) Registration and sterilisation of dogs;
- (vi) A two weeks' training for three Rodclean staff in dog catching at the seat of MSAW in Mauritius, and
- (vii) Procurement of drugs and dogs' accessories.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, it is planned to start dog catching in sensitive areas such as, hospitals, port and airport areas, markets in November 2023.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, there is low response from the public despite communiqué/awareness on the local radio to invite people for sterilisation of their dogs which have already started by my Commission. Mass awareness campaigns followed by sterilisation exercises are being planned during the upcoming official visit of the MSAW delegation in Rodrigues planned for early November 2023.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, the control of stray dogs in Rodrigues will be enforced as per recommendations made in the Animal Welfare Act and under the guidance of MSAW. The Ministry for Agro Industry and Food Security is encouraging “Sustainable Stray Dogs Control Options” and the aforesaid Ministry is strongly recommending “catch neuter, release or rehome”.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, a sum of Rs 5 million has been earmarked in the National Budget and will be provided under the NECCF for the control of stray dogs in Rodrigues. The implementation plan will be finalised during the upcoming mission of MSAW in Rodrigues.

**PROVISION OF WATER TANKS – RAIN WATER HARVESTING SCHEME**

**(No. B/148) Ms K. Roussety (Second Local Region Member for Baie aux Huîtres)** asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the provision of water tanks under the Rain Water Harvesting Scheme, he will state to the House on the:

- (a) criteria for selection and the modalities set up to obtain same;
- (b) number of applications received;
- (c) number of successful beneficiaries so far, and
- (d) conditions attached thereto?

**Reply:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (a), the criteria to be eligible for the rainwater harvesting scheme is as follows: -

- (i) Applicant should be a resident of Rodrigues;
- (ii) Monthly household income not exceeding Rs 60 000;
- (iii) Holder of a residential state land lease or title deed;
- (iv) Residential building completed;
- (v) Not beneficiary of previous Rainwater Harvesting Scheme;
- (vi) Has no water tank or available water tanks should not exceed a capacity of 6 m<sup>3</sup>.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, the applicant had to submit all the required documents proving their compliance with the abovementioned criteria along with their original signed application form. The applicant had to sign the form as a formal declaration that the information and documents provided are accurate and that they satisfy the eligibility criteria for the Rainwater Harvesting Scheme.

The required documents are as follows and may vary depending on the marital status of the applicant:

- a) Proof of address;
- b) Proof of identity for applicant and spouse if married;
- c) Proof of household income for applicant and spouse if married;
- d) Marriage certificate if married; and
- e) State land lease.

The applicant also had to select one of the four water tank options while applying for the scheme. Most have opted for a prefabricated water tank.



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Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards the modalities put in place, a screening committee chaired by the Administrative Officer of the Commission for Water Resources was set up to assess the applications received against the set criteria.

The screening exercise was carried out to verify the documents submitted by the applicants and determine their eligibility as per the set criteria.

Applications having missing documents considered as non-material omissions were not discarded but the applicants were contacted and given a deadline to submit the documents after which the applications were reassessed.

After screening, the responsive applications were submitted to the RPUC for on-site assessment by Project Supervisors to determine the applicant's eligibility to the scheme pertaining to the water storage capacity of the applicant (not exceeding 6 m<sup>3</sup>) and the presence of an already constructed dwelling on site.

After this second assessment the RPUC submits a report of findings and recommendations to my Commission. This shortlist is then referred to the Executive Council for approval. The approval of the Executive Council is then conveyed to the RPUC to award the scheme to successful applicants.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (b), the scheme was launched on 26 October 2022 and the closing date was extended to 02 December 2022. By the closing date, my Commission had received 1,603 applications, which were collected at Malabar and La Ferme Water Resources Units and the Head Office of my Commission.

Although the call for application was broadcast several times on the local radio and on social media, many people have complained that they were not aware. We will therefore re-advertise the scheme again so that they have a chance to apply. Priority will be given to lowest income households having little storage capacity.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (c) a first batch of 68 beneficiaries were awarded their water tanks on 08 September 2023. Other batches will follow as the on-site assessments continue by the three project supervisors recruited by the RPUC. A second batch of 30 beneficiaries will be awarded the scheme shortly. Water tanks have already been delivered to 52 beneficiaries who have already constructed a base to place the tanks. It is expected that 400 water tanks will be provided during this financial year. The scheme will be repeated in subsequent financial years since it is the policy of the Regional Government to encourage rainwater harvesting at household level.

