

/UNREVISED/

No. 10 of 2024

RODRIGUES

FIFTH REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENTARY

DEBATES

(HANSARD)

(UNREVISED)

TUESDAY 03 SEPTEMBER 2024

/UNREVISED DRAFT/

CONTENTS

QUESTIONS (*Oral*)

STATEMENT BY COMMISSIONERS

ADJOURNMENT

MATTERS RAISED

QUESTIONS (*Written*)

/UNREVISED DRAFT/

The Executive Council

(Formed by Mr Franceau Aubret Grandcourt)

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

/UNREVISED DRAFT/

PRINCIPAL OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS

Mr Chairperson - Leopold, Mr Joseph Christian, GOSK

Deputy Chairperson - Tolbize, Mr Justar

Clerk - Legentil, Miss Marie Lyndia Yannick

Deputy Clerk - Clair, Miss Marie Chrismélanie

Serjeant-at-Arms - Perrine, Mr Joseph Laval

/UNREVISED DRAFT/

RODRIGUES

Fifth Regional Assembly

Debate No. 10 of 2024

Sitting of Tuesday 03 September 2024

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

The National Anthem was played

(Mr Chairperson in the Chair)

/UNREVISED DRAFT/

TABLE OF CONTENTS

QUESTIONS (*Oral*)

- (No. B/97) - State land fenced without authorisation – Rod Farm Ltd –Marechal/Deux Montagnes
- (No. B/98) - Land leased/Rodrigues Regional Assembly – Industrial purposes/October 2002 to December 2021
- (No. B/99) - Borehole/Mont Lubin – Breakdown since January 2024 to date
- (No. B/100) - Handicraft/Rodrigues – Policy of the Commission
- (No. B/101) - Existing water network from Pointe Coton to Camp Pintade
- (No. B/102) - Sexually Infections (STIS) in Rodrigues
- (No. B/103) - ‘Ecole de Foot’ and ‘Centre de Formation’/U20 - Rodrigues
- (No. B/104) - Registration – Day Care Centres/Training of care givers (*withdrawn*)
- (No. B/105) - Provision of assistance/Social Housing Schemes – Financial year 2024-2025
- (No. B/106) - Setting up –Nursing school/Rodrigues
- (No. B/107) - Trainee Nurses recruited - Rodrigues establishment/2022 - started training in Mauritius
- (No. B/108) - Supply of water/Tourism establishments – Daily demand of water
- (No. B/109) - Mauritius & Rodrigues Submarine Cable (MARS) Fibre Optic Cable (*withdrawn*)
- (No. B/114) - Funds contracted/Mauritius Investment Corporation (MIC) - Rodrigues Public Utilities Corporation (RPUC) (*withdrawn*)
- (No. B/116) - Control of stray dogs around the island (*withdrawn*)

STATEMENTS

- **The Chief Commissioner:** 15 plages additionnelles déclarer plages publiques
- **Mr Wong So:** Campagne promotionnelle – Tournée Rodriguaise - 19 au 25 août
- **Mr Ravina:** Progress status - 4^{eme} Jeux de Rodrigues

ADJOURNMENT

/UNREVISED DRAFT/

MATTERS RAISED

- **The Fourth Island Region Member (Mr J. P. Spéville):** Manque d’abris bus – Ile Michel
- **The Second Island Region Member (Ms M. N. Raffaut):** Lack and unreliability – Public Transport Services – Allée Tamarin
- **The Second Local Region Member of Baie Aux Huîtres (Ms K. Roussety):** Règlement – Utilisation des sacs en plastique à Rodrigues
- **The First Local Region Member of Grande Montagne (Dr H. Agathe):** RTMC – Récolte des oignons
- **The First Local Region Member of Saint Gabriel (Mr J. R. Ramdally):** Difficulté – Patients à transférer à Maurice – Traitement pas disponible à Rodrigues
- **The Minority Leader:** Service de dialyse – Problèmes des patients dialysés

QUESTIONS (*Written*)

- (No. B/110) - CT scan services at Queen Elizabeth Hospital
- (No. B/111) - Cancer patients/Rodrigues
- (No. B/112) - Upgrading works
- (No. B/113) - Managing Director of Rodclean Ltd – Changes brought to terms and conditions of appointment
- (No. B/115) - Status of employment - Rodrigues
- (No. B/117) - Collection & dissemination – Weather information/Mauritius
Meteorological Services - Rodrigues
- (No. B/118) - Gender based violence - Rodrigues
- (No. A/3) - High Level Drug Committee – list of members/mission & activities
- (No. A/4) - No. Of deaths registered – 2020 to date/Rodrigues
- (No. A/5) - Construction – reservoir/Montagne Cherie - Budged speech 2021-2022
- (No. A/6) - Staffing position – Public section/Rodrigues establishment

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Mr Chairperson: Yes, Minority Leader.

**STATE LAND FENCED WITHOUT AUTHORISATION – ROD FARM LTD –
MARECHAL/DEUX MONTAGNES**

(No. B/97) Mrs R.M.F. Gaspard Pierre Louis, C.S.K. (Minority Leader) asked the Commissioner for Agriculture and Others whether, in regard to State land fenced without authorisation by Rod Farm Ltd at Maréchal/Deux Montagnes, he will inform the House if all fences have been removed as at date, if not, why not?

Mr Perrine: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I wish to inform the House that the Deux Montagnes/Rivière Coco Valley forms part of 13 Sylvo Pastoral Areas set up under the former 2nd EDF Programme. Very interesting work was done by EDF in Rodrigues. So, I lay down a copy of the 13 Sylvo Pastoral Areas that existed in Rodrigues of an extent of 1,354 hectares.

The area of Rivière Coco/Deux Montagnes comprises of an extent of about 160 hectares of land which have been fenced by the Anti-Erosion Programme in the Year 2000-2002 and also by the Commission for Agriculture in the Year 2017-2018.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, unfortunately, on both occasions all fencing have been vandalised and the land been subject to free grazing of animals. Unfortunately, Mr Chairperson, Sir, in front of such state of affair, it has been judged that allocating the Sylvo Pastoral Area to different planters/breeders would be a more feasible solution.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, in Rodrigues, Agricultural Permits are granted as per the procedures and the specificity of Rodrigues as follows: -

1. Applications are made at the Commission for Agriculture.
2. Applications are examined by the Agricultural Services to ascertain availability of Agricultural Land and whether all the criteria for an Agricultural Permit are met.
3. An Agricultural Permit is normally issued to an applicant for an approximate extent to be determined by the Agricultural Services as follows: -
 - (i) Food Crop Production – 4,000 m²
 - (ii) Livestock Production – 1,000 m²

/UNREVISED/

4. The Agricultural Permit is for a duration of at least one year, the time for the applicant to proceed with land preparation, which may involve land clearing, derocking, terracing, ploughing, harrowing and levelling in accordance with the conditions set out in the permit.
5. Within the period of the Agricultural Permit no rent is claimed from the applicant who may also fence the land and start the running of the Agricultural Project pending the approval of the lease over the land.
6. At the satisfaction of the Commission for Agriculture, the request for a formal grant of lease is then referred to the Commission for State Land for necessary action.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, my Commission is in the presence of some 40 applications of land for agricultural breeding purposes at the region of Rivière Coco/Deux Montagnes. I would like to table the list of the applicants for the information of the House.

I must also inform the House that Mr Jean Marc Bégué is among those applicants and his application dates as far back as 07 June 2012, a long time ago. He has been waiting for nearly 20 years. My Commission has a backlog of some 7,000 applications to consider. *C'est ça l'héritage.*

The Agricultural Land Committee at its meeting of Friday 14 June 2024 has processed the application of Mr Bégué whereby the committee was apprised that the land had already been fenced by Mr Bégué to an extent of 90,969.86 m² of State land.

The Agricultural Land Committee effected a site visit on the said location and confirmed the land is fenced. The committee consequently recommended that prior to the case of Mr Bégué be approved, he should be requested to remove all fencing over the said 90,969.86 m² of State land.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, the case of Mr Bégué will be treated according to existing policy and procedure subject that he complies with the law. I have been informed that he has started to remove part of the fencing. A site visit of the State Land Committee will be effected forthwith and final decision will be taken concerning the request of Mr Bégué.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I must point out that there was a precedent case where one Mr H.T.M. applied for an Agricultural Permit at Deux Montagnes and pending the issue of his permit, he fenced the land and started cultivation.

/UNREVISED/

In accordance with Section 22 of the State Land Act, a Notice to squatter dated 17 December 2013 was served upon him and he was evicted from the land.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, in a query from the Equal Opportunity Commission in this matter it was clearly stated and quoted and I quote:

“An application for an Agricultural Permit is not per se an authority to the applicant to occupy the state land and carry any developments on the land prior to the approval of the permit.”

So, the request, the application of Mr Bégué has been considered and subject to removal of all the fence, his application will be approved.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards to the request of Mr Bégué dated 18 April 2023 to transfer the said Agricultural Permit to Rod Farm, he has been advised to submit a project through Invest Rodrigues. I table a copy of his letter requesting the transfer of the land.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

The Minority Leader: Mr Chairperson, Sir, we have been listening to the Commissioner of Agriculture, he has been giving information lengthily on the case of Mr Bégué while we were asking for Rod Farm Ltd. Can we know from the Commissioner for Agriculture what about Rod Farm Ltd regarding this fencing?

Mr Perrine: This is the policy of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly. Anybody who has a project should submit the project to Invest Rodrigues and then for policy decision it is referred to the Council for approval and then referred to Cadastral Office for land issue. So, we have advised... he has the right to transfer, to have a company there is no problem but he has to pass through the proper channel. He has to submit to Invest Rodrigues because for feasibility. We do not have competence at the Commission to look at projects. So, we have advised him to refer his project to Invest Rodrigues. When we will have the input from Invest Rodrigues then we will approve the transfer, that is, issue the permit on Rod Farm.

The Minority Leader: Mr Chairperson, Sir, so the Chief Commissioner in his reply on 16 July informed the House that at no point in time there was application from Rod Farm Ltd. So, you mean that the application of Mr Bégué will now be transferred to the name of Rod Farm Ltd? This is what you want to say?

Mr Perrine: No. You know the Chief Commissioner's Office is also, that is the development and project – this Commissioner was under the aegis of the Chief

/UNREVISED/

Commissioner. So, all projects are directed, are treated first by the Invest Rodrigues where we have qualified officers there and they will report on the feasibility of the project. So, what we have advised Mr Bégué, there is no problem to transfer the lease because a permit can be issued on society, on company provided they abide to the law. So, what we have advised Mr Bégué is to channel his project, the project of Rod Farm, which is a very important project, investment of a lot of money to Invest Rodrigues. So, we are awaiting for the comment of Invest Rodrigues. And we have to go to the Council for approval, policy wise and then we will issue the permit in the name as he has requested.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, we see a market difference in the answer given by the Commissioner for Agriculture as compared to the Chief Commissioner especially as regards to the document has been tabled. Because in the first answer of the Chief Commissioner he said it is not ethical to such document but I see that you have done same. This is to be noted. Nevertheless, Mr Chairperson, since the Commissioner for Agriculture has mentioned about procedures and specificity for Rodrigues as regards to granting of Agricultural Lease. We know very well and it was stated in this House.

(Interruptions)

Yes, I am coming. That Rod Farm is owned by a resident and a non-resident. Base on this, Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to ask the Commissioner for Agriculture whether it is the policy or the policy to be for his Commission to grant societies, companies or even trust, agricultural land of whom non-residents are directors?

Mr Perrine: Mr Chairperson, Sir, respected Member is a student at law and he knows full well that according to State Land Act law that has been approved by the National Assembly and in according to the section 26 in Rodrigues, we have the right, we have the full autonomy as they say on this subject. So, you have the law then you have the policy. So, the Rodrigues Regional Assembly formulates the policies and it is legal. So, if as I told you if they turn it to the Council and the Council gives its approval then it is legal for Rodrigues and we have to abide to it.

(Interruptions)

The Minority Leader: Je poursuis dans la même direction, M. le président, c'est sûr que jusqu'ici pour les projets d'hôtels, les projets où il y a des gros investissements on a toujours eu des appliquant de Rodrigues ou d'ailleurs et depuis la nuit des temps ça a été pratique de réserver les terres agricoles pour les Rodriguais parce que c'est quelque chose que

/UNREVISED/

nous savons faire. Est-ce qu'aujourd'hui le Commissaire veut nous dire que pour être... il a parlé de légalité, est-ce que sa politique, *the policy decision will be to allow anyone to come and to take agricultural land in Rodrigues and to develop their project?*

Mr Perrine: M. le président, I understand what the Minority Leader is saying but in practical – you know there is a project with FAO and which dates back as when they were in power 2027 – which is the – we call it – land suitability map which has been prepared. What I have been doing is to update it. So, just listened, the purpose of this map is to provide information marking on soil parameters, type of fertility for agricultural post I am talking about...

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: I have said order! Allow the Commissioner to answer the question, please.

(Interruptions)

Mr Perrine: The land, the tool that we have, the FAO has put in our hand is that it provides different growing areas around the island and their respective extents. It acts as a planning tool for future agricultural development and give a clear indication on portion of land that have to be reserved for food production. You have put it aside. Now to enforce this decision, that is, Zoning Act, I am coming soon with Rodrigues Regional Assembly Regulations.

(Interruptions)

That will come shortly. The objective is to... The reason is to prevent agricultural land being used for other purposes and also, very important for me, is to stop speculation on agricultural land. Thank you.

Mr Baptiste: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I feel that the Commissioner is a bit evasive on the question. Because it was straight forward relating to land fenced without authorisation by Rod Farm. Whether fences have been removed. And I would like to congratulate him because he is comparing like with like not like the Chief Commissioner is trying to say. These are agricultural land and he made a parallel with the HTM, which I congratulate him for. I would like to ask him whether what he mentioned also relating to he quoted from ICAC or something like that, policy, you quoted? Whether he will take the same measures/decisions for the eviction order for the fence to be removed as it was the case in 2013 and that he will

do it without fear or favour as the oath he made as Commissioner, to be fair with what is being done?

Mr Perrine: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I have always acted without fear or favour. He knows it, everybody knows it. But I have said in my reply that – you know we do not take arrogant action we know, enforcing laws, we explain first. We give him the opportunity. We have informed him that he has to remove the fencing that he has placed and he has agreed. Now, I am informed that he has removed part of it. The Agricultural State Land Committee will shortly effect a visit on the site and if the fencing has been removed he will be given his permit. Thank you.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, I would like to ask the Commissioner for Agriculture whether there has been any request for an eviction order from his Commission to the Commission for Land and, if yes, why same has not been applied so far?

Mr Perrine: Mr Chairperson, Sir, you know I am a Commissioner that leave administrative matters to administrators and they have to report to him. But I do not you know question or ask them to bring the file to let me see. Everybody will assume their responsibility. The decision is clear. The person must remove and if he has not removed then we will take the necessary action as the respected Member is saying without fear and without favour.

Mr Lisette: May I know, Mr Chairperson, Sir, when this eviction order was sent to the Commission for Land for necessary action?

(Interruptions)

Mr Perrine: No, it is approved. My Commission is not responsible for issuing eviction order. So, it is another commission. So, we submit information then they decide. Okay?

The Minority Leader: Then, Mr Chairperson, Sir, we would like to know the Commissioner for Agriculture, he was saying just as the Chief Commissioner said on the 16 of July that the person is starting to remove the fence. After one month, he is saying the same thing. Can we know on this side, whether there is a deadline fixed for this person to remove the fence?

Mr Perrine: As to confirm that he has fenced the land, there has been a site visit effected by the Agricultural Land Committee to confirm. We do not act on hear and say

/UNREVISED/

evidence, they confirm. Now they will have to go this week or next week and they will submit a report. I will take action and report fact check serious report, not on live conference or opinion of others. You know, let the Agricultural Land Committee visit the land. The Agricultural Land Committee is composed of technicians of my Commission and also from Cadastral Unit. So, they will go and submit the report. Maybe I will table the report for the House also to make you aware of what is happening.

Mr Chairperson: Okay, Dr Henry go on.

Dr. Agathe: Je voudrais demander au Commissaire de l'Agriculture comment il est en train de gérer la question de l'équité, d'équité d'accès à la terre là-bas, parce que vous avez soumis une liste d'autre demandeur et qu'on voit bien que dans la procédure il y a une surface de 4,000 m² qui est autorisé à chaque demandeur. Donc, comment vous êtes en train de traiter la demande d'autres éleveurs sur le terrain ?