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Mr Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (d), the conditions attached thereto are spelt out in the agreement signed between the RPUC and the beneficiary. They are as follows:

- (1) The RRA/RPUC shall provide a prefabricated water storage tank of 5.15 m<sup>3</sup> minimum capacity to the beneficiary bearing an identification number;
- (2) The RRA/RPUC shall assist the beneficiary for the transportation of the water storage tank from Port Mathurin to his/her place of residence.

The beneficiary on the other hand agrees that: -

- (1) The beneficiary shall construct a platform of required dimension (2.2 m x 2.2 m) to fix the water storage tank thereon. beneficiaries who have levelled a proper space to place the water tank are not accepted since they may not have the means to build a concrete base.
- (2) The water storage tank will be handed over to the beneficiary only after the completion of the construction of the platform or proper land leveling done.
- (3) The beneficiary shall connect the water storage tank with rain water harvesting devices like gutters at his/her own costs and always fix the ballcock to any water supply pipe connected to RRA/RPUC water network.
- (4) The beneficiary undertakes not to dispose of the water storage tank through any means like sales, rent or otherwise. In case of future inspection by RRA/RPUC employees and the water tank is not found on beneficiary site, you will be held liable to refund to RRA the sum of Rs 27,990, being cost of the water tank.
- (5) The storage water tank shall not be placed on the roof of his/her building as it is meant to harvest rainwater from the roof.

### **CAMP DU ROI STADIUM PHASE 2**

(No. B/149) Mr J. P. Spéville (Fourth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner of Sports and Others whether, in regard, to the upgrading of Camp du Roi Stadium Phase II, he will state and table where matters stand as at date, giving details on:

- (a) the total cost of the project;
- (b) when the contract was awarded;
- (c) the expected completion date, and
- (d) the scope of work?

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**Reply:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I wish to inform the house that the upgrading of Camp du Roi Stadium phase (II) is an ongoing project which I inherited from the former government. The main objectives of the project include inter alia: -

- (i) increase participation of our citizens in football, athletics and other related sports, and
- (ii) decentralize the organization of football activities around the island.

Being given that the stadium is a major sport infrastructure for the island, my office is committed to complete the project as this will provide for the organization of Intercollege Competitions and other major local and International Competitions.

As regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that the total cost of the project amounts to Rs 38,010,720 exclusive of VAT.

As regards to part (b) of the question, Mr Chairperson, Sir, the contract was awarded on the 20 October 2021.

As regards to part (c), the project was expected to be completed by 01 August 2022.

As regards to part (d), Mr Chairperson, Sir, the scope of work of the project is as follows: -

- Construction of boundary wall 170 m long x 4 m high.
- Covering of existing stand with an approximate gross floor area of 1,156 square metre.
- Construction of new covered entrances.
- Services installation.
- Bollards and paving blocks at entrances.
- External services and drainage work.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

**DIFFICULTIES MET BY YOUTH & SPORTS COMMUNITY – USE OF LE CHOU  
COLLEGE PLAYGROUND**

(No. B/150) Ms M. N. Raffaut (Second Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner of Sports and Others whether he is aware of the difficulties being met by the youth and sports community for the use of Le Chou College playground and, if yes, what measures his Commission is envisaging to remedy the situation?

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**Reply:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, let me first inform the House that the Le Chou College playground is under the purview of the Commission for Education. It was taken over by that Commission on 17 November 2022 in the presence of the Manager of REDCO Ltd.

The House may wish to note that my Commission received representations from villagers of Le Chou and the surroundings regarding the utilisation of the playground in question. In this respect, my Commission approached the management of the Le Chou College so as to request them to put the playground at the disposal of the community to allow them to carry out youth and sports activities.

I am informed that the management of the college attended to the request and the public has access thereto since August 2023 after school hours. However, they are not benefitting from the lighting system as same is integrated within the internal electrical system of the college.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, my Commission intends to meet the management of REDCO Ltd at soonest so as to work out an arrangement similar to that made regarding the use of the college gymnasium. We shall envisage the possibility of installing a separate electrical meter which would fall under the responsibility of my Commission and would thus allow athletes and the community at large to organise night trainings and competitions.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, please note that it is the policy of the Executive Council to put at the disposal of the community after school hours all sports infrastructure found in public schools, including use of the lighting system as most training is carried out in the evening.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

**PREVALENCE – TEENAGE PREGNANCY**

**(No. B/151) Ms M. N. Raffaut (Second Island Region Member)** asked the Commissioner for Child Development and Others whether, in regard to the prevalence of teenage pregnancy, she will: -

- (a) state and table on the statistics per age group for the past three years, and
- (b) provide the action taken since she is in office and the policy of her Commission regarding same?