Mr Perrine: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the extent of 4,000 and 1,000 is what has been submitted but it has to be determined by the technician of availability of land there as the respected Member has said. The number of applicant that we have then they will take a decision. It can be less or it can be more. But it should be determined by the technician of the Agricultural Services. Anyway, if there is possibility on other site we will ask the applicant to relocate their project and then we will consider. We would like to give satisfaction to all applicants.

Mr Chairperson: Okay. Next question.

**LAND LEASED/RODRIGUES REGIONAL ASSEMBLY – INDUSTRIAL
PURPOSES/OCTOBER 2002 TO DECEMBER 2021**

(No. B/98) Dr H. Agathe (First Local Region Member for Grande Montagne) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to land leased by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly for industrial purposes, from October 2002 to December 2021, he will state to the House (a) the number of leases terminated and the land repossessed due to non-development, and (b) table the name of the beneficiary of each lease, the location and extent of the land involved together with the date of repossession, if any?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, as the House is aware, the Regional Government is mandated to grant industrial lease, among other types of leases, on State land to promote industrial and economic development in Rodrigues.

/UNREVISED/

Industrial lease may be granted in favour of an individual, company or society for hotel development and construction of industrial buildings which includes restaurant, discotheque, shops, supermarket, beauty parlour, workshops, garage among others.

Once an industrial lease has been issued, it is the onus and the responsibility of the lessee to ensure compliance with all the conditions attached thereto, failing which the Rodrigues Regional Assembly reserves the right to terminate the lease agreement and repossess the land '*de plein droit*'.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, as far as hotel projects are concerned and the other types of projects for which an industrial lease has been terminated and land repossessed, the list is presently being compiled by the Cadastral Office and also my office, which will be submitted to the Assembly in due course. Thank you.

Mr Chairperson: Okay, next question.

BOREHOLE/MONT LUBIN – BREAKDOWN SINCE JANUARY 2024 TO DATE

(No. B/99) Mr N. Lisette (First Local Region Member for Baie aux Huîtres) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the borehole of Mont Lubin, he will inform the House on if there has been any breakdown thereat since January 2024 to date and, if yes, to provide the number of non-operational days, indicating if any tender was launched for the replacement of the pump, and if so, to state:

- (a) the detailed specifications therefor;
- (b) when tender was launched, the name of the successful bidder together with the bid value;
- (c) if the pump has already been delivered by the successful bidder, and (d) if it is currently operational?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, with regard to the borehole of Mont Lubin, there has been a breakdown from December 2023 to April 2024. From 02 to 05 April 2024. Airlift was done by Water Research Ltd. On 22 April, a new pump was installed. From 22 April to early July, there was pumping of water from the borehole with frequent interruptions. On 09 July, the pump went off and was thereafter removed for test and further actions.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (a), the details specification of the submersible and vertical multistage pump are as follows:

/UNREVISED/

- Submersible pump, fresh water type complete with splicing kit, all wetted parts in stainless steel AISI 304, 3-phase, 380-400 V, 1.5 metre electrical cable, 50 hz, head 130, flow rate 10-11 m³/hr

Mr Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (b) my Commission initially launched bids for a spare pump for Mont Lubin borehole on 25 October 2023. Following technical evaluation, the contract was awarded to Aqualia Ltd in February 2024 for Rs70,650 VAT exclusive. The delivery period was 160 days.

In the meantime, in January 2024, the RPUC has requested to initiate actions for the immediate purchase of a water pump for Mont Lubin borehole, with the idea that the one to be obtained by my Commission will act as spare pump. The RPUC managed to obtain a new pump and same was installed in April 2024. Unfortunately, it has broken down and been replaced by a new one ordered by the RPUC in March 2024.

The pump procured by my Commission has also been delivered and will act as a spare pump for the borehole.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (c), I am informed that the pump ordered by the RPUC was delivered to Rodrigues on 28 June and has been installed in the borehole. The spare pump procured by my Commission was delivered in July 2024.

With regard to part (d), I am informed that the borehole pump procured by the RPUC has just been commissioned and Mont Lubin borehole is now operational since Saturday 31 August 2024.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to ask the Deputy Chief Commissioner who is supervising and managing the Mont Lubin borehole right now.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the management of boreholes has been transferred to the RPUC earlier this year but there is a blended management together with the electromechanical unit of the Commission. They work together, the technical parts. The RPUC is more managing the statistical data, yield of borehole. This is very important if you want to do the follow-up over the long term. So, it is a blended management by both teams.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, the Deputy Chief Commissioner will surely agree that on every day that there is a breakdown or inoperational of the borehole this result in a loss of

some 190 to 200 m³ per day. Because if I see these specifications, 10 to 11 m³ per hour, this means a production of about 200 to 210, 220 m³ about per day. I would like to know from the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether the handing over of the site to the RPUC has not been done in a hostile way given that the Water Unit as he has rightly said the electromechanical and the maintenance team was doing a good work on the borehole around Rodrigues and the passing of this supervision to the RPUC has led to such frequent breakdown since December 2023.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: This is not correct, Mr Chairperson, Sir, we have to thank the RPUC for substantial improvements in the water distribution in Rodrigues including in the borehole section. You will surely here, not hear in the news the western region of Rodrigues. You are now very fond of live Facebook, you will not get any client there in the western part of the island because there has been substantial improvement in the water distribution there thanks to the more efficient management by the RPUC in the distribution and the fact that we have put back in operation the plant at Caverne Bouteille. In any thing where there is transition there are always small problems that may occur. The problem which arised at the Malabar reservoir is that there was a change in the monitoring system where a remote monitoring system was installed and this caused some erratic operation of the pump. So, either we modernise or we keep with the old systems. Together both teams have found out that for the time being it is better to remove the remote control operation system and then the pump is operating anew. We must say that the Mont Lubin borehole yield decreases rapidly and it takes time to recharge. This is due to over exploitation of, not only, these boreholes but of all boreholes in general in Rodrigues. The Member may rest assure that efficient borehole management obtaining the correct yield is one of our top priorities and not over exploit these boreholes. Thank you.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, in fact, I wanted to come to this distant monitoring system because I remember that we did install such a system in Fond La Digue. The first smart pump that was installed at Fond La Digue and there was that small pump that was installed also in the sewerage system of Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Nevertheless, I would like to know from the Deputy Chief Commissioner as regards to the responsibility of the bidder being given that or I would ask the question differently, how is he involved in the monitoring of the pump provided that it is being controlled from distant.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Did I hear that the Member asked how I am involved?

Mr Lisette: No, I said that the bidder.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Yes, like all these technologies, Mr Chairperson, Sir, the bidder does have access but no control. They can see what the pump is doing. And, I must say that these new technologies they have their advantages and their disadvantages. For example, at the borehole of Fond La Digue, it permitted the shutdown of the borehole of the electrical system to prevent the bursting, the damage to the pump. But also at times it caused errors. So, in times of water shortage we want to minimise these errors. The answer is that yes, the supplier does have access to the data as well as the RPUC, who may decide then how to interact. Not in the long term, in the reforms we are doing we plan to have a whole informatised, the digitalised water control system. So, we will know for each borehole in real time what is the yield. I do not think if we are putting a sensor on a borehole to know what is the yield, how much water is coming out of the borehole and other parameters of the borehole, this should affect the performance of the borehole. So, it is something they are still learning and I believe that we, the technicians and people at both RPUC and Electromechanical they will be able to have good result in implementing these systems.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, I see in fact, the RPUC has been put into place to act as a rapid agent for the RRA and when I look at the course of action as ... about the Deputy Chief Commissioner, I see that there has been delays also for the procurement of a pump as regards to the time that has been taken which has been lapsed. May I know from the Deputy Chief Commissioner why such a state of affairs?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, he should ask himself those question because I have been told that each and every borehole has a specific pump. So, we do not have standard pumps and the one for Mont Lubin these pumps are not readily available on the market and we need to order them from either Mauritius, if they are available or from abroad. And, you know the delivery time of a pump which weights nearly 100 kilos, very heavy. We need to order these pumps. So, there was a problem of MNI, a problem of stock management, ensuring that we have reserve pumps at the level of the Commission, at the level of the Water Unit. We did not have these reserve pumps even for the desalination plants when we have breakdown in the borehole we did not these reserve pumps. And, we are now implementing standardised procedures, standardised parameters so that new boreholes have the same specifications of pumps so that we can move one pump from one borehole to another if needed or we can take parts from one borehole and put on another borehole. We have to be proud of technicians of both the Water Unit and the RPUC because for example

there was a breakdown, there was an issue with the pump at the Anse Aux Anglais desalination plant, the sea water pump, and within one or two days they were able to repair it.

The Minority Leader: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Deputy Chief Commissioner, mentioned the blend management actually at the borehole of Mont Lubin and he just mentioned his pride regarding Water Unit and technicians from RPUC, can we know from him whether he is expecting to have this blended mode of management for long?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the RPUC is an operator for water. One of the aspects of the water reforms – I will come to it in the next question on the Member, I will explain in detail what we are doing – one of the aspects are the legal and institutional reform. We will have to bring here in this House new water regulations. The one we have, I think, date from the 1920's or something like this. We have to modernise this. Yes, they will keep the blended operation because the Water Unit has a good electromechanical team under the aegis of Mr Louis, he is a very able officer and knows all the boreholes and they can bring their contribution to the operation of these boreholes. They also have as you know their traditional way of working. They do not work after hours; they do not work on the week-ends which the RPUC does. So, it is a good blending that we put them together so that the borehole unit – there will be a borehole manager at the RPUC who will manage all these boreholes, have them digitalised centralised the control of these boreholes which will feed our new spectacular wonderful water network that we have started putting in place these days.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, from the answer of the Deputy Chief Commissioner, I would like to know does it mean that the Water Unit today does not have access to borehole without the authorisation of the RPUC to that particular borehole, I mean?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: No, Mr Chairperson, Sir, they are operating together. We have to put in place the correct *modus operandi*. They have access. For example, there was an issue at the... there are recurrent issues at the Lataniers borehole which often go shut off. I have been told that some people may be tampering with the electrical installation there. So, it is a question, at home you may have a particular electrical issue, moisture in a switch and then your breaker will go off. It is a safety. You just have to put the breaker back. At time it is an issue just for a breaker and we have had people of the Commission going to Lataniers to put the breaker back in place. We have much tampering on our installations, the Commission, the RPUC. These regulations that we will bring will

criminalise, Mr Chairperson, Sir, tampering with the water network, tampering with water system, with reservoir. This is a general issue. We have heard of it in Rivière Coco, where people tamper with the water network and then there is bad distribution.

Mr Lisette: Yes, one last question, Mr Chairperson, Sir, when I am looking at the efficiency of the system itself. I want to know about the reporting line of action because as I see matters right now, the water which is pumped from Mont Lubin is brought either to Malabar or to Montagne Patate reservoir. In case that there is a failure during the night what is the reporting line as regards to that?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, if there is a failure during the night for the time being we do not have an emergency team responding. I do not think we need to intervene during the night also for a borehole because it is just a borehole 10 to 11 m³ per hour. It is a very small debit, a very small production. If there is a breakdown, the people at the RPUC and at the Water Unit they start working on the next day early. They will attend to these. There is no need to intervene of a borehole which goes off during the night and for a production of 10 to 11 m³ per hour. Especially that we say that boreholes are being over exploited, Mr Chairperson, Sir. And, I will explain in the next question from the Member about our general overview what we are doing. We want these boreholes to have some rest time. The boreholes which were made in Rodrigues in years 2000 when we started doing the boreholes were not designed for 24-hour operation, Mr Chairperson, Sir. It is like making someone works for 24 hours. This is the error we are doing in Rodrigues. This is why the island is being dried up, the rivers have stopped. In different parts of Rodrigues there are no rivers because we are too much pumping our underground water resource, Mr Chairperson, Sir. You are informed, Members are informed there will be a helicopter all around Rodrigues during the next month, October, by the BRGM, the 'Bureau de Recherches Géologiques et Minières' de France. Okay? They will be in a helicopter with a sounder, a system under it, which will send ultrasound into the soil. Let us hope they do not read our minds and we will have a modernised up to date exact vision, stock of what is our underground water. I am a pessimist for underground water. I think that we have reached overexploitation for underground water as far as the existing boreholes are concerned but we have other optimist, Mr Claude Wong So, for example, is an optimist for borehole. And, we do not know, very often we will have boreholes which we have a very good yield in the beginning and then after some months, after some years, the yields will decrease. I was reading in the New York Times some months ago about the agriculture of the United States is threatened. The

production of cereal in the United States is decreasing, is threatened because they depend for irrigation on borehole water. Borehole water which has been there underground for millions, hundreds of years and which takes hundreds of years to replenish. So, the problem of previous government of ourselves is that we are obliged to keep pumping. We cannot go for this rate. We have to reduce the pumping rate and pass over to other sources such as desalination coupled with renewable energy. I hope the Member gets me clear.

Mr Chairperson: We move to next question. We will have time to answer.

(Interruptions)

He is coming with the answer.

(Interruptions)

Mr Lisette: There is a contradiction in what he said in former sessions.

Mr Chairperson: Go on with your question. Put your question direct.

Mr Lisette: My question is straightforward. The question relates in fact to that question of overexploitation of the underground water. How does the Deputy Chief Commissioner reconcile the fact that he is a pessimist about the exploitation of our underground water and at the same time before the surveying of the underground water by the firm that he has mentioned, he has already taken the decision of adding I think, six or eight boreholes to pump more water from our earth?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Yes, Mr Chairperson, Sir, the study for the helicopter is one thing, it will give an overview. But the boreholes which are being contemplated, which we can wait, they have a background very solid study behind them. So, there was the Chief Hydrogeological Officer from ministry in Mauritius and other scientists who have decided, who have worked out where to put these boreholes. And now out of the eight, I think, eight. Out of the eight, after further studies for the tests, we have had tests, scientific tests with apparatus, etc., I am becoming also in water system. And, we have discovered that two of them are not conclusive. I do not have them in mind. Two of them are not conclusive. Okay? So, it depends, Mr Chairperson, Sir, a number of boreholes have been dug in Rodrigues but have never been used. Yes. Does not mean... You should explain this to Mr Ravina, who talks a lot on Facebook, it does not mean that if we are digging the borehole we are going to pump water from the borehole and all the time. There will be a management. So, we can dig other boreholes where is necessary depending on the studies that are being

made. For example, we are thinking that we will have a good yield in borehole in Nassola and then in Araucaria. We will see. But as I tell you for ecological reasons I am not for more pumping from the underground water resources of Rodrigues. And, for me, I do not think the yield will increase a lot especially during the dry period where we have a big deficit.

Mr Chairperson: Next question.

HANDICRAFT/RODRIGUES – POLICY OF THE COMMISSION

(No. B/100) Ms M. N. Raffaut (Second Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner for Women's Affairs and Others Whether, in regard to handicraft in Rodrigues, she will inform the House on the policy of her Commission therefor, giving details of any new measures already taken in relation thereto?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, we appreciate the interest of the respected Member, in the development of the handicraft sector in Rodrigues. I am answering for the Commissioner, sorry, she is absent. A sector which plays a significant role in preserving our cultural heritage and enhancing the livelihood of many artisans across the country.

The regional government recognises the importance of handicrafts and my policy regarding the handicraft sector lays emphasis on components such as skill development, financial assistance, infrastructure support and market development, in view of driving growth and innovation in the sector.

The Commission for Handicraft, under my policy guidance, works in close collaboration and in synergy with the Commission for Industrial Development, SME, Mauritius Ltd. and the Economic Development Board, which are implementing various schemes/facilities targeting entrepreneurs in Rodrigues including artisans. Coordination among the different entities are being ensured to avoid duplication of facilities and supports, also in view of optimising resources.

Some of the schemes that have already been introduced for our local entrepreneurs including artisans are:

- The SME Refund Scheme for participation in international fairs, the Freight Rebate Scheme and the Trade Promotion and marketing scheme by the Economic Development Board (EDB).

/UNREVISED/

- At the level of the Commission for Industrial Development-Invest Rodrigues, there are the Technology Acquisition and Modernisation Scheme, SME Skills which caters for marketing tools for participation in fairs, SME Skills-Exchange Programme for group tours, SME Skills Development Programme for placement in foreign enterprises among others.