**Reply:** Mr the Chairperson, Sir, statistics on teenage pregnancy per age group, for the last three years, as submitted by the Statistical Unit of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly are as follows:

**/UNREVISED DRAFT/**

<b>Age group (Years)</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023 (January to 23 October)</b>
Less than 14	0	0	3	0
14 – 15	8	6	7	6
16 – 17	49	41	25	11
18 – 19	82	80	80	54
Live birth among mothers ages <20 years	139	127	115	71

I am tabling the requested statistics.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, a one-day seminar for young girls and women with resource persons from CRAC Anti-Drug, the Commission for Family Welfare and Others and Commission for Health was organised as follows:

<b>S.N.</b>	<b>DATE/TIME</b>	<b>REGION</b>	<b>VENUE</b>
1.	Tuesday 2 <sup>nd</sup> May 2023	1 & 2	Petite Butte Community centre
2.	Tuesday 16 May 2023	3 & 6	Songes community centre
3.	Friday 26 <sup>th</sup> May 2023	4 & 5	Grand Baie community centre

The one-day seminar for young girls/women received positive response and active participation of the attendees. The participants were out of school, and were mostly unemployed and showed great interest in looking for information concerning sexual reproductive health issues.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, regarding the policy of my Commission to fight against the Prevalence of teenage pregnancy, studies have proved that Gender Based Violence inside relationships affects the reproductive and sexual health of young men and women, therefore an effective policy for the fight against Gender Based Violence can bring positive outcomes in the fight against teenage pregnancy. By empowering young girls and boys, this can reduce their susceptibility to unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases.

## **/UNREVISED DRAFT/**

It is in this direction, that my Commission with the expertise of Gender Links, Mauritius has worked out a specific Leadership training programme for girls with the participation of boys covering topics such as Gender Based Violence, Teenage Pregnancy/Access to contraception, Menstrual Health, Abortion STIs, Safe Sex, Making the voice of youth to be heard, Communication with parents. A total of 60 young girls and boys have already benefited from the programme on 16 June 2023. Gender Links has undertaken a follow up sessions with the beneficiaries during its last mission to Rodrigues, in September 2023.

To ensure the sustainability of the Leadership training programme for girls and to ensure that a maximum number of youth benefit from same, my Commission has already planned a Training of Trainers course during the month of November 2023.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, my Commission is also enhancing its parental empowerment programmes to empower parents/caregivers to provide a safe and protective environment for girls and boys to thrive. Parental empowerment programmes have been held at village level on various topics such as:

- Communication and cooperation in the family;
- Misuse of technology;
- Gender base violence, and
- The responsibilities of the parents and children.

These parental empowerment programmes have already been held in the village of Patate Théophile (15 participants), Roseaux (20 participants), Camp Pintade (20 participants), Crève Coeur (13 participants) and Montagne Cabris Corail (20 participants) and will be extended to some more villages by December this year.

Mr the Chairperson, Sir, sexual education at an early age has become the norm. It has been proved that in countries, where sex education is compulsory in schools and starts at early age, these countries have the lowest teenage pregnancy rate and the number of teenage girls having sex later and using contraception has risen dramatically.

This is why, Mr Chairperson, Sir, my Commission has put the necessary efforts to extend its ‘Comprehensive Sexuality Education programme’ to all the pre-primary schools this year. Why starting with the pre-schools? Simply because at older age children have already been bombarded with stereotypes of acceptable gender behaviours and unmonitored internet

exposure. Feelings of embarrassment, shame, confusion and a sense of taboo are already ingrained.

Mr the Chairperson, Sir, many of such initiatives aiming at the prevention of teenage pregnancy are being made possible thanks to the financial support of the UNFPA which is partnering since some years now with the Rodrigues Regional Assembly to facilitate access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights among others and I seize this occasion to say a special thanks to the UNFPA.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, my Commission has also organised a one-and-a-half-day workshop on 26 and 27 September 2023 at the Centre for Sustainable and Integrated Development (Ex-Vatel) to work towards a coasted action plan to address and combat social ills in Rodrigues. This workshop has involved the participation of various stakeholders and has enabled the collection of valuable information through brainstorming sessions. The stakeholders present have also made interesting recommendations regarding actions that will help to address and combat the different social ills affecting our youths and families in Rodrigues (including teenage pregnancy). The coasted action plan is being finalised and will be completed by the end of this month.

Furthermore, Mr Chairperson, Sir, last year, the UNFPA, on behalf of the Commission for Child Development and Others bided in a call for proposal at the British High Commission for a project 'Develop measures to address, combat and prevent sexual and gender based violence, child abuse and HIV in Rodrigues'.

I am pleased to inform to the House that the project has been approved for funding for an amount of Rs 843,000.

This project looks into developing and installing a comprehensive and secure programme database system, with a corresponding dashboard consistent with Gender Based Violence Information Management System (GBV IMS) indicators and reporting requirements as a basis to develop further measures to address Gender Based Violence (GBV) and Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) needs in the country. The end result of this project will be a better dissemination of services, including improved knowledge and awareness of GBV and SRHR issues in Rodrigues and improved support to GBV survivors.

I wish to reassure the House that this government is fully conscious about the Prevalence of teenage pregnancy in Rodrigues and will not lessen its concerted continuous actions and efforts in the fight against this social scourge. We remain positive that actions taken

today such as sex education at an early age and the empowerment of young girls, be it economically or to develop autonomy in relation to their sexuality, coupled with enhanced education and sensitisation programmes will show positive outcomes on the prevention of teenage pregnancy in the quite short/medium terms.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

**FUNDS CONTRACTED – MAURITIUS INVESTMENT CORPORATION LTD  
(MIC) – RODRIGUES PUBLIC UTILITIES CORPORATION (RPUC)**

**(No. B/152) Mr N. Lisette (First Local Region Member for Baie aux Huîtres)** asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the funds which have been contracted/to be contracted from the Mauritius Investment Corporation Ltd (MIC) by the Rodrigues Public Utilities Corporation (RPUC), he will state to the House where matter stands, giving details as to any conditions attached, if any?

**Reply:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, at its meeting held on 20 August 2021, Cabinet agreed that the Rodrigues Public Utilities Corporation (RPUC) Ltd set up as a special purpose vehicle negotiates with the Mauritius Investment Corporation (MIC) for an investment of Rs 1 billion in the water sector of Rodrigues.

The MIC required that the RPUC submits a comprehensive Business Plan on the basis of which investment will be made in terms of redeemable bonds. The RPUC proceeded with a request for proposal and awarded a contract to Ernst and Young Ltd to prepare the business plan for a first draw of Rs 540 m. to finance projects to increase water production in Rodrigues.

The Business Plan has already been submitted to the MIC. The Subscription Agreement has also been prepared. As per requirement of the MIC, the terms and conditions in the proposed Subscription Agreement cannot be disclosed prior to signature.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, Cabinet has agreed that the MIC enters into a Subscription Agreement with the RPUC. Cabinet approval has to be sought and obtained once the financing and operating modalities have been finalised between the RPUC and the MIC and before the agreement is signed.

There are some issues that have to be agreed upon, particularly with respect to the setting up, composition and chairmanship of a Project Steering Committee for oversight purposes. Once an agreement is reached, the approval of Cabinet will be sought to proceed with the signature of the Subscription Agreement and disbursement of funds will follow.



## **/UNREVISED DRAFT/**

In the meantime, Mr Chairperson, Sir, my Commission and the RPUC have not been sleeping on our laurels and just waiting. We have initiated actions for implementation of projects contained in the Business Plan.

Tenders for 3 x 350 m<sup>3</sup> per day containerised desalination plants as well as for construction of building of 1045 m<sup>2</sup> for 3 1000m<sup>3</sup>/day ROT units at Pointe Cotton plus 2x1000 m<sup>3</sup> concrete circular reservoir are ready for award upon receipt of funds from the MIC. A contract has been awarded by my commission for the construction of a 1000 m<sup>3</sup> reservoir at Mt Piquant. LuxConsult (Mtius) Ltd is finalising bidding documents for the 3x1000 m<sup>3</sup>/day ROT unit and the preliminary report on the primary pipe network has also been prepared. Mekorot has also been contacted to prepare a master plan for the water sector.