With regard to skill development of our local artisans, one of the budgetary measures of my Commission consists of the setting up of an '*Ecole de l'Entrepreneuriat*' with emphasis on the handicraft sector.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, regarding infrastructure support and market development, the space at Mon Limon will enable artisans to showcase and market their products. We are working up for the setting up of a market fair at Petite Butte. Tender for consultancy services for the construction of the market fair is under evaluation stage.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, we are working on the export readiness of our local entrepreneurs, including artisans. A delegation of the ITC She Trades, Mauritius, the Economic Development Board of Mauritius, and the UNDP (Socio-Economic Unit) was on mission to Rodrigues from 26 to 28 August 2024, to work in collaboration with the Commission for Industrial Development and the Commission for Women Affairs and Handicraft in view of preparing an action plan for Women Entrepreneurs in Rodrigues as well as on the export readiness of our women entrepreneurs.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, we are planning a big event in the context of the World Handicraft Day which will be celebrated for the first time in Rodrigues next year during the month of June. To further boost the handicraft sector and have a clearer picture on where we envision to be in the short, medium and long term, my Commission will work on a comprehensive action plan for the sector, which will lay emphasis on (i) market access and the promotion of technology transfer and e-commerce platforms specially designed for handicrafts (ii) innovation and design through collaboration with design institutes, and (iii) promoting sustainable practices in the production of handicrafts.

I wish to reassure the House, that our government is dedicated to preserving and promoting the local rich tradition of handicrafts. We will continue to support our artisans through a combination of financial assistance, skill development, and market access initiatives, whilst ensuring the sector's sustainable growth.

Thank you.

Ms Raffaut: Mr Chairperson, is the Commissioner aware that there was a symposium *sur l'artisanat Rodriguais*?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am not sure I am aware. It is not really my *tasse de thé* here, it is more water. Therefore, I would invite the Member, if she wanted she can seek information on this to have included this because this is a supplementary question which is far from the main scope of the question which is on the policy, the policy of the Commission. You are an English teacher, you have to distinguish between a policy and an activity. What you are saying is an activity which is not a policy.

The Minority Leader: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Deputy Chief Commissioner was recently the Commissioner for ... Unfortunately, month ago the same Deputy Chief Commissioner was the Commissioner for Handicraft. It is pitiful he does not know whether there has been this symposium. I would like to know from him with regard to market development, I have not heard anything about selling online while there has been a contract signed with Ceamine Ltd, a company of young professional in IT where they created the website and whether he is aware that there has been this contract given to have the promotion and selling of our handicrafts and agro-processing products online, if he is aware, where matters stand and, if he is not aware what is his views about this?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I repeat, unless I do not know what is a policy, the question was about a policy. Policy of her Commission regarding handicraft in Rodrigues, giving details of any new measures. Okay? So, what you are talking are not new measures. It is a contract, whatever you are mentioning. Anybody, the fact of going and selling your products is already a reality in Rodrigues. Okay? We see people selling honey online, on Facebook, for example. Selling sausage, selling everything they want on Facebook. And, you can have an e-commerce platform for Rs10,000/Rs12,000 and you can sell your products. The Commission is there, we have said there are different schemes, financial assistance, we have new skills, new schemes being advertised at the level of the Commission for SMEs together with the handicraft sector where we have encouraging people to visit other countries, to go into trade fairs. So, there is no specific issue or no specific stone which is not being turned to help entrepreneurs. They can walk at the level of the Commission, they can come and see the Commissioner or myself and we will advise them about what we are doing. We are not here to engage into specific contract or specific products because every entrepreneur has their specific needs.

Dr Agathe: Je vous ai entendu parler, M. le commissaire du projet d'une école d'entrepreneuriat. Je crois que le secteur fait face en ce moment à des besoins, à des défis urgents. Comme par exemple, la difficulté d'avoir accès à des matières premières traditionnelles de base. C'est quand même un secteur qui s'appuie sur pas mal de tradition. Il est important de conserver ces traditions qui peuvent apporter quand même une image de marque assez forte à notre destination. Et aussi, lié à ce problème de matière première, il y a un problème aussi de diminution de savoir-faire. Il y a beaucoup d'artisans qui disposent de savoir-faire qui disparaissent et il y a peu de relai avec les jeunes.

Mr Chairperson: Now put the question.

Dr Agathe: Donc, la question est qu'est-ce qu'il est en train de faire pour sauvegarder les traditions pour rendre plus accessible les matières premières qui est réellement un problème en ce moment ?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, on the issue of the raw materials to be used by handicraft, yes there has been a decrease. Just how there has been a decrease in water, there has been a decrease in fish, availability of fish, abundance of fish in the sea and the Member I think is well aware that this is due to the impact of human activities, other activities such as grazing, bad agricultural and rearing practices which has caused the destruction of grounds of places where for example materials like Lataniers was grown and this has reduced. If you look at Rodrigues today, you rarely see Vetiver. Do we see Vetiver today in Rodrigues? The lines of Vetiver? This has basically disappeared today. Only in some small number of places you can see Vetiver. So, what can we do, what are the artisans doing, this is a question of the Commissioner earlier talked about it, preserving these sources of raw materials. But to be an entrepreneur is also to be innovative. Why not encourage them to import raw materials, maybe synthetic or natural raw materials or even to set up their businesses. We are speaking of their savoir-faire, to take their savoir-faire to countries like Madagascar or even countries like Thailand, big continental countries where there are availability of raw materials and then set up their business in these countries, make money, take the money back to Rodrigues. You are laughing, this is business today, the world is...

(Interruptions)

So, Mr Chairperson, Sir, on the *perte de savoir-faire*, the *perte de savoir-faire* is everywhere. Today if you look someone who can build a wooden boat for you is quite

difficult. If you look for people verse in traditional medicines, for example, is difficult. So, we are face with many challenges today but, of course, we have to see to it that these knowledge, these skills are preserved. This is why I think that they want to set up the '*Ecole de l'Entreprenariat*' to transfer these skills. For example, we have the *casier* making skills. It is a very big skill. You have to learn a number of years how to prepare the bamboo sticks, how to put it in the sea for some months and then you build your *tresse*, your *casier*, how to place *l'entrer casier* or otherwise you will not get any fish because the fish will enter and it will go out. So yes, we have to see how to preserve these but it is not question only of government, of the Commission, it is a question also of artisans' association promoting these skills and training the young people in these skills.

Mr Lisette: Yes, Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Deputy Chief Commissioner has spoken about challenges but I think the first thing that we have note about his answer is that when we are speaking of traditional crafts it has to be made from local products, local raw materials. Nevertheless, the challenge that remains and it has been rare. It has been rare for some time but it is gaining momentum is the invasion of products from abroad. And, if you travel you will that even those tourists who are coming to Rodrigues and leaving, they are taking away bags, handicrafts products thinking that it is Rodriguan made. I would like to know from the Deputy Chief Commissioner what concrete actions will have to be taken more fiercely in order to curb such position?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, we are building a big airport shortly. It is starting and then we will have bigger demand. Can Rodrigues provide for the demand for, let say, 1,000 hats per day? I remember when I was Commissioner for Tourism, we went to Disney Land in Paris and there was a show, 'The Wild Wild West Show' and one of the thing you get when you pay for this show you get a straw hat like the cowboys. So, we spoke to the director and then he said, yeah if you can supply me with 1,000 hats per day, 500 in the morning, there is a show in the morning and then there is a show in the night, 500. At times there are three shows during the day. Can we provide... Mr Leopold is a pioneer in the revival of *artisanat* in Rodrigues.

(Interruptions)

Yes, we do not have enough *matière première*. We do not have enough raw materials. We are not a big country. We are not Madagascar. We are not Zimbabwe where we can go and find materials in the *brousse*, *dans la brousse*, *M. le president*. So, we have to be

/UNREVISED/

pragmatic. If we can import raw materials and then work it here. This is how we want to make money. If we keep living in the past.

(Interruptions)

This is what we need. We need moneys to live. We need to create wealth.

(Interruptions)

Money, yes. We need money. We need Rodriguans to make money out of the opportunities that they have. If you want to sit and relax and live out of a small salary of a Minority Leader, this is your vision. But do not criticise those who are working, who are investing my friend. I am telling local handicraft to try to see how to avoid, how to solve the lack of raw material by going to Madagascar, importing raw materials or taking their business to Madagascar and then exporting to Disney Land, Paris, 1,000 hats per day. They are saying it is not a good idea. But what do you want? What do you want the Rodriguans to be? Someone with a small line fishing a karanda along the coast or someone walking in the sun. No, we want people to work, Mr Chairperson, Sir. This is the difference between this team. This is the difference between our group of parties and the OPR party. They are stuck in the past. We are looking forward, Mr Chairperson, Sir. We want people to invest in the country. Okay?

(Interruptions)

This is your problem. People has chosen us to bring the country forward. The lead forward, Mr Chairperson, Sir. Okay?

(Interruptions)

I do not dance traditional. You can put it to another person. Maybe to Mr Wong So, he is a...

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: Let us move to next question, please. Member Lisette, next question.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Ask Mr Henri about the theory of comparative advantage. Why do you need to produce something at big cost when you can have it cheap abroad? Let us produce what we are good at. We are good in tourism. Okay?

(Interruptions)

We, I do not say I. We are good in tourism. You are criticising our tourism sector? *Ou pan get TFI ou? Lot zour la. Negatif!*

EXISTING WATER NETWORK FROM POINTE COTON TO CAMP PINTADE

(No. B/101) Mr N. Lisette (First Local Region Member for Baie aux Huîtres) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the existing water network from Pointe Coton to Camp Pintade, he will give details as regards the size and hydraulic transfer capacity of the network on the following respective parts/sections of the network:

- (a) Pointe Coton desalination to Roche Bon Dieu reservoir (Montagne Piquant and Fond Roche Bon Dieu);
- (b) Roche Bon Dieu reservoir to Petit Brûlé reservoir;
- (c) Petit Brûlé reservoir to Quatre Vents reservoir, and
- (d) Quatre Vents reservoir to Camp Pintade reservoir?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Yes, Mr Chairperson, Sir. I am informed that the size and hydraulic transfer capacity of the different networks mentioned in the question are as follows:

From	To	Pipe Type	Pipe Diameter	Theoretical Hydraulic Capacity (m³/hr)
Pointe Cotton Desalination Plant	Montagne Piquant Reservoir	HDPE	160 mm	127.251
Montagne Piquant Reservoir	Fond Roche Bon Dieu Reservoir	HDPE	160 mm	127.251
Fond Roche Bon Dieu Reservoir	Petit Brûlé Reservoir	HDPE	110 mm	56.556

/UNREVISED/

From	To	Pipe Type	Pipe Diameter	Theoretical Hydraulic Capacity (m³/hr)
Petit Brulé Reservoir	Quatre Vents Reservoir	Ductile Iron (DI)	150 mm	110.8498
Quatre Vents Reservoir	Papayes Reservoir	HDPE	90 mm	37.10639
Papayes Reservoir	Grand La Fouche Corail Reservoir	DI	150 mm	110.8498
Grand La Fouche Corail Reservoir	Camp Pintade Reservoir	HDPE	110 mm	56.556

As such, Mr Chairperson, Sir, one cannot per say speak of a water transfer network from Pointe Coton to Camp Pintade inasmuch as the network with a pipeline of 160 mm from Pointe Coton to Montagne Piquant then to Fond Roche Bon Dieu was designed for a 100 mm³ desalination plant to supply the region, the east only. It was not designed and does not respond to our requirement to transfer up to 10,000 m³ of water per day from Pointe Coton.

Second, had there been a proper design the 110mm water pipeline from Fond Roche Bon Dieu to Petit Brulé would have been upgraded. You cannot transfer water at 56.56 m3/hour in this 110. 110 is like the grey pipe we used for *tuyo drenaz*, the size.

Third, Mr Chairperson, Sir, the network from Petit Brulé to Quatre Vents of only 150 mm cannot be used unless we shut down the Lataniers borehole which uses the same network to transfer water to Quatre Vents reservoir. So, an attempt to say that there is a water transfer network from Pointe Coton to Camp Pintade is stuck at Lataniers because there is a borehole already using that network to send water to Quatre Vents.

Fourth, the Member will also note that there is only a 90 mm pipe from Quatre Vents to Papayes and 110 mm pipe from Grand La Fouche Corail to Camp Pintade with all the tapings on them.

/UNREVISED/

The biggest error of the previous regional government has been to engage in inadequate thinking and designing regional water networks and not an integrated holistic water transfer network for the whole island as we are doing today.

We are planning for the long term future requirements of Rodrigues. The existing water transfer and distribution networks are archaic and will fail to meet the future plan needs of Rodrigues.

My Commission and the Rodrigues Public Utilities Corporation (RPUC) are coming up with the implementation of the primary water network, commonly known as the '*colonne vertébrale de l'eau*'. The draft bidding documents for the primary network from Pointe Coton to Petit Brulé reservoir have been prepared by Luxconsult (Mtius) Ltd. The design and technical specifications will be further vetted by a French specialist water engineering firm.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, Pointe Coton is becoming the main desalination park of Rodrigues. The water has to be transferred to different parts of Rodrigues everyday. We are making provision for the pipelines to be able to transfer up to 8,000 m³ to 10,000 m³ of desalinated water per day per 24-hour. The existing network cannot meet such requirements. A new transfer network, will be of ductile iron and worked out using specialist engineering techniques and less likely to be subject to illegal tampering as required for the water transfer from Pointe Coton to other parts, to the central reach of the island.

Reservoirs will be built along the ridge and from there to the, western, northern and southern parts of the island. My Commission is proud to be engaged in this fantastic, technical and engineering design of a new modern water transfer and distribution network for Rodrigues. The closing date for the 3,000 m³ desalination plant has closed, was yesterday and, we expect this unit to be operational by the second semester of 2025.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, the '*colonne vertébrale de l'eau*' of the island has already started with the first phase of the following works already at implementation state:

- (1) The digging of additional sea water intake boreholes for the increase requirement of the 3,000 m³ plant. This has been completed.
- (2) The construction of the 1,000 m² building to house the 3,000 m³ unit. Contract has been awarded and construction foundation stage has been completed. The columns are being erected at Pointe Coton.

/UNREVISED/

- (3) The construction of two 1,000 m³ reservoir for the storage and associated operations of the new 3,000 m³ at Pointe Coton.
- (4) The construction of the new pipeline and pumping station to connect water to Petit Brulé, to transfer water to Petit Brulé. The design has been made and is being finalised and is being vetted.
- (5) One 1,000 m³ reservoir at Montagne Piquant is under completion. The design and the layout of the transfer from Petit Brulé to Malabar to Quatre Vents to Papayes, etc., the design is being finalised including construction of several 2,000 m³ reservoir, one of which the contract has already been awarded for Manique. We are planning to build a new.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, the next item we are doing, the study of our underground water resources and mapping with the Agence Française de Développement (AFD) and Bureau de Recherches Géologiques et Minières (BRGM). You will see a helicopter surveying the island shortly. Numerous other actions are under way such as the proper staffing of the RPUC, the legislative aspects that must accompany the reforms and the billing and monitoring system that is crucial to help rationalised and fund the modern water system of Rodrigues.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, no government, no regional government has made so much effort than ours, not only in terms of infrastructural investments but also crucially in terms of carefully thought policies has been made today. For example, Mr Chairperson, Sir, Baie Malgache is presently painfully supplied with water from a small reservoir of Allée Tamarin which itself is fed from the dam at Pavé La Bonté and the borehole of Fond Baie Aux Huîtres. This will continue. We will keep improving the existing ground and borehole water resources.

With our new approach, Mr Chairperson, Sir, there are good news. We are planning to build a new 1,000 m³ reservoir. This has to be validated by the technical engineers, l'Etude du Réseau, 1,000 m³ reservoir nearby Montagne Tonnerre uphill, which will feed from the new contemplated 2,000 m³ at Quatre Vents reservoir and water from Quatre Vents will be transferred from Petit Brulé and itself coming from the increase desalination at Pointe Coton. With good result expected from new borehole along the central ridge, we were speaking about the new boreholes. We also expect a satisfactory branding of desalinated water with underground water.