### **SOCIAL AID & UNEMPLOYMENT HARDSHIP RELIEF**

**(No. B/153) Mr L. D. Baptiste (Second Local Region Member for Grande Montagne)** asked the Commissioner Social Security and Others whether, in regard to Social Aid and Unemployment Hardship Relief, he will, for the benefit of the House state and table the number of beneficiaries per category: -

- (a) for the month of September 2019 as at date respectively, and
- (b) whose allowances have been disallowed/discontinued, and reduced, respectively, from period July 2022 to date, and stating the reasons thereof?

**Reply:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, Social Aid is provided in cash, to some categories of persons who are temporarily unable of earning adequately their livelihood and have insufficient means to provide for themselves and their dependents. It thus caters for the following: -

- Physical or mental disability
- Abandonment by spouse
- Imprisonment of husband/partner
- Beneficiaries of Basic Retirement Pension living alone and paying rent
- Grant for purchase of medicine to centenarians
- Families with twins, triplets – subject to family income not exceeding ceiling as provided for in the existing legislation
- Abandoned children
- Grant to buy assistive devices such as Spectacles, Wheelchairs and Hearing aids

**/UNREVISED DRAFT/**

Unemployment Hardship Relief is another form of Social Assistance ruled by the Unemployment Hardship Act of 1983. It caters for every person under the age of 60, who is unemployed, has a wife or a child or who is a disabled person, and whose resources are insufficient to meet his requirements.

Table 1 showing the number of beneficiaries per category, is annexed.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards to part (b) Social aid, being a temporary assistance and is subject to revision, updates and cessation; as the circumstances of beneficiaries are dynamic and are subject to evolve.

Each case may be reduced, disallowed or discontinued for individual particular reasons, such as reconciliation of a separated couple, children having reached age limits, disqualification by a medical board, employment and many others.

Table 2 covers cases disallowed discontinued from period July 2022 to date, is annexed.

Table 3 below shows the number of cases that have had their amount of Social Aid been reduced from period July 2022 to date:

<b>No of cases</b>	<b>Reason for decrease in amount paid</b>
490	Increase in subsistence allowance provided by the Ministry of Social Integration (NEF)

**CONSTRUCTION – STADIUM/ROCHE BON DIEU**

(No. B/154) Mr J. P. Spéville (Fourth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner of Sports and Others whether, in regard to the construction of the stadium at Roche Bon Dieu, he will state and table on where matters stand as at date giving details on:

- (a) the total cost of the project;
- (b) when the contract was awarded;
- (c) the expected completion date, and
- (d) the scope of work thereof?

**/UNREVISED DRAFT/**

**Reply:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, the project of constructing a mini stadium at Roche Bon Dieu was first brought on the table in 2014 by the former government, with a view to: -

- (i) encourage a greater number of people in Rodrigues to practice physical activities for leisure, health and competitions;
- (ii) increase access to sports infrastructure and provide necessary assistance for the organisation of sports activities for all, and
- (iii) create opportunities to increase the number of sportsmen/women participating in local competitions and enable them to reach National Selection for international sports competitions.

As the House is aware, I inherited this project with all its nook and cranny.

I am informed that a first contract was awarded on 05 July 2017 for an amount of Rs 44,289,342 (VAT incl.). Works were scheduled to start on 30 August 2017 and completed on 25 February 2018. However, on 22 June 2018, the contractor issued a Notice of Termination of Contract with immediate effect, on the ground of failure to grant permission to proceed with the whole works.

Consequently, bid was relaunched and a new contract was thus awarded on 09 June 2021.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards to part (a) of the question, the total cost of the project amounts to Rs 66 m. (VAT excl.).

As regards to part (b), Mr Chairperson, Sir, the actual contract was awarded on the 19 June 2021.

As regards to part (c), the expected completion date was the 22 August 2023.

Regarding part (d) of the question, Mr Chairperson, Sir, the scope of works is as follows: -

- Construction of boundary wall 3.0 m high x 580 m;
- Construction of new stand with an approximate gross floor area of 1,156 sqm;
- Construction of football pitch;
- Paving blocks at entrances, and
- External services and draining works

Thank you Mr Chairperson, Sir,

**CONSTRUCTION – ACCESS ROAD/PAVE LA BONTE**

**(No. B/155) Ms K. Roussety (Second Local Region Member for Baie aux Huîtres)** asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the construction of the access road at Pavé La Bonté, he will, for the benefit of the House state whether any contract/works order has been allocated since the start of the financial year 2023/2024 and, if yes, to state the:

- (a) scope of work;
- (b) value of the contract to be performed;
- (c) contract date, stating the start and completion date, and
- (d) item vote from which the works are to be paid?

**Reply:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to inform the House that Works Order has been issued for the project in this Financial Year with respect the construction of access road at Pavé La Bonté.

**Reply:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to inform the House that Works Order has been issued for the project in this Financial Year with respect the construction of access road at Pavé La Bonté.

With respect to part (a) of the question, the works order consist of 370 metre of concrete road including lay-bys and turning bay as follows:

- (i) Excavation works;
- (ii) Placing and striking of Formwork;
- (iii) Reinforcement works;
- (iv) Concrete works;
- (iv) Reinstatement works;
- (v) Cutting and Uprooting of Trees;
- (vi) Supply and Fixing of Fencing and Handrails;
- (vii) De-assemble and re-assemble of an existing shed, and
- (viii) Demolition works.

**/UNREVISED DRAFT/**

With regard to part (b) of the question, the value of the Contract to be Performed is Rs 8,398,066.93 (Ex VAT)

In regard to part (c) of the question, the contractual requirements for the execution of the works shall be as follows:

- (i) Handing over of site has been completed on 15 September 2023.
- (ii) The starting date is 22 September 2023.
- (iii) The completion date is 16 February 2024.

With regard to part (d) of the question, the works will be paid under Programme 3107 Item 31113010 – Improvement, Renewals, Minor Projects and Infrastructural Works in villages

**MEDICAL LABORATORY TECHNOLOGISTS – UPGRADING COURSES IN  
MAURITIUS**

**(No. B/156) Ms K. Roussety (Second Local Region Member for Baie aux Huîtres)** asked the Commissioner for Health and Others whether, in regard to the Medical Laboratory Technologists undergoing upgrading courses in Mauritius, he will enlighten the House on:

- (a) if the courses are relevant to their professional activities, and
- (b) the facilities, if any, provided to them and, in the negative, to state the reasons thereof?

**Reply:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that the Medical Laboratory Technologists/Senior Medical Laboratory Technologists in post in the Health Services in Rodrigues already hold a Diploma in Biomedical Sciences obtained from the University of Mauritius and the training course for the award of the Diploma was met by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly as it is a requirement of their prescribed scheme of service dated on 29 October 2015, the post is filled:

- A. *“By appointment of Student Medical Laboratory Technologists who have successfully completed their training including the obtention of the Diploma in Biomedical Sciences.*

OR

- B. *By selection from among candidates in Biomedical Sciences from a recognised institution or an equivalent qualification acceptable to the Public Service Commission”.*

**/UNREVISED DRAFT/**

In addition to that, I am informed that the four Medical Laboratory Technologists/Senior Medical Laboratory Technologists are undergoing an upgrading course in Mauritius but it is to be noted that this upgrading course is not a requirement in their prescribed scheme of service, therefore it should be self-financing course.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, concerning part (b) of the question, I wish to inform the House that on five occasions my Commission has provided hotel accommodation facilities on half board basis to the four Medical Laboratory Technologists/Senior Medical Laboratory Technologists to the tune of Rs 383,250 to enable them to undergo their training courses and their examinations in Mauritius as follows:

- (i) From 13 to 23 August 2022 – Rs 48,000 (three officers as per copy of claim annexed) (different modules).
- (ii) From 06 to 16 July 2022 – Rs 128,000 (copy of claim annexed) – two officers.
- (iii) 06 June to 17 July – Rs 65,500.
- (iv) From 14 January to 11 February 2023 – Rs 98,000 (copy of claim annexed) (two Technologist).
- (v) From 17 January to 11 February 2023 – Rs 43,750.

In addition to the above, my Commission is facilitating the four Medical Laboratory Technologists/Senior Medical Laboratory Technologists, by seeking for replacement from the Ministry of Health and Wellness to facilitate their release on time. The Rodrigues Regional Assembly has to meet the following expenses for the replacing Technologists from the Ministry of Health and Wellness:

- (i) Payment of return air tickets from Mauritius to Rodrigues and back;
- (ii) Hotel accommodation on full board basis to the tune of Rs 574,500;
- (iii) On Call Allowance, and
- (iv) Transport facilities

**TRANSFER – RODRIGUAN FIREFIGHTERS/ESTABLISHMENT OF MAURITIUS  
TO RODRIGUES REGIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**(No. B/157) Mr J. R. Ramdally (First Local Region Member for Saint Gabriel)** asked the Commissioner for Health and Others whether, in regard to the transfer of Rodriguan Firefighters on the establishment of Mauritius to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, he will enlighten the House as to where matters stand as at date?