/UNREVISED/

We are on the right path and never have we been so close to providing water more than, *une fois par semaine*. Complete results will occur in the end of 2025 beginning of 2026, all other things remaining equal and assuming our projects are completed satisfactorily. Thank you.

Mr Lisette: I note that the Deputy Chief Commissioner has admitted that as we stand now it is possible to have water coming from Pointe Coton to Camp Pintade. As at now it is possible. I see that in his answer that he is not fully acknowledgeable of the existing network and this why I am going to ask him because he mentioned it in his answer. Is he aware that the borehole of Lataniers which provide water to Quatre Vents can be diverted to Ste Famille if you want to have more water coming from Petit Brulé to Quatre Vents?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, we are not going to undress Paul *pour habiller Pierre*. We want a water transfer network from Pointe Coton through the central ridge to the western part of the island for the time being. I understand the qualms of the Member, I understand his thoughts, his fears that we succeed, I understand the fears of the OPR people. Your people are saying we are on the track.

(Interruptions)

The OPR people, the OPR partisans they are telling us, yes good job!

(Interruptions)

The people who know the water sector. Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Member wants to prove that there is a network from Pointe Coton to...

(Interruptions)

Yes, Mr Chairperson, but why did he put only a 160 mm of pipe which can transfer in theory 127 m³ of water per hour.

(Interruptions)

How much? 2,400? 3,000? We are putting 10,000 in Pointe Coton in a few years. So, how will we transfer water? And then when it reaches Quatre Vents, *M. le président, quand son tuyau arrive à Quatre Vents pour aller vers Papayes c'est 90. Donc, il fait boire dans un gros entonnoir après l'entonnoir devient comme ça*. This is not serious. This network does not exist presently. It is a heretic network; we cannot rely on this. This is why he has failed. So, this is why we have thought about this new network and the first phase is being implemented. Our only difficulty, our only cost of operation is to bring to Petit Brulé. Once since on the

mountain near your place it will flow by gravity to the other parts of the island. You know the central ridge, not only on the central ridge. But for example, there may be another 2,000 m³ on Malartic or on Citronelle. There may not, Mr Wong So and myself we are still at times at Mr Wong So says the water must flow from one place to another and distributed, no need necessarily to have reservoirs all along, a lot of reservoirs. We are saying let us have some security, there is a cyclone we have these stock of water. When the water reaches Malartic, it can come to the L'Union reservoir and from the L'Union reservoir along the ridge, along the valley ridge to Hauteur Accacia and to also Jardin Mamzelle by going into the valley dam and using the existing network of Fond Accacia to Jardin Mamzelle.

I seize the opportunity; I know the Member is passionate as myself. We do not sleep at night. Mr Wong So and myself we are texting each other all the times, anytime in the night, working on this. I will invite, with the acceptance of the Executive Council, the Member to participate in our steering committee on water the next meeting so that he can join this adventure of solving the water issue in Rodrigues.

Mr Lisette: Yes, Mr Chairperson, Sir, we are passionate about the issue because we master it in fact, nevertheless I would like to ask the Deputy Chief Commissioner on the same line of course that he has been speaking, I would like to know when the design of the '*colonne vertébrale de l'eau*' was done did he take into consideration that there is a two similar network as he has just described from Pointe Coton to Camp Pintade, there is a similar network from Songes to Papayes and from Caverne Bouteille to Vangasail. Is he aware of that?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: He took the example of Caverne Bouteille to Vangasail, this is a regional network. Okay? You did another network from Anse Goeland to Montagne Limon, which has not been used – Mt Du Sable. The money is lost underground. The money is underground. You did the same network for Pointe Coton. These are regional networks. The ... was done by the FED. We are keeping it, it is working. Of course, we have to improve it. But this network along the ridge does not exist. Otherwise, we cannot aspire to have a good water distribution system, water transfer pipes of 90 mm. This does not fit into the mathematical engineering model for a smooth transfer of water from along the ridge and from the ridges, on the lateral ridges to the other parts of the island. For example, do we have efficient water transfer? Where is Anse Aux Anglais, which is a quite populous amenity with tourists? Where is Anse Aux Anglais fed from with water? It is from Crève-Coeur. So, it is regional. It is the desalination plant at Anse Aux Anglais pump to Crève-Coeur and

Crève Coeur to Anse Aux Anglais even to Terre Rouge. What happens if over a weekend where there is no water, there is a breakdown? So, Anse Aux Anglais will remain without water over the weekend if they do not have stock? So, this is why we are bringing from Montagne Patate, from Malabar water to the Pointe Canon reservoir and also possibly to another reservoir, uphill Anse Aux Anglais so that we can these diversifications of sources. So, we need to invest this money. Okay. So, we are pressing the consultant to finalise the whole water transfer network which we want to be efficient.

Mr Lisette: Yes, Mr Chairperson. The Deputy Chief Commissioner is an economist; we all know that. Based on the fact that there has been investment already made for, as he has mentioned, the regional network from Vangasail, from Caverne Bouteille to Vangasail up to Montagne Cabris reservoir which was built and the same line of thought from Songes up to Papayes once again which have been pumped to Papayes with Rivière Coco with one reservoir not being used at all and from Papayes by gravity to Camp Pintade this can be done. Would it not have been wiser and more economical instead of investing 10,000 at Pointe Coton to have invested in the different sites that already existed at Caverne Bouteille, at Songes and this would have reduced the cost enormously.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am confused with these affair of year, Form IV is which year? *Forme IV* ? Year 10? Any year 10 student in economics would have proved the Member wrong, Mr Chairperson, Sir. This is why I say we must have specialist to do things and we want the best specialist in the world. You will be astonished that when we exchanged some days ago with some specialists from France, when we gave them our calculations, we gave them our things, they were just like this. And, they said no, this is wrong. A parameter which we have is 4.2 transfer rate something like that, it should be 0.8. This is the error they made, Mr Chairperson, Sir. They did not read the report, Chene Report 2010 and, the error that they made is that *justement* they went to do small units around the island for regionalised distribution from Caverne Bouteille to Vangasail, etc., regionalised distribution. My colleague here, we went to Cyprus. In Cyprus they do not have this, they have one or two big units, up to 60,000 m³ per day and then they pump it to be distributed all around. And, there is the term for it. The economic term for it is economies of scale. If you want to produce shirts, you do not do small units. If you have 1,000 shirts per day, you do a big factory. So, you have all sort of economies of scale. And, one of the economies of scale is economies of personnel, economies of buying – when you are buying you bring to one site, technical economies. If they have done one 4,000 m³, they would have

succeeded at Pointe Coton. We discovered Pointe Coton. They started, we discovered, we were told that Pointe Coton is the best site. Because desalination is first of all, I have read – I wanted to learn about desalination more. The first thing about desalination is the chemistry of the intake of the water. The quality of the water intake. This is why we have had problems. So, if they had done Songes and then Pointe Coton, they would have succeeded with the transfer network improved they would have succeeded. So, what happened, they did four units, they did not have the personnel, they had a lack of personnel, they took General Workers to operate desalination plants and then it fails. The General Workers were sitting on the beach at Anse Aux Anglais chilling and the desalination plant was on alarm, there was no specified personnel. Today we have invested – we have Mr Ravanne, young Trainee Engineer who I was surprised when he came to see me. He has, I think, somethings like Mechatronics – first class honours, Mr Chairperson, Sir, from an Australian university. First class honours in his engineering degree and he is, I would say, the technical person for us for our desalination. They understand things rapidly. They are proactive. Who did you have in government to take care of desalination? Nobody! Mr Emile? Mr Emile is not an electromechanical, is not a chemical engineer all this. Today, we have all these people who have joined in. And, the error was to have made these units. And then, you have failed because you could not operate it, you could not repair it and it was left to rot. Fortunately, we came back and we have adopted these new policies. Okay? Yes, from an environmental point of view. Chene said it should have been made at Grenade because Grenade the open sea is not far, it is 50 metres, you could have a pipe to release the brine in the open sea. It was the biggest error to go for more units, more costly and then not operationally efficient. So, we are moving. You can defend your network, your Caverne-Vangasail-Montagne Cabris network. We are not speaking of this. We are keeping this. We are putting 250 mm ductile iron pipes. I say we must put more because we are planning. There is a planning behind. We are planning for the horizon 2050 with a population of 60,000. So, your kids, grandkids will benefit from this system.

Mr Baptiste: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I see that the Deputy Chief Commissioner is very passionate now about desalination which at once he thought that would be only system of, you know, backup in case. But you must admit also that you also you made mistake, Mr Chairperson, Sir. And, he talked about economies of scale but I think that he forgot to talk about risk bearing economies. While he is concentrating all the efforts on Pointe Coton what will happen if it unfortunately, happen that, for example there is contamination in the region

of Pointe Coton and we are all relying only on Pointe Coton as the main central for the water production for Rodrigues. Do you not think that consideration should also be taken to ensure that we are not over dependent on only this main one network from Pointe Coton?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, to reply to the first part of the question, the member is well aware that *seul les imbeciles ne change pas*.

(Interruptions)

As regards, risk, Mr Chairperson, Sir,...

(Interruptions)

I have never said that Pointe Coton should be the only one. We started the desalination at Songes. We have Songes, which is good working. So, if we Songes and we have Pointe Coton and we have enough storage, we have a good management of our boreholes, we have a good management of our dams, we can sustain breakdowns. Okay? So, it is a question of managing sites. Pointe Coton main with Songes secondary, we are okay. We should not force a small island like Rodrigues have all these plants – the proof is that the one you built at Anse Goeland, you did not find the borehole, the water for it. What happened? They had to close the unit, unfortunately. How much money has been wasted there? Why? Because there was no planning. Okay? Today, I have asked that we do not float the tender for the pipelines from Pointe Coton to Petit Brulé. We do not have it because we want water specialist, *maitre d'ouvrage, ingénierie de l'eau* to validate what our consultants here have made. The Member, I think built the reservoir of Hauteur Accacia, the new one, and you know what happened. When the works were completed contractor and consultant rejected the fact that the intake was too low and then it climbs and 1 m³ of water stayed into it. You know this. So, do we want this to happen to us? They say – ah okay we are producing 3,000 m³ but we can pump only 1,000 m³. *Li pou met lamin dan zot likou?*

Mr Lisette: I am quite astonished and I do not know whether he has been advised as he is speaking. My question will be a double canon one in the sense that he mentioned about the quality of water at Pointe Coton which is better but from studies it has been shown that the water of Songes which is pumped for desalination is better in the sense that we are having brackish water which has less impact on the environment. This is my first question, because I am coming to the ecological side of the issue. Would we have used the borehole for Songes to increase the production there, the release of brine is less than the salinity of water itself at Songes. Was he aware of this? The first point.

(Interruptions)

Okay, one question at a time and then I will come to the second question.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, when we inherited the chaotic situation, the chaotic suitcase in desalination that he passed over us with I think than 200 m³ per day being produced, we did our job. We had the water tested at all the boreholes, at all the desalination plants. And, our reports say that the water at Pointe Coton is the best for, in terms of purity. You should not look at one parameter only, only the content of salt. You should look at other parameters, the purity of the water. Okay? And then, what is he saying by brine? At both sites the brine is pumped into underground boreholes, Mr Chairperson, Sir. We know what they are doing. I am not deciding by myself. We are being guided by science and technical engineering advice. For example, I can share with him, the consultant for the new pipeline from Montagne Piquant to Petit Brulé, they were following the road but we went on Google Earth with Mr Darcet and everybody, and we saw that there is a path just in front of the reservoir, a track road we can put it direct here and go through the field up to the old residence of the Chairperson and then it can follow the road. We have been doing all this. And, I always say to my colleagues, do your homework as a politician, go into the files, look into what they are saying. And, one of the other weaknesses of the network there is that it goes to the Roche Bon Dieu small reservoir as Roche Bon Dieu. Have you been there? Everywhere there is green, Mr Chairperson, Sir. Everywhere around this reservoir is green with desalinated water because it is being tapped. Do we want this? No, we do not want anybody to interfere with this. So, this is why the 250 mm ductile iron pipe will be or at least one metre below the ground and we will have flowmeter at Pointe Coton. How much water is leaving and how much water is arriving. And, it is simple maths. If there is a big difference, we know that there is breakdown or leakage or illegal tapping.

Mr Lisette: Yes, of course, it has to be sorted out but if I remember well, Fond Roche Bon Dieu, if he is speaking about the same one, there is a source, source Tetel I think, I did visit that and I think that many of the farmers or planters they may be using that source. At the time that I was there that was the source that was being used – the source of Tetel. In fact, there is a source down there which is used also to send water to agricultural land. Even to Kan John, I think there is a direct source of water from there so that they can reduce dust as regards... Nevertheless, the Deputy Chief Commissioner mentioned about looking at all parameters. That is fine. Now he is concentrating to go for a 10,000 m³ at Pointe Coton.

(Interruptions)

Yes, at long term or in the medium term. Has he considered that ecological parameter where if we are going for 10,000 m³ per day at a particular site, we are going to have the release of not less than 15,000 m³ of brine at a particular site. What does he consider? Has he given an assessment of what is better for Rodrigues and for the marine ecosystem, whether to decentralise the dissemination of brine around the island rather than concentrating it at a specific site where we are having 15,000 or up to 20,000 m³ of brine being released in the lagoon or in the high seas of Pointe Coton? Has he taken this into consideration?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: I repeat, Mr Chairperson, Sir, we are guided by studies. There is the EIA for the 3,000 m³ under way and, of course, I can ask a counter question. You put a desalination plant at Anse Aux Anglais, in the lagoon, shallow water, small microorganisms in the lagoon, small fish, artisanal fishing. You go to Anse Goeland, you put a 1,000 m³ desalination, what is the volume of discharge water, more than 5,000 per day – okay – and then you put another one worst in the shallow lagoon of Caverne Bouteille. So, which project would be impacting more on the lagoon? I think it is your concept. This why we put it in Pointe Coton because we are putting not in the lagoon, we are putting in the borehole, reject borehole being pumped with pressure down into it so that there is dissipation of the water. And, there is, of course, room for improvement. At times some people think of ecology. Yes, but we must think also... I had a discussion with an engineer, he was saying – ah there will be increased in cost of energy. I said, you are not going to pay for the cost of energy, we are going to pay for the cost of the energy, do the desalination. Of course, with minimum energy cost. But we need the water. It is not you, the engineer of Mauritius who will tell us what to do. You do the desalination, do not worry about the cost. Because they think they know better than us, Mr Chairperson. So, what will happen at Pointe Coton? Is that, we will build environmental mitigation facilities, equipment so that this discharge it should go into the open sea. In the open sea the current is bigger for the dissipation, for the mixing of the brine. There are mixing equipment that they use so that it is dissipated smoothly into the sea. So, we have to make choices, Mr Chairperson, Sir. Either we keep telling the people, we do not have water or we take the measures and then we do the environmental mitigation, which we are doing and which is better than releasing brine in large quantity all around the island. Because Pointe Coton is on the opening sea. And, we can have a pump to pump up to 250 metres under the sea, on the sea surface so that it is dissipated there and we save the lagoon.

The Minority Leader: Mr Chairperson, Sir, we see that the Deputy Chief Commissioner is talking a lot in the meantime the people are starving from water – *mor la swaf – meurt de soif*. Can I know from the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether he can inform the House about any defined timeline for the completion of this project?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: It is not one project, Mr Chairperson, Sir, there will be no completion per say, because we always need to improve the network, to replace pipes, to build things but for this one, the centre piece is the 300 m³ desalination plant, which will not be for the east because the east, Pointe Coton. We already have one 500 which is not working properly. We have to change an equipment on it to make it work to full capacity. You are having a new 350 so the capacity will be for the east using the old, the new, the old pipelines of 160, 850 per day. So this could be sufficient for distributing water at a rate of once per week to fulfill the dream and promise of our friend and this 300 m³ will come into operation in about one year. I am telling you, the tender was closed and opened yesterday. We have about four or five bidders. We are going to evaluate the technical bids, not me, the RPUC, and then after the technical bids, those who are responsive they will look at the financial bids. We are going very fast. In less than a month we can award the tender and then desalination is not sold in the town here, they need to build it. We expect it to be ignited in about one year, in about September, October next year 2025. And, I have insisted, I have told the consultant and RPUC that the network, the transfer network must be ready by this date and it is not a big job. It is a big job but it is not technically something which as if we cannot do in Rodrigues. Okay? Digging and putting the pipes is just using the correct parameters for the pumping stations, etc. So, this network also must be ready by this time so that we can face the 2025 drought season with better confidence. So, we can say that will be in about one year, the end of 2025 all this big project will be ready. We must also keep increasing depending on the needs of the population, needs of tourism. We cannot take people here and then there is no water to shower. And, of course, there is the billing aspect, all this we have to take into considering. And, I think, will be very much ready for the 2027 elections.

Mr Chairperson: We move to next question.

SEXUALLY INFECTIONS (STIS) IN RODRIGUES

(No. B/102) Mr J. R. Ramdally (First Local Region Member for Saint Gabriel) asked the Commissioner for Health and Others whether, in regard to the sexually infections (STIs) in Rodrigues, he will, for the benefit of the House, state and table (a) a breakdown of

the figures of the number of persons infected per STI, per age group, per sex for the last five years, and (b) the measures his Commission is contemplating to curb increasing trends, if any?

Mr Volbert: Mr Chairperson, Sir, looking at the figures of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) over the past decade, I would like to point out that had my predecessors engaged in education and preventive measures, we would not be in such a position today. Over the years there has been fluctuations and this is a sign that there were no concrete measures taken, and perhaps, the lack of information and transparency has led to such situation. The population should have been informed about the prevailing situation of STIs so at least those concerned could have taken the proper precautions. Public health safety lies in transparency and good communication to the population. The people have the right to know when there is threats to their health because it is the best way to prevent things from deteriorating. We are in an era where information is readily available everywhere for everything and yet if we fail to inform people on the things that truly matters as policy makers we are failing in our duties. I am not here to blame anyone about what has happened but I just want to make things clear that we could have done better.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I wish to inform the House that statistics pertaining to Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) are collected and compiled at the level of different units of the Health Services and the Statistic Office.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, as per the question of the respected Member to state and table the figures over the last five years per age group, per sex, I wish to inform this House that the figures available at present for all the STIs are not as per age group and sex.

For instance, for 2019 the only STI for which the details pertaining to age group and sex are available is HIV. I am tabling the figures pertaining to same. I will table the figures but after I have answered to the question. The information pertaining to the other STIs is being compiled and shall be tabled at a later stage.

For the years 2020 and 2021, I am tabling the details for all STIs tested at the Health Services per age group and per sex.

As regards years 2022 and 2023, figures are available for HIV per age group only. I wish to inform the House that details are being compiled and shall be submitted at a later stage.

/UNREVISED/

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I wish to go beyond this five-year period and present to the House the overall figures since 2013.

The published figures for STIs from 2013 to 2023 are as follows:

Disease Year	HIV/AIDS	Gonorrhoea	Hepatitis		Syphilis
			B	C	
2013	4	0	9	6	0
2014	3	0	9	6	15
2015	11	17	12	8	18
2016	7	19	16	14	55
2017	8	32	7	26	91
2018	13	71	35	14	148
2019	15	117	8	9	112
2020	11	69	2	16	126
2021	13	35	5	12	116
2022	14	11	6	9	156
2023	13	11	12	0	49
2024	6	5	1	4	216

Mr Chairperson, Sir, as per those figures, it is obvious that the figures pertaining to the prevalence of STIs has been alarming with an increasing trend since 2014. Furthermore, the House will concur that the prevalence of STIs as reported officially should be further multiplied so as to have a clearer picture of the real situation of a country. It is therefore very important to emphasise on contact tracing and to further strengthen on information, sensitisation and testing campaigns.

/UNREVISED/

For instance, we took Office in 2022, the number of persons infected by Syphilis stood at 156. The number of Syphilis at 2023 stood at 49. As from January up to 31 August 2024 the number stands at 216. As I was made aware of this sudden increase which is a very alarming situation, I had no choice but to come up with an aggressive strategy to address the issue. As a result, we decided, to launch a massive awareness and sensitisation campaign followed by a testing programme.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, considering those, my Commission has been amongst others:

- devising very aggressive information and sensitisation campaigns;
- investing into ways and means to further encourage a greater number of persons to be tested;
- investing into training and capacity building programmes of the Medical Officers and other human resources involved into STI management.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, my Commission is doing everything possible to address the issue of STI in Rodrigues and as a result we have decided to address the issue both on short and long term basis.

In the short term, we had a meeting with religious bodies and elderly groups so as to seek help in raising awareness about the issue and also to have consultations with them about the installation of condom machines in different locations. Following such meetings, we went ahead with the organisation of a mega screening and awareness campaign on the 10 August 2024 at Mourouk. Such event has been very successful as we were able to bring about 4,000 people of all age groups to attend the event. Out of this figure, 138 people, that is 86 females and 52 males were tested for HIV. Around 400 condoms and 200 pamphlets were distributed and as a result, there were 738 people who had been reached directly regarding STIs.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I also wish to add that we are finalising the installation of condom machines in different regions of the island as a measure to help the sexually active population to protect themselves. We wish to emphasise that such a measure is not to encourage people to have intercourse but rather to encourage the already sexually active ones to practice safe sex.

Further to that, in the long run, we are planning to:

- include complete sexual education in the school curriculum;

/UNREVISED/

- further train positive ambassadors in all secondary schools so that issues pertaining to sexual health can be addressed by peers;
- set up of 'point info santé' in secondary schools;
- address the issues of alcohol and drugs which is a contributing factor;
- promote awareness and screening for population at large at village level, workplace, etc.;
- increase access to preventive measures like, condoms etc.

Furthermore, we have had:

- exchange programs with the AIDS secretariat in Seychelles and Madagascar last year.
- 35 health staffs have been educated about stigmatisation against HIV positive patients.
- A doctor is soon to complete his postgraduate diploma in HIV/AIDS.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, a healthy population is our main objective and as a caring government, we will not rest until we achieved a zero new case detected yearly.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, a healthy population is our main objective and as a caring government, we will not rest until we achieve a zero new case detected yearly. A healthy population is the key to success to a prosperous country. Also we are planning to extend all the awareness campaigns to substance abuse awareness so as to decrease risk factors leading to STI's contamination. Thank you.

Mr Ramdally: M. le président, donc je n'ai pas bien entendu dans la réponse du commissaire. Il a parlé de quelques 138 personnes qui ont été testés pour le SIDA durant l'activité et il y a un autre chiffre pour les autres STIs, est-ce qu'il peut nous préciser le...

Mr Volbert: Il voulait que je répète la réponse, je vais le faire. 138, oui, et il y a 1433 pour les autres détections qui ont été fait. STI, 738.

Mr Ramdally: Ce sont des cas positifs de 738 cas. On n'a pas compris.

Mr Volbert: Ces gens-là ce sont fait tester pour ces maladies. Je n'ai pas dit que ce sont des cas positifs. Ce sont des gens qui ont été testé, qui ont fait leurs *screening* par rapport à STIs.

Mr Ramdally: Donc, on n'a pas encore eu les résultats pour ces personnes pour savoir combien de personnes ont des infections.

Mr Volbert: J'avais dit dans ma réponse qu'il y a que les HIV qu'on a eu jusqu'à le 31. Mais comme je vous ai dit on a fait ça le 10 août et les résultats sont attendus. Donc, je vais informer la Chambre des résultats des tests qu'on avait fait le 10 à Mourouk.

Mr Ramdally: M. le président, lors de cette activité justement on a entendu qu'il y avait un appel pour que les gens viennent faire la détection et on a donné de l'argent pour les quelques 100 ou 200 personnes qui viennent en premier. Est-ce que c'est une nouvelle politique de la commission que de payer lorsqu'on fait appel pour faire des détectations ou pour donner du sang ou je ne sais pas ? Est-ce que c'est une nouvelle... ?

Mr Volbert: M. le président, laissez-moi d'abord dire quelque chose. Ce respecté Membre était dans le gouvernement depuis 2013 et on avait ce *trend* de '*Sexual Transmissible Infection*' depuis 2013. Ils n'ont rien fait. Je ne sais pas s'ils ont fait quelque chose mais moi je pense qu'ils n'ont rien fait parce que ce *trend* s'ils ont fait quelque chose comme nous nous faisons actuellement aurait baissé. Donc, peut-être ils ont fait, ils ont appelé les gens à se faire dépister. Et, les gens ne sont pas venus. Et, nous nous avons apporté, ça ce n'est pas nouveau. Même à Maurice on fait ça. Il y a plusieurs places. On ne donne pas de l'argent.

(Interruptions)

The Minority Leader: M. le président, j'ai écouté le commissaire mentionner les chiffres, *the trend regarding the contamination since 2013*, je crois il a dit. Et, on a vu dans les chiffres qu'il a mentionnés c'est vrai *it fluctuated*. Il n'y avait pas ce *trend* augmentant comme vous dites aujourd'hui. Quand vous venez dire que nous n'avons pas fait d'éducation mais Syphilis si on est cette année 216 nouveaux cas mais c'est sous vous parce que Syphilis on peut guérir. On ne peut pas venir aujourd'hui *imputing motive* juste pour épater la galerie. Ce que moi je veux savoir, étant donné que vous avez ce chiffre aujourd'hui, c'est vrai ce chiffre est alarmant, on veut savoir nous qu'est-ce que vous avez fait maintenant parce qu'il y a une question de test, payer les gens pour avoir des tests, ainsi de suite, mais la prise en charge de ces personnes. Nous savons que nous avons au niveau de HIV, une unité et nous savons aussi qu'à Maurice on a des cliniques pour les STIs. Est-ce que face à cette situation préoccupante vous avez décidé de mettre en place des cliniques STIs et combien de staffs seront dédiés pour la prise en charge de ces personnes contaminer ?

Mr Volbert: M. le président, il y a quatre questions dans une question. Je vais essayer de répondre à la Minority Leader. Pour dire que les cas se sont augmentés sous ce gouvernement. Vous savez quand j'ai eu les résultats, les datas j'ai demandé à ce qu'on fasse des tests. On a fait appel à beaucoup de gens. Vous savez je ne suis pas médecin, je vais répondre, il y a les médecins qui sont là. Je pense si je fais mal vous allez me signalé. Donc, le Syphilis ça se manifeste à deux façon, il y a des petits boutons et pas de petits boutons. Des petits boutons sur les parties privées. Donc, ce que je veux dire, il y a peut-être des gens qui se sont infectés, ils ne sont pas partis à l'hôpital pour se faire dépister. Le cas est grave parce que de janvier on a eu, je pense, 48 cas, février 50, 2024 je parle et on a fait la demande et là où je pars dans les fonctions je fais passer les messages, je demande à ces jeunes, à ces vieux, il n'y a pas les jeunes, il y a les *sugar daddy* aussi qui sont infectés. Il faut que vous le sachiez. Il y a le *sugar daddy*. Il y a le *sugar mammy*. Il n'y a pas que les jeunes. Donc, on a fait les messages pour dire à ces gens-là de venir se faire dépister. C'est pour que vous voyez le *trend* à baisser à partir d'avril. On a eu des case, 48, 50. Je crois le *peak* était en mars, si je ne me trompe pas. Et puis, ça à continuer à baisser jusqu'à ce qu'on a que neuf cas là au mois d'août. C'est-à-dire le message a été reçu par la population. On fait notre demande contrairement à vous, on ne casse pas des trucs. Vous voulez faire savoir que nous à la commission... dans ma réponse je l'ai dit on prône la transparence. Une chose j'aimerais souligner, M. le président, parce que d'après la Minority, d'après leur question elle voulait faire savoir qu'on cache des... parce que c'était avec nous.

(Interruptions)

Attendez ! Vous savez, M. le président, il y a une information que j'aimerais souligner ici. Vous savez qu'on a eu Leptospirosis en 2013 à Rodrigues. Est-ce que quelqu'un dans salle-là était au courant ? Leptospirosis...

(Interruptions)

C'est vous quand vous étiez là vous cachiez les informations. Vous ne faisiez rien. C'est pourquoi je vous ai dit que vous ne faisiez rien avec les STIs. Vous n'avez rien fait. En ce qui concerne la question.

Mr Ramdally: On a point of order, Mr Chairperson, Sir. C'est quoi le rapport entre Leptospirose et *sexually transmitted diseases* ?

(Interruptions)

/UNREVISED/

Mr Chairperson: You are a senior Member and you know that the Chairperson has no control over the answer. I have controlled on your answer. This is according to our Standing Order.

Mr Volbert: Je vais donc répondre à la Minority Leader. C'est par rapport à une clinique, la prise en charge. C'est pour ça qu'on a envoyé un médecin à Maurice. Il va terminer en janvier. Il y a le docteur Manan qui est à Maurice actuellement qui suit un cours, un diplôme, un *post-graduate* in HIV. C'est pour venir prendre en charge parce qu'on n'avait pas. Et vous n'avez pas prévu quand vous étiez là. Merci.

Mr Lisette: The situation is alarming, I do agree with that and something has to be done. Nevertheless, the Commission mentioned that the number of cases have decreased but for us to have a good comparison what should we have? We should have the number of person who has been tested. If we say that so many persons have been tested and so many persons have been positive or compare with another year. Now what is happening? We having an alarming case in the population and it may be that there are less people who are coming for detection or for testing. So, this is an issue that he has to bear in mind as at we are speaking now. Nevertheless, a second question which I have not get from the Commissioner, he stated that there is no data for age group and sex. I think it has not been compiled may be from the different sources as at now. For us to be effective in attacking the problem, we have to stay focus on the age group, that is, those being active and those being affected. This is why I would like to ask him from a declaration that he made in the public, in the meeting with the religious bodies which he mentioned in his answers, he mentioned that there has been an alarming rate among the sugar daddy. Can we know from which source is his information?

Mr Volbert: For HIV there are but for the others I cannot come here and lay down on the Table of the Assembly something that has not been compiled so far. I have the total amount but for age group I do not have...

(Interruptions)

Mr Ramdally: M. le président, est-ce que je peux demander au commissaire s'il va mettre en place une unité qui va s'occuper des STI autres que le HIV ?

Mr Volbert: J'ai déjà répondu à cette question. Je ne sais pas mon ami, mon cousin, le respecté Membre, il n'écoute jamais. J'ai dit qu'il y a un médecin qui est en formation à Maurice et *shortly we will open a clinic for STIs*.

The Minority Leader: *One question.* Le commissaire a parlé dans sa réponse de la mise en place de l'éducation sexuelle complète. Donc, je sais que ça concerne l'éducation mais puisque vous parlez aujourd'hui de l'éducation des jeunes au niveau de la sexualité. Nous avons commencé un projet financer sous le UNDP pour l'éducation complète. Il y a le manuel déjà prêt, il y a les projets déjà commencer est-ce que vous allez justement continuer ce projet ? Parce qu'il y a eu depuis deux ans une rupture. Est-ce que c'est ce projet-là dont vous parlez ?

Mr Volbert: Je ne sais pas de quel projet vous faites allusion mais si c'était un bon projet... c'est vrai parce que nous tous ici à part quelques-uns de l'autre côté qui ont fait des '*lives*' pour dénoncer ce que nous faisions à Mourouk pour le *mass detecting*. Peut-être ils n'avaient pas les informations. Ils étaient *lives* pour dire que c'est une mauvaise pratique. Mais si c'est une bonne chose, Madame la Minority Leader,...

(Interruptions)

Madame la Minority Leader, vous voulez entendre votre réponse. Si c'est une bonne chose... puisque vous dites vous-même que c'est une chose pour l'éducation donc je vais demander à ma Chef de Département de chercher le livret et on va *go through* et mettre en pratique s'il y a des bonnes recommandations.

Mr Chairperson: Next question.

“ECOLE DE FOOT” & “CENTRE DE FORMATION”/U20 - RODRIGUES

(No. B/103) Mr J. P. Spéville (Fourth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner for Youth & Sports and Others whether, in regard to 'Ecole de Foot' and 'Centre de Formation' including U20 in Rodrigues, he will state if any facilities have been made available thereto from 2020 to date and, in the affirmative, to state and table a list thereof as provided to the different teams?

Mr Ravina: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the policy of my Commission is to provide the maximum facilities to young athletes to support the development of sports from grassroots level. This includes the provision of sports equipment, transport facilities, and other facilities for participation in local and national competitions. Facilities provided to 'Ecole de Foot' and 'Centre de Formation de Football' varies.

‘Ecole de Foot’ participants are provided with transport facilities to attend inter school league matches during weekends. They are also provided with T-Shirts, track suits and stockings for football festivals during the year based on their performance.

Centre de ‘Formation de Football’ including U-20 are provided with football shoes, shorts and jerseys, stockings and shin guards.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I wish to inform the House that there is one ‘Ecole de Sport’ which has made a request for facilities. My Commission has just received a shipment of equipment and jerseys and this school will receive same shortly.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am tabling the list of different facilities provided to different teams from 2020 up to date. Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

Mr Spéville: M. le président, est-ce que le commissaire de Sport peut nous dire s’il a un plan de développement pour mieux structurer les centres de formation incluant U20 ?

Mr Ravina: Mr Chairperson, of course, yes. I have called the coach of the U20 at my office to listen to him and to look for any additional formation for U20 and any other different formation for U20.

Mr Spéville: M. le président, les jeunes footballeurs de U20 ont beaucoup de talent. On a pu voir l’évolution de l’équipe de U20. Ils ont même remporté la Coupe de la République l’année dernière en 2023. Donc, est-ce que le commissaire de Sport peut nous dire s’il y a un programme de détection international pour l’aboutissement de cette structure ? Est-ce qu’il y a eu des négociations ?

Mr Ravina: M. le président, je dois vous dire franchement... *Pa ankor fini ? Okay sorry.*

(Interruptions)

Mr Spéville: Est-ce qu’il y a eu des négociations, sinon pourquoi ?

Mr Ravina: M. le président, jusqu’à l’heure, non. Pour des négociations ça ne dépend pas de ma commission, ça dépend de la Mauritius Football Association.

Mr Baptiste: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Commissioner mentioned that there are other facilities but I do not know what are the other facilities. But I would like to ask him whether he is aware that prior to his coming to office U20 was also provided with a lunch pack (*pain fourrer*) and why this no longer being made available to them?

Mr Ravina: Mr Chairperson, c'est-à-dire pour l'année financière, l'année dernière, on n'a pas eu la finance pour donner cette supplément au U20 mais cette année si c'est prévu on va donner le supplément à l'équipe de U20.

Mr Baptiste: Yes, with regard to equipment also, I understand that there is an issue of late delivery of these equipment. Normally, they should be given prior to the beginning of the tournament, of the season or training period. Why is it that there has been such a delay in the delivery of these equipment which are very essential for these youths?

Mr Ravina: M. le président, ça ne date pas d'aujourd'hui, c'était toujours comme ça. Mais moi je suis au courant bien sûr qu'ils font face de difficulté par rapport à leurs équipements. Mais ce que je vais faire cette année-ci je vais demander à tous les entraîneurs d'envoyer leur requête à l'avance pour qu'on puisse leur donner leurs équipements à temps.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, le commissaire a parlé d'un manque de budget qui a fait qu'ils n'ont pas pu continuer à donner aux enfants leurs pack lunch. Est-ce que je peux savoir combien de jeune sont concernés par ces différentes écoles de foot et les centres de formation, donc pour savoir quel est ce budget qui manque pour ça ?

Mr Ravina: M. le président, on a à peu près 60 enfants qui est actuellement dans le centre de formation et les écoles de foot. Mais concernant le budget, on ne peut pas dire exactement le budget c'est combien.

(Interruptions)

Oui, c'est vrai, je vous dis.

Mr Baptiste: Yes, I understand also that there have been several requests for an additional coach to support the existing one for U20, is the Commissioner aware of this? And, whether he will take on board this request?

Mr Ravina: Bien sûr, M. le président, on a pris connaissance de ça. Bien sûr, on va recruter les entraîneurs justement pour donner un coup de main à U20 et aussi à d'autres écoles de foot et d'autres centres de formation.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I think that the Commissioner has not given the right information. Because if I just flashed out for U20, there should be at least 20 *stagiaires*. For *centre formation* there will be at least 20 *stagiaires* for a team. So, this leave us with only 40 *stagiaires* for the *école de foot*. May I know from him, how many *école de foot* do we have in Rodrigues?

/UNREVISED/

Mr Ravina: *In Rodrigues*, on a cinq centres de formation et huit écoles de foot. De ces huit écoles de foot. On a quatre catégories dans ces huit écoles de foot. Et pour le centre de formation on a deux dans chaque centre de formation. Deux équipes.

(Interruptions)

The Minority Leader: M. le président, nous savons que ces jeunes des différentes de centre de formation ou école de foot avaient eu l'occasion et des opportunités dans le passé chaque année pour avoir des échanges à Maurice. Et on a vu que depuis deux ans ça n'a pas eu lieu. On peut savoir pourquoi ? Et si le commissaire compte contempler justement redonner cette chance à ces jeunes pour des échanges ?

Mr Ravina: Non, M. le président, ce n'est pas vrai. Cette année on a à peu près quatre équipes qui ont été à Maurice. Non, non, ce n'est pas vrai.

(Interruptions)

Non, non, ce n'est pas vrai, M. le président.

Mr Chairperson: The Table has been advised that PQ B/104 has been withdrawn. So, we are going to break for one hour for lunch.

At 12.55 p.m., the sitting was suspended for one hour.

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

REGISTRATION – DAY CARE CENTRES/TRAINING OF CARE GIVERS

(No. B/104) Ms M. N. Raffaut (Second Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner for Women's Affairs and Others whether, in regard to the registration of day care centres and the training of care givers, she will inform the House on where matters stand as at date and table the number of (a) applicants, (b) day care centres already registered, (c) pending applications and reasons therefor, and (d) new applications?

(Withdrawn)

PROVISION OF ASSISTANCE/SOCIAL HOUSING SCHEMES

– FINANCIAL YEAR 2024-2025

(No. B/105) Mr L. D. Baptiste (Second Local Region Member for Grande Montagne) asked the Commissioner for Housing and Others whether, in regard to the provision of assistance under the Social Housing Schemes for Financial Year 2024-2025,

he will state if his Commission has now set the new terms and conditions that will be applied for the construction of housing units by contractors and, if so, to provide the details thereof?

Mr Volbert: Mr Chairperson, Sir, as I previously announced, I wish to further inform the House that regarding the Social Housing Schemes offered at the level of my Commission, besides maintain the Self-Help scheme since it is a remarkable scheme, my Commission has reviewed the other schemes given that there is always room for improvement. Indeed, my Commission has undertaken several meetings with concerned staff of the Housing Unit but also with other relevant stakeholders regarding the terms and condition that would apply to the Social Housing Schemes.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, as approved by the Executive Council last month, the eligible criteria that would henceforth apply under the improved Social Housing Schemes 2024/2025 stipulate that the beneficiary should:

- Be parent of at least one child;
- Be at least 25 years old;
- Possess a state land lease;
- Not possess a concrete housing unit or an NHDC;
- Be a resident of Rodrigues.

Under this improved scheme, there would now be the possibility that the construction of housing units be undertaken by contractors. This has been approved by the Executive Council on 16 August 2024.

For the smooth and successful implementation of this improved scheme, whereby the potential beneficiary would be in a position to either bring in his/her own contribution to the cost of construction or to proceed with a loan to bring in the appropriate contribution, the banking institutions of Rodrigues would be our main partners. This is why a meeting has already been held with the different banking institutions to present the improved scheme.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, the House will recall the then scheme whereby the Housing units were entrusted to a Contractor who was selected by the Beneficiary out of a list of contractors as shortlisted by the then Regional Government.

I wish to inform the House of the findings and recommendation as per National Audit Office (NAO) Report of 2019-2020 pertaining to that way of proceeding. Same is qualified in the report of the National Audit Office as being non-compliant to legislation.

/UNREVISED/

Mr Chairperson, Sir, with your permission, allow me to quote the part of the National Audit Report, as from page 50 under point 8.2.2 entitled Public Procurement Act not complied with which reads as follows:

“No tendering procedures were initiated by the RRA to choose the lowest responsive bidder for the construction of housing units for the beneficiaries selected under the New Social Housing Scheme, contrary to Public Procurement Act...”

To same observation, Mr Chairperson, Sir, the National Audit Office made the following comment: *“Given that the New Social Housing Scheme is being financed mainly by RRA, it is the latter’s responsibility to select the Contractors for the construction of housing units through tendering procedures, and not that of the beneficiaries.”*

Therefore, considering the remarks and the recommendation of the National Audit, as a matter of transparency and good governance, my Commission will initiate action for the launching of an Expression of Interest to enlist the services of those contractors who satisfy a list of approved criteria as defined by the Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB).

My Commission will proceed with the proper procurement exercise to secure a pool of contractors registered with the CIDB, who will provide their services for the construction of the social housing units. The bank will thereafter be provided with the details of contractors assigned to each beneficiary.

The purpose of this tendering procedure is to ensure that the selected contractors satisfy that technical and particularly financial obligation as required by CIDB.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, to ensure the completion of those social housing units and that there is no delay in the construction due to any financial constraint; the contractors will need to have a bank warranty of at least Rs2 M and in case of delay will have to settle a penalty fee.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I wish to inform the House that the construction of the housing units by contractors and the Self-Help Scheme is applicable for the New Social Housing Scheme 50 m² and 60 m² and up-grading of Trust-Fund up to 60 m². Those projects will be categorised in four different schemes.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards to Scheme I, I wish to inform the House of the different modalities thereof, which are the following:

/UNREVISED/

For the New Social Housing Scheme I, whereby the surface areas of the houses are of 50 m² and 60 m² and up-grading of Trust-Fund up to 60 m² for beneficiaries earning up to Rs10,000.

% Contribution	50 m² Housing Unit Contribution (Rs)	60 m² Housing Unit Contribution (Rs)
92% by RRA	1,150,000	1,324,800
8 % by Beneficiary	100,000	115,200
Total Cost	1,250,000	1,440,000

Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards to Scheme II, I wish to inform the House of the different modalities thereof, which are the following:

For the New Social Housing Scheme II 50 m² and 60 m² and up-grading of Trust-Fund up to 60 m² targeting those beneficiaries earning between Rs10,001-Rs 15,000:

% Contribution	50m² Housing Unit Contribution (Rs) & and Up-grading of Trust-Fund up to 60m² (Rs)	60m² Housing Unit Contribution (Rs)
80% by RRA	1,000,000	1,152,000
20% by Beneficiary	250,000	288,000
Total Cost	1,250,000	1,440,000

Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards to Scheme III, I wish to inform the House of the different modalities thereof, which are the following:

New Social Housing Scheme III 50 m² and 60 m² and up-grading of Trust-Fund up to 60 m² aiming those persons earning between Rs15,001-Rs20,000.

/UNREVISED/

% Contribution	50 m² Housing Unit Contribution & Up-grading of Trust-Fund up to 60 m² (Rs)	60 m² Housing Unit Contribution (Rs)
60% by RRA	750,000	864,000
40 % by Beneficiary	500,000	576,000
Total Cost	1,250,000	1,440,000

Mr Chairperson Sir, as regards to Scheme IV, I wish to inform the House of the different modalities thereof, which are the following:

New Social Housing Scheme IV 50 m² and 60 m² and up-grading of Trust-Fund up to 60m² beneficiaries earning between Rs20,001-Rs25,000.

% Contribution	50 m² Housing Unit Contribution & Up-grading of Trust-Fund up to 60 m² (Rs)	60 m² housing unit Contribution (Rs)
30% by RRA	375,000	432,000
70 % by Beneficiary	875,000	1,008,000
Total Cost	1,250,000	1,440,000

M. le président, nous avons à cœur le bien-être et l'épanouissement de notre population surtout des personnes qui vivent dans des situations précaires. Ainsi, en ce faisant, nous visons à ce que notre population ne se soit pas accablé par le poids des dettes auprès des institutions bancaires. Ces plans d'aides améliorés vont dans ce sens. Merci.

Mr Baptiste: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to ask the Commissioner what is the fundamental difference between these schemes that he has just enumerated here and the previous one set up by the previous government in 2016-2017?

Mr Volbert: M. le président, il y a beaucoup de différence. Par exemple, la contribution des bénéficiaires, il y a que 8%, premier différence. Et deuxième différence, c'est qu'auparavant c'est la Rodrigues Regional Assembly qui se portait garantie pour le *loan* à la banque mais maintenant c'est le bénéficiaire lui-même qui se porte garant pour un *loan* qu'il va emprunter à la banque.

Mr Baptiste: Yes, okay. But I would like to know it is because your previous scheme has failed. Because up to now no one has been able to secure a housing unit already completed. Anyway, I would like to ask the Commissioner what has been the outcome of the negotiation with the bank, the nature, because he mentioned with other partners, there were discussion with the banking intuitions, what were the main ... discussion?

Mr Volbert: M. le président, nous finalisons tous les modalités et je vais venir ici avec un *statement* s'il n'y a pas de question de l'autre pour vous informer de ce que nous avons entrepris et nous avons arrêté avec la banque.

Mr Baptiste: Yes, Mr Chairperson, Sir, is Commissioner aware that the main difficulties face the beneficiaries in the past were to be able to secure this contribution. That is why there was a special negotiation with the banks and what you are trying to set up will defeat the purpose of the scheme with the MOUs with the banks. Knowing that up to now not a single beneficiary has not been able to repay his loan and that up to now the RRA has not disbursed a single rupee for defaulters.

Mr Volbert: M. le président, j'ai été informé qu'il y a des bénéficiaires qui a des aréages avec la banque. Il y a pas mal de bénéficiaire. C'est pourquoi, M. le président, nous avons gardé le *scheme* de Self-Help. C'est pour ceux qui n'ont pas accès à des *loan* à la banque, ils peuvent avoir recours à ce Self-Help qui a été mis en place en 2022.

Mr Baptiste: Yes, I will come up with what the Audit Report has said about this. But the Commissioner should know that he is dealing with housing units for low income groups. And, we are all aware that these are the groups categories of people who are facing much difficulties to obtain, to get a decent housing unit. And, the Self-Help has not proved to be efficient up to now. Can the Commissioner inform the House about the measures he would envisage to take in order to ensure that these people who are since 2022, are waiting for their construction materials to continue the next phase of their housing unit. What he envisages to take in order to make this system more efficient?

Mr Volbert: M. le président, moi dans la place du respecté Membre Baptiste, je n'allais pas ouvert les yeux mais puisque... mes yeux. Il parlait de ça depuis la dernière fois. Et nous ce que nous avons fait, il y a un plan que nous allons mettre en place, par exemple, ceux qui n'ont pas pu terminer leurs maisons et il y a un *social enquiry* qui va être faite. A ce moment-là, on va au niveau...

(Interruptions)

/UNREVISED/

Laissez-moi répondre, Madame. Si vous connaissez la réponse ne me posez pas la question ! Et à ce moment-là on va terminer ces maisons-là pour ces bénéficiaires qui n'ont pas pu terminer leurs maisons depuis 2022.

Mr Lisette: I would like to highlight rather the point raised by the Commissioner for Housing, make a comparison of those who are under self-help and those who are going to have a new scheme. First of all, is he aware that *oultre* the problem of delivery of materials there are the beneficiaries having problem in securing a loan already to contribute for the labour cost.

Mr Volbert: M. le président, je ne suis pas quelqu'un de la banque mais il y a mon collègue qui était ancien *Manager* de la banque, il peut nous confirmer, Rs100,000 c'est un *personal loan*, c'est dérisoire. Si quelqu'un qui veut avoir une maison.

(Interruptions)

C'est 25%, c'est à peu près Rs238,000 avant. C'était différent.

(Interruptions)

Si vous connaissez la réponse pourquoi poser les questions alors ?

(Interruptions)

Comme disait le Deputy Chief Commissioner tout-à-l'heure, 2025 on va se voir avec le plan que nous mettons en place on va voir.

Mr Baptiste: Yes, Mr Chairperson, Sir, with the coming up of this new scheme, is it not an own goal against his own Chief Commissioner who did not believe in this specific project?

(Interruptions)

Mr Volbert: This is your opinion.

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: Next question.

SETTING UP – NURSING SCHOOL/RODRIGUES

(No. B/106) Mrs R.M.F. Gaspard Pierre Louis, C.S.K. (Minority Leader) asked the Commissioner for Health and Others whether his Commission has any collaboration with any institution for the setting up of a nursing school in Rodrigues and, if yes, to state the

/UNREVISED/

name of the institution, indicating if all (a) requirements have been met for setting same including physical infrastructure, equipment and staffing, and (b) clearances have been obtained for the launching of the course?

Mr Volbert: Mr Chairperson, Sir, *zot poz kestion apr zot koze zot pa les mwa repon. Pa fasil ek zot la hein.*

Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Polytechnics Mauritius Ltd contacted my Commission in 2023 highlighting the spacing problem that was being faced at Baie Malgache Campus given the high interest of our Rodriguan people towards the opportunity as provided by this training institution to pursue further studies whilst not leaving the island.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, Polytechnics, Mauritius Ltd (PML) is a body corporate established in 2017 under the aegis of the Ministry of Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research with the objective of running programs to serve the emerging needs of Mauritius for a qualified human resource at middle-professional level. Programs provided by PML are close to the needs of the world of work in all sectors, and produce professionals who are adapted and resilient to the growing needs of the economy in terms of workforce, which is both strongly qualified and expertly skilled. PML is a registered institution for Professional, scientific and Technical activities as per enclosed copy of Business Registration Card.

Since April 2023, the Polytechnics Mauritius Ltd is actually delivering a Diploma in Midwifery and Obstetrical Nursing Course and a Diploma in Health Care Assistance.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, my Commission strongly believes that capacity building of the personnel of the Health Services and that providing training programmes to young people in view of ensuring a pool of qualified personnel ready to join the public service in those fields whereby there is a shortage of staff will help improve service delivery.

Consequently, discussions were initiated between my Commission and the Polytechnics Mauritius Ltd to support the delivery of training programmes in Rodrigues.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Commission for Health and PML in March 2024 highlighting the respective responsibility of each party to same agreement. As per same, it is agreed that the Commission for Health would provide a space to PML to set up and run a Nursing school and to deliver training in the Nursing and Allied Health sector. It was also agreed as per same agreement that the site

of the Nursing school will bear the name of Polytechnics Mauritius Limited Nursing School; and the Nursing school would bear with the logos and marketing materials linked to PML.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards part (a) of the question, I wish to inform the House that my Commission acts as a facilitator to ensure that all infrastructure and others are available for the smooth running of the training programmes. In fact, I am informed that appropriate partitioning works to provide the adequate infrastructure for the smooth delivery of training have been done and appropriate equipment procured by PML. As regards the staffing, it is of the responsibility of the PML to arrange for the relevant human resources accordingly.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards part (b) of the question, as I previously mentioned the PML body corporate acts under the aegis of the Ministry of Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research with the objective of running programs to serve the emerging needs of Mauritius for a qualified human resource at middle-professional level. The training courses delivered in Rodrigues are similar to those being run in Mauritius. Therefore, no additional clearance is required for the course to be run in Rodrigues as well.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, je suis choqué de la réponse surtout par rapport à la partie (b) du commissaire de la Santé disant que le PML n'a pas besoin d'autre clearance que du *Ministry of Education to run courses in the health field*, principalement au niveau de nursing. Le commissaire est-il au courant que dans la République de Maurice il y a tout un *framework*, un *clinical framework* pour une école de nursing sous lesquelles toutes institutions qui dispensent des formations dans le domaine de la santé *they should abide to that* ? Est-il au courant qu'aujourd'hui les formations que doivent être dispenser par toutes institutions dans le domaine de nursing ces formations doivent être valider par le Central Nursing School et est-ce qu'il peut nous dire si cette formation donner à Rodrigues ? Parce qu'il n'y a pas une question parce que PML peut donner à Maurice. Sinon l'Université de Maurice peut venir ici ouvrir un centre. Est-ce qu'il a vérifié, il a assuré que les prérequis en terme de certification, PML détient ces certifications pour pouvoir dispenser ces formations Oà nos jeunes à Rodrigues ?

Mr Volbert: M. le président, moi-même je suis choke par quantité de fois que la Minorité soit choke. A toutes les questions elle est choqué. Vous voyez, Polytechnics Mauritius donne des formations à Maurice, à Pamplémousses et à Flacq. Il y a deux institutions. Donc, comme j'ai expliqué dans ma réponse, c'est un *body corporate* depuis

2017, c'est-à-dire, il est au norme, c'est au norme. Donc, quel est le problème ? Quel est le problème ? C'est Polytechnics Mauritius, ce n'est pas Polytechnics Rodrigues, Madame la Minority Leader. Donc, pour moi ça n'a pas de différence parce que étant donné que Polytechnics Mauritius donne des cours à Maurice. C'est *okay*, on est dans un *same republic*.

The Minority Leader: I am afraid the Commissioner is getting thing so wrong. Parce que, M. le président, je parlais de ce *training framework*. Dans ce *training framework* il est bien clair que pour avoir la validation de Nursing Council et même de l'*approval* du Higher Education Commission (HEC), il y a une question de *physical facilities*. Est-ce que ces *physical facilities* qui existe à Pamplemousses ou ailleurs ou au PML, *the approval*, est-ce qu'il y a un *body*, parce qu'il y a un *body* qui doit venir vérifier ici si on a ces *physical facilities*. Et si vous regardez bien, je ne vais pas rentrer dans les détails. *This is available on internet. You will verify and you will check that these facilities are unfortunately unavailable as at now in Rodrigues. So, I am afraid that the Commissioner is getting things wrong and I would like him to urgently verify and ensure that we are not.* On n'entraîne pas nos jeunes dans *enn kales kase!* Parce qu'au niveau de nursing ces conditions doivent être valide et à l'heure où je vous parle je voudrais que vous me dites s'il y a eu un dossier déposé pour Rodrigues, pour l'opération de PML, Nursing School devant le HEC et devant le Nursing Council ?

Mr Volbert: Comme je vous ai dit dans ma réponse, M. le président, nous on donne des facilités à Polytechnics Mauritius mais si la respecté Minority Leader veut avoir plus de renseignement en ce qui concerne le *day-to-day running* ou tous ce qui se fait par la Polytechnics Mauritius, qu'elle aille chercher les informations. Moi, je n'ai pas ces informations. Et en plus, on a les *Trainees* qui sont actuellement à l'hôpital qui font des internats, à l'hôpital actuellement. Et en plus, aussi il y a toutes les facilités, je pense il y a toutes les facilités. Et nous avons fait la demande a ce que le training pour ces officiers, il y a 2/3 qui vont être fait ici et 1/3 à Maurice. Donc, pour moi je ne vois pas quel est le problème. C'est pour ça quelqu'un a écrit à Mauritius Institute of Health (MIH) pour demander à ce que le Training School ne soit pas fait à Rodrigues. Et donc, la Polytechnics Mauritius est venu avec sa proposition, est un *corporate body*, elle fait la demande à Maurice. Et je pense qu'il y a la question 107, il y a cette réponse – « *accredited by the MIH* ». Donc, il n'y a pas de problème s'il a été accrédité par le MIH où est le problème. Je ne vois pas le problème.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, je dois peut-être prendre l'occasion pour dire que c'est nous sous l'ancien régime qui a fait venir le PML à Rodrigues. C'était

principalement pour les formations dans le domaine de l'informatique et pas pour la santé parce que nous connaissons justement ces normes.

Le commissaire a parlé de la formation des jeunes qui continue à ce moment et a parlé de 2/3 à Rodrigues et 1/3 à Maurice. Est-ce que le commissaire est au courant que dans le cadre de cette formation dès la deuxième et troisième année les jeunes doivent faire des *clinical placement*. C'est-à-dire, au lieu de 2/3 ici et 1/3 là-bas, c'est seulement la première année qui doit se faire ici et les deux années à Maurice. Est-ce qu'il est préparé à envoyer nos jeunes pour cette deuxième et troisième année pour leur formation, pour une formation complète, pour être sûre qu'on est en ligne avec ce qui est nécessaire pour ce *diploma* et est-ce qu'il est disposé aujourd'hui s'engager pour envoyer ces jeunes à Maurice parce qu'ici nous n'avons pas les infrastructures qu'il faut ?

Mr Volbert: M. le président, ces jeunes sont placés dans des différents départements à l'hôpital et je pense qu'à Rodrigues on a presque tous les... à l'exception de SAMU ou d'emergency... On n'a pas beaucoup de département qui ne sont pas présent à Rodrigues. Donc, ces gens-là vont être placés à Maurice. Je ne sais pas quel est le problème ? Permettez-moi, M. le président, de faire une petite parenthèse. J'étais à Maurice en juillet, on m'a montré une lettre que quelqu'un a envoyé de Rodrigues pour dire pourquoi on fait le training des Prisons Officers à Rodrigues ? Mais quel est le problème avec ces training-là. Est-ce que ces gens-là pensent que Rodrigues n'est pas capable, les Rodriguais ne sont pas capables ? Quel est ce problème ? Quel est votre problème ? Je ne comprends pas. C'est ça l'autonomie.

Mr Baptiste: Mr Chairperson, Sir, we are more *préoccuper par rapport* à quality education. Because here when they talked about facilities for clinical experiences which need to be started by mentors with specialist qualifications as far as possible. *Je donne quelques exemples*, burns and plastic surgery, neonatology, cardiology, oncology, neurology, etc., etc., intensive care unit. And, it is also mentioned that it should be affiliated with a parent hospital et plus loin on dit affiliated hospital should be in the radius to 15 to 30 kms. I would like to ask the Commissioner whether they have gone through all these to find out what exactly the facilities which are available in Rodrigues and which are not available so that we can really give to our students, our people of Rodrigues the quality education because it is not a matter of doing a course like that but it should be quality so that to take care of our people in Rodrigues.

/UNREVISED/

Mr Volbert: M. le président, j'ai dit dans ma réponse tout à l'heure il y a des départements qui ne sont pas présent à Rodrigues. C'est pour cela que nous avons fait la demande pour envoyer ces gens-là à Maurice. Je ne sais pas, je dois répéter ça à quatre ou cinq fois-là. Je ne sais pas si M. Baptiste veut attirer l'attention quand j'ai dit trois ou quatre fois j'ai répété, les services qu'on n'a pas ici, les départements qu'on n'a pas ici on va envoyer ces gens-là à Maurice pour qu'ils puissent avoir ces facilités-là. Mais quel est le problème ? Quel est le problème ? Okay?

**TRAINEE NURSES RECRUITED - RODRIGUES ESTABLISHMENT/2022 -
STARTED TRAINING IN MAURITIUS**

(No. B/107) Mr J. R. Ramdally (First Local Region Member for Saint Gabriel) asked the Commissioner for Health and Others whether all Trainee Nurses who have been recruited by the Public Service Commission for the Rodrigues establishment in 2022 have started their training in Mauritius and, if not, why not?

Mr Volbert: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that on 15 July 2022, 30 Trainee Nurses were appointed in the Health Services.

Out of the above 30 Trainee Nurses, three trainees were not made to proceed to Mauritius pending clearance from the Island Chief Executive Office as these trainees had already undergone training in Nursing at the Polytechnics Mauritius Ltd (PML) in Mauritius.

I am informed that consequently they are therefore fully compliant with requirements of the Nursing Council. Recommendation was made to the Public Service Commission (PSC) for their appointment but latter has advised that the views of the Ministry of Health and Wellness be sought with regards to their training. The Trainee Nurses seek equivalence of their certificate from Higher Education Commission in order to determine whether the National Diploma in Nursing at the Polytechnics Mauritius Ltd is equivalent to the training conducted by the School of Nursing leading to the National Diploma in Nursing.

I wish to further recall that as mentioned previously, Polytechnics Mauritius Ltd (PML) is a body corporate established under the aegis of the Ministry of Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research and has the mandate of running programs to serve the emerging needs of Mauritius for a qualified human resource at middle-professional level. In fact, given that PML is a fully accredited body by the MIH, courses delivered by this training school are recognised ones.

Mr Ramdally: M. le président, le commissaire vient de mentionner que les cours de PML sont des cours au norme mais comment il explique le fait que des étudiants qui ont été au PML à Maurice, c'est trois Trainees Nurses actuellement dans le service ils ne sont pas des *fully qualified nurses officers* ?

Mr Volbert: Je ne peux pas la réponse à la question parce que j'ai dit ça dans ma réponse.

Mr Chairperson: Come with the next question, please. This question is not allowed.

(Interruptions)

Mr Ramdally: M. le président, une des conditions qui devait être respectée par les Trainee Nurses et qu'ils doivent signer un *bond*. Est-ce que ces trois Trainee Nurses ils ont signés un *bond* ?

Mr Volbert: M. le président, je n'ai pas les informations. Si le respectable Membre veut avoir des informations qu'il vient avec une autre question la prochaine fois.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to come to the three nurses or I think they should be called Trainee Nurses or Nurses having a qualification from PML, I would like to know whether they are working right now at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital as a full-fledged Nursing Officer or a Trainee Nurse?

Mr Volbert: M. le président, j'ai dit dans ma réponse qu'il y a les trois – "*three trainees were not made to proceed to Mauritius pending clearance etc*" They are actually at Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Donc, ils attendent à ce que leurs demandes soient approuver. Le PSC a été informé. Ces Nurses-là, ces infirmiers, ils sont reconnus par le Nursing Council of Mauritius. Ils ont leurs registrations. Ce sont des infirmiers qualifiés. Donc, pour moi, il n'y a pas de problème. On attend depuis un bout... Vous étiez-là, vous connaissez comment ça marche quand vous étiez au gouvernement. Le Island Chief Executive a déjà demandé le *clearance from the PSC and we are waiting for the PSC*. So, du moment qu'on a le *clearance*, ces gens-là vont être recruter Nursing Officers.

Mr Ramdally: M. le président, est-ce que je pourrais demander au commissaire s'il est au courant que les étudiants qui étaient dans le même batch que ces trois Trainee Nurses à l'hôpital, ils sont actuellement au Nursing School dans le training à Maurice ?

Mr Volbert: M. le président, c'était leurs choix parce que comme j'ai dit dans ma réponse c'est le même programme qu'ils sont en train de faire deux fois de suite, trois ans,

trois ans. Donc, c'est deux fois. Donc, c'est leurs choix d'aller à Maurice et ne pas attendre à ce que le *clearance* soit obtenu par la PSC pour être recruté comme *full-fledged*.

The Minority Leader: Est-ce que le commissaire est au courant dans le cadre, tout comme ces trois jeunes, à Maurice les jeunes qui ont parcouru leurs formations près de PML pour un Diplôme in Nursing, ils ont été recrutés par la PSC et ils travaillent comme des Assisting Nursing Officer. Ce qui fait que, ces jeunes qui sont à Rodrigues et qui ne sont pas partis dans le batch de mars 2023, c'est une erreur de la commission de la Santé ou bien de l'administration de ne pas avoir envoyé ces jeunes-là.

Mr Volbert: M. le président, je ne sais pas d'où la Minority a eu cette réponse. Moi je sais que ces jeunes-là, il y a pas mal de Rodriguais, 22 Rodriguais, je crois, qui sont là-bas, ils y en ont qui sont dans les cliniques, ils y en ont qui sont à l'hôpital, ces gens-là sont recruté *on contract* en attendant la réponse du PSC pareil comme à Rodrigues. Je ne sais pas d'où la Minority Leader vient avec cette information, que ce soit Assistant Nurse, je ne sais pas quoi.

The Minority Leader: The Commissioner is saying that the three young men, they are working on contract just as in Mauritius, now?

Mr Volbert: Je n'ai pas dit ça, M. le président.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, we have to distinguish between things. We have to distinguish between those students who have followed courses in PML but who have been recruited by private sectors in Mauritius. This is another matter. Now, we are referring to those who have been recruited by PSC. My question is, would it not have been wiser that these students being sent to Mauritius along with their fellow colleagues pending that the PSC or the approval was obtained so that there was no problem on that issue.

Mr Volbert: M. le président, ce sont des *qualified nurses* reconnu par le Nursing Council of Mauritius.

(Interruptions)

Mr Volbert: *Ekoute ! Zot kon reponz la me selman zot poz kestion ! Be pa bizin poz kestion zot deza kon reponz la !*

Donc, on a le Island Chief Executive a déjà fait la demande et on attend. Vous savez comment ça marche avec la PSC. Il faudra attendre. On ne peut pas brûler les étapes. On attend à ce que... parce que même à Maurice on a ce même problème. On a ce même

problème à Maurice. Les Nurses, les jeunes qui ont suivis les cours au Polytechnics Mauritius, ils travaillent dans les hôpitaux à Maurice mais ils sont *on contract basis*. Donc, ici s'ils ont été recrutés, on attend dès qu'on a l'aval du PSC ils seront recrutés. D'ailleurs, on a un manque aigue de staff à l'hôpital. Donc, pour nous ça nous arrange.

The Minority Leader: Est-ce que le commissaire peut nous dire dans ce cadre-là, donc ils attendent pour ces trois jeunes. Ces jeunes ont été recrutés en septembre 2022. *Their colleagues have been to the training in Mauritius since March 2023. We are today in 2024, nearly more than half of the year, two years, will they be appointed as from the very day they joined the service? Because else they will be lagging behind comparing to those colleagues in their batch.*

Mr Volbert: ... question poser ça, dépendre techniquement de...

Mr Chairperson: So, the Table has been advised that PQ B/...

(Interruptions)

I am on my feet! That PQ B/109, B/114 and B/116 have been withdrawn.

Next question.

SUPPLY OF WATER/TOURISM ESTABLISHMENTS – DAILY DEMAND OF WATER

(No. B/108) Ms K. Roussety (Second Local Region Member of Baie Aux Huîtres) asked the Commissioner for Tourism and Others whether, in regard to the supply of water to tourism establishments, he will, for the benefit of the House, state and table the daily demand of water therefrom, as at date and:

- (a) give details of the volume being supplied daily from the respective production sources;
- (b) table the list of all tourism institutions that have benefitted therefrom so far together with the respective volume, and
- (c) specify the mechanism being employed to have a better equitable control of the resource?

Mr Wong So: Mr Chairperson, Sir, in the context of the dry season period which was highly felt during October and November 2022, the Executive Council at its meeting held on 28 October 2022 has decided to approve that the Chief Commissioner's Office (Water

/UNREVISED/

Resources at that time) through the Rodrigues Public Utilities Corporation (RPUC) provides water to operators in the tourism industry at Pointe Coton Desalination Plant.

In November 2023, the Executive Council at its meeting held on 17 November, decided that in view of sustaining the tourism sector, which is a key economic sector for the development of Rodrigues, during the prevailing water shortage season, the Commission for Water Resources will allow water lorry tankers to collect water for tourism operators at Pointe Coton Desalination Plant against payment of fee of Rs50 per m³.

Hence, with regards to part (a) of the question, Mr Chairperson, Sir, I have been informed that the RPUC supplies water to tourism establishments as decided by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly from Desalination Plant of Pointe Coton and in some cases from Songes Desalination Plant.

The demand varies on a daily basis and the latest trends show that the tourist establishment will come to the RPUC and pay for deliveries over several days. The delivery ranges from 8 m³/day to 80 m³/day maximum for the past week.

Regarding part (b) of the question, I wish to inform the House that for period November 2023 to August 2024, 59 tourism establishments have benefitted from the Water scheme, representing 2333 m³ of water.

I am tabling to the House, the list of all tourism establishments that have bought water from the RPUC for the aforementioned period, together with their respective volume.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (c), I have been informed by the Commission for Water Resources that in the past, Pointe Coton Desalination Plant was producing about 300 m³ of water daily in July 2022. RPUC has put in the 2 x 500 m³/day Reverse Osmosis (ROT) units back into operation and production oscillate between 600 to 800 m³/day.

Water from Pointe Coton Desalination Plant is transferred to Montagne Piquant Reservoir for onwards distribution. The sale of water for the tourism establishment has not affected dramatically the supply of water to Montagne Piquant Reservoir as compared with the July 2022 scenario.

The RPUC is now installing and commissioning a new 350 m³/day containerised desalination unit at Pointe Coton which will further improve the situation as from end of September 2024.

/UNREVISED/

Hence, in order to have a better equitable control of the water resource, RPUC has put in place the following control measures: -

- (i) Each tourism establishment calls at the RPUC with a memo from my Commission (Tourism) at the Tourism Licensing Office and pays for the volume of water required, and
- (ii) After payment, RPUC issues in duplicate, a Water Delivery Voucher which the driver of the water tanker must produce to the RPUC staff at Pointe Coton Desalination Plant. Water is thus delivered and the duplicate copy is returned to the RPUC Head Office for control purposes.

Until now no case of malpractice or fraud has been detected up to date. Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

Ms Roussety: M. le président, est-ce que le commissaire du Tourism peut éclairer la Chambre s'il y a des établissements qui bénéficient aussi l'eau provenant de Mourouk, si oui, quel est le tarif ?

Mr Wong So: A ce jour, M. le président, ce que j'ai comme information c'est que tous ceux et celles qui désirent avoir de l'argent dans le cadre de ce *scheme* sont desservi par Pointe Coton et Songes.

The Minority Leader: Est-ce que le commissaire peut nous dire s'il y a une limite par établissement, par jour ou par semaine pour avoir accès à ce service. M. le président, au début de ce *scheme* on avait demandé à ce que chaque établissement puisse quand même procurer un camion par semaine. Mais l'urgence et l'état de la situation ce privilège a été enlevé pour laisser le soin à tout un chacun de pouvoir en bénéficier. La liste est devant vous, vous allez voir les établissements qui ont pu bénéficier de pas mal de mètre cube d'eau par semaine. Ce qui me fait dire que ce quota d'un camion par semaine ne s'applique plus dans le sens que c'est libre à tout un chacun de pouvoir prendre la quantité qu'ils ont besoin moyennant le paiement de Rs50 par m³. Vous verrez quand même les établissements il y en a certain qui sont en première ligne.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, in light of what the Commissioner has said with the liberalisation of the process of control as regards to volume of water per week now, it seems it is opened. Is he aware that this is leaving way for abuse because a citizen who applies for water for domestic purposes has to wait for one month but he can contact today an hotel establishment who has a tanker and use his permit for delivery?

/UNREVISED/

Mr Wong So: M. le président, je ne sais pas si je serais en accord avec des principes de la Chambre si je dis les noms des établissements qui apparaissent et qui ont vraiment utilisaient l'eau qui a été mentionné. Vous allez être content quand même de voir. Mais je ne vais pas le mentionne parce qu'il y en a certain, par exemple, sur l'item 22, je ne dirais pas le nom de l'établissement, je vois que le mois dernier, on est le 2 septembre, ils ont utilisé 120 m³. Sur cette liste que vous avez, Madame vous avez la liste. Essayez de voir l'établissement.

(Interruptions)

Essayez de voir l'établissement, Madame. Vous dites qu'il y a abus. Essayez de voir vous-même. Je ne dirais pas le nom ici mais vous avez la liste devant vous.

(Interruptions)

Vous dites qu'il y a abus. Si vous dites qu'il y a abus. Il y a quelqu'un qui est chiffre ici au numéro 22.

(Interruptions)

Je vous l'ai dit je ne dirais pas le nom, je tairais le nom. Mais la personne a utilisé 120 m³.

(Interruptions)

Je vous l'ai dit, il n'y a pas d'abus.

Mr Chairperson: Order please!

Mr Wong So: Respected Member Lisette a parlé, il a dit qu'il y a des abus. Moi, je dis il n'y a pas d'abus. Simplement que cette personne a besoin de 120 m³ pour ce mois-ci. Et, c'est normal. Vous avez le nom devant vous, Madame, vous avez le temps.

Mr Lisette: I think the Commissioner has not understood my question well. When I am speaking of abuse. I am not speaking of abuse in the quantity that is being provided to the establishment. I am speaking of abuse that there is a trade that is being set for those who have a tanker and who have easy access to water today as compared to other on the island.

Mr Wong So: M. le président,...

Mr Lisette: This is the abuse that...

Mr Wong So: M. le président, ce que le respecté Membre Lisette est en train de dire qu'il y a eu abus...

/UNREVISED/

(Interruptions)

Ou est-ce que je peux maintenant...

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: Order please!

Mr Wong So: M. le président, permettez-moi d'éclaircir la Chambre concernant/au niveau de mètre cube qui ont été dispense dans le cadre de ce *scheme*. 2333 m³ de l'eau sur deux ans. Si vous parlez d'abus, je ne sais pas trop comment vous faites ça. 2400 m³ sur deux ans en 24 mois, ça vous fait 100 m³ sur un mois, sur vous fait 3 m³ par jour. Merci.

MAURITIUS & RODRIGUES SUBMARINE CABLE (MARS) FIBRE OPTIC CABLE

(No. B/109) Mrs R.M.F. Gaspard Pierre Louis, C.S.K. (Minority Leader) asked the Commissioner for Information Technology and Telecommunications and Others whether, in regard to the Mauritius and Rodrigues Submarine Cable (MARS) fibre optic cable, he will state and table to the House on: -

- (a) the different payments effected by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly together with the dates and amount paid since 2022 to date;
- (b) the bandwidth allocated to the different operators and the amount paid thereby for the same period;
- (c) the amount of bandwidth and Global IP actually in use, and
- (d) if there is 100% coverage of the fibre optic cable around the island?

(Withdrawn)

**FUNDS CONTRACTED/MAURITIUS INVESTMENT CORPORATION (MIC) -
RODRIGUES PUBLIC UTILITIES CORPORATION (RPUC)**

(No. B/114) Mr N. Lisette (First Local Region Member for Baie Aux Huîtres) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to funds contracted from the Mauritius Investment Corporation (MIC) for the Rodrigues Public Utilities Corporation (RPUC), he will, for the benefit of the House, seek information and state if the:

- (a) loan agreement has already been signed between the two parties and, if yes, to state the terms and conditions and to table a copy of same, and

/UNREVISED/

- (b) letter of Guarantee for the repayment of the loan and interest has already been issued by the competent authority and, if yes, to state the agreed modus operandi therefor?

(Withdrawn)

CONTROL OF STRAY DOGS AROUND THE ISLAND

(No. B/116) Dr H. Agathe (First Local Region Member for Grande Montagne)

asked the Commissioner for Agriculture and Others whether, in regard to the control of stray dogs around the island, he will state the current state of matters?

(Withdrawn)

Mr Chairperson: Okay. Time is over.

STATEMENT BY COMMISSIONERS

15 PLAGES ADDITIONELLES DECLARER PLAGES PUBLIQUES

The Chief Commissioner: M. le président, permettez-moi de faire un *statement* concernant l'initiative de ce présent gouvernement régional de proclamer 12 plages additionnelles à Rodrigues comme plage publique.

Je souhaite vous exposer cette décision d'une grande importance qui a été adoptée par le Conseil Exécutif en date du 29 août 2024. Cette décision concerne l'extension de notre littoral balnéaire à travers l'autorisation qui a été accordée ma commission, qui est responsable de la gestion des terres, de procéder à des arrangements pour déclarer 12 plages additionnelles autour de notre magnifique île Rodrigues comme plages publiques. Baladirou, Rivière Banane, Pointe L'Herbe, Baie Aux Huîtres, Pointe Diable, Fumier, Tasman, Trou D'Argent, Anse Femie, Var Brûlé, Île Michel et Cité Patate, ces plages vont être proclamées Plages Publiques sous les dispositions de la section 2 du Beach Authority Act, section 26 et 32 de la Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act 2001.

Il est crucial, M. le président, de noter que chaque plage a été sélectionnée avec le soin nécessaire pour maximiser les bénéfices pour notre écosystème local tout en répondant aux besoins de notre population. Cette initiative ambitieuse vise à préserver nos plages face à des pressions grandissantes en termes de développement touristique et commerciales sur nos zones côtières. Elle vise aussi à accomplir plusieurs objectifs stratégiques qui sont essentiels pour le développement durable de Rodrigues.

En décrétant ces plages extraordinaires, nous visons non seulement à diversifier notre offre touristique, mais aussi à stimuler l'économie locale d'une manière significative. Chaque plage représente une nouvelle opportunité d'accueillir des visiteurs enthousiastes et de promouvoir nos richesses naturelles, contribuant ainsi à l'essor de nos entrepreneurs locaux et à la création d'emplois.

L'ajout de ces plages supplémentaires fournira à nos concitoyens de nouveaux espaces de loisirs, de détente, et d'interaction sociale, contribuant ainsi à l'amélioration de leur qualité de vie de manière tangible. Ces plages feront l'objet des plans d'aménagement et de développement infrastructurel qui seront implémentés par ma commission qui est aussi responsable de l'environnement et gestion des plages avec la collaboration de la Beach Authority.

Je tiens à souligner fermement que tous ces développements seront réalisés dans le respect total de nos écosystèmes fragiles et précieux. Nous nous engageons à assurer des pratiques de développement durable qui préserveront notre patrimoine naturel, garantissant ainsi un environnement sain pour les futures générations. Une attention particulière sera accordée aux aspects environnementaux de chaque projet afin de minimiser l'impact et de maximiser la durabilité.

Nous sommes pleinement conscients que de tels projets ne peuvent être mis en œuvre avec succès sans l'approbation et la participation active de notre communauté. C'est ainsi des consultations systématiques seront organisées pour recueillir les contributions précieuses de nos citoyens sur la manière dont ces plages doivent être aménagées. Nous souhaitons que chaque voix soit entendue et que chacun ait l'occasion de partager ses idées et ses préoccupations.

Je tiens aussi à préciser que dans cette même perspective, une priorité sera donnée aux personnes locales dans l'octroi des baux ou autorisations pour l'utilisation des espaces disponible autour des plages pour des fins touristiques et commerciaux afin de garantir un développement touristique plus authentique et durable.

Je voudrais également rappeler à tous, que cette initiative respecte pleinement le cadre législatif en vigueur, conformément aux lois régissant la gestion des plages dans le cadre de l'autonomie de Rodrigues. Nous nous engageons à respecter toutes les procédures nécessaires pour garantir la transparence et la légalité de notre démarche. Je vous appelle tous à soutenir cette démarche qui sera indéniablement bénéfique pour notre île, pour notre environnement

vibrant et pour notre peuple dynamique. Ensemble, unissons nos efforts pour faire de Rodrigues un modèle de développement harmonieux, alliant croissance économique et préservation de nos biens communs. Je vous remercie, M. le président.

(Applause)

CAMPAGNE PROMOTIONNELLE – TOURNEE RODRIGUAISE - 19 AU 25 AOUT

Mr Wong So: M. le président, l'île Maurice a vibré aux sons de Rodrigues pendant toute une semaine de campagne promotionnelle dans les quatre coins de l'île.

De prime abord, je voudrai remercier mon collègue, la commissaire, Mme Christiane Agathe pour sa participation à la Tournée et en même temps remercier les deux officiers de sa commission pour l'aide formidable qu'elles ont apportées pour faire de cette tournée un succès.

Mes remerciements vont aussi à mon collègue, le commissaire, Varok Ravina et les officiers de sa commission pour leurs aides au niveau culturel. La performance des artistes lors de cette tournée a été de plus remarquable et mémorable. Toute l'équipe est revenue à Rodrigues satisfait et avec le sentiment du devoir accompli. D'ailleurs sur les réseaux sociaux ou dans la presse écrite, parler et audiovisuel, l'engouement des Rodriguais à Rodrigues et de la diaspora à suivre les « *lives* » témoignent du grand intérêt porté à l'évènement.

La Tournée Rodriguaise, M. le président, a duré du lundi 19 au dimanche 25 aout. Le programme était comme suit : -

- 1) Le lundi 19 août à Beau Vallon, Mahebourg ;
- 2) Le mardi 20 aout à Flacq Cœur de Ville ;
- 3) Le mercredi 21 aout à Grand Baie Cœur de Ville ;
- 4) Le jeudi 22 août à Port Louis Waterfront, et
- 5) On a enchainé à partir du vendredi 23 au dimanche 25 au Salon de Prêt à Partir, Pailles au Swami Vivekananda International Commercial Centre.

Je voudrai faire ressortir ici, M. le président, que nous étions une forte délégation de Rodrigues comprenant, pas moins de 80 personnes dont 29 entrepreneurs, 26 opérateurs touristique, 14 artistes et les autres membres de la délégation officielle.

Notre séjour au centre de récréation de Pointe Jérôme à Mahebourg nous a permis de souder davantage l'esprit d'équipe entourant cette tournée Rodriguaise au-delà de nos

difficultés et autres problèmes, ainsi que les trajets par bus pour rejoindre nos différents lieux d'activités.

J'ai eu l'honneur, M. le président, de diriger cette grande délégation. Je tiens d'emblée, M. le président, à remercier tous ceux et celles qui ont fait de cette activité une réalité. Nous avons eu l'aide du bureau du Premier ministre, de la MTPA, du ministère