**/UNREVISED DRAFT/**

**Reply:** Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that there are 13 Rodriguan who have been appointed Firefighters on the establishment of the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Services list. On 16 April 2021 and 18 March 2022 respectively they have applied for their permanent transfer from the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly.

The Chief Fire Officer had, on 28 March 2022 stated no objection for their permanent transfer of the Firefighters on establishment of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly.

The approval of the Disciplined Forces Service Commission was sought on 27 April 2022 for their permanent transfer.

I am informed that on 31 May 2022, the Disciplined Forces Service Commission has asked to seek the views of the Secretary for Home Affairs.

On 10 June 2022 the views of the Secretary for Home Affairs was sought accordingly.

The Disciplined Forces Service Commission was so informed on 08 July 2022 and a reply is being awaited.

At the meeting held on 26 July 2022 with the Prime Minister's Office and all those concerned by visio conference it was explained that there is no provision in the Disciplined Forces Service Commission Regulations for the transfer of officers of the Disciplined Forces between two establishments. It was informed that a solution would be worked out by the Prime Minister's Office. Furthermore, during the Human Resource Committee held at the Ministry of Public Service, Administrative and Institutional Reforms on 28 February 2023 the issue was discussed.

It was decided that 14 additional posts in the grade of Firefighter be approved and that funds be provided accordingly in the Budget exercise 2023/2024 to allow the absorption of the 13 Firefighters from Mauritius when a solution is found concerning this issue.

In a correspondence from the Senior Chief Executive, Ministry of Local Government dated 27 March 2023, this Office was informed that the permanent transfer may be entertained subject to the filling of vacancies in the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service and that clearance of the Disciplined Forces Service Commission obtained.

The Prime Minister's Office (Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity Division) has, in a letter dated 13 October 2023 been asked to inform this office of any development to address the legal impediment concerning such transfers. As at date a reply is still being awaited.

**‘KREOL RODRIGE’ – PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

**(No. B/158) Ms M. N. Raffaut (Second Island Region Member)** asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the teaching of ‘*Kreol Rodrige*’ in primary schools, he will inform the House on: ‘

- (a) the number of pupils who will sit for Creole Rodrige at Primary School Achievement Certificate (PSAC) level for academic year 2023, and
- (b) if the students will be able to pursue the subject at secondary level for academic year 2024?

**Reply:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that 264 pupils of which 260 from the five Roman Catholic Authority (RCA) schools and four from Government Primary Schools will sit for *Kreol Rodrige* at the Primary School Achievement Certificate (PSAC) level for Academic year 2023.

Since the introduction of *Kreol Rodrige* in schools in Rodrigues in 2020, this year will be the first time the subject is being assessed at PSAC level.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that *Kreol Rodrige* is currently not being taught at secondary level. As such, *Kreol Rodrige* will not be offered as a subject in Grade 7 in 2024.

As the House is aware as stated in my reply to Question B/147 of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly sitting of 13 December 2022, the introduction of ‘*Kreol Rodrige*’ at secondary level is a complex process that entails several steps to facilitate its smooth implementation.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that another impediment to the introduction of *Kreol Rodrige* in secondary schools is the unavailability of qualified Educators.

As a matter of fact, following the promulgation of the Education (Amendment No. 4) Regulations 2023, an Educator shall teach *Kreol Rodrige* provided he has the following qualifications:

- (a) Degree in French and Kreol Studies, offered by the University of Mauritius and a PGCE or an alternative qualification in education from a recognised institution or
- (b) B.Ed in Kreol Repiblik Moris, offered by the Mauritius Institute of Education (MIE).



**/UNREVISED DRAFT/**

I am also informed that the Mauritius Institute of Education (MIE) has launched a Post Graduate Certificate in Education in Kreol Repiblik Moris (PGCE KRM) programme in July 2023. The students are trained in the teaching-learning of both Kreol Morisien and Kreol Rodrige. Currently, one student from Rodrigues is following the course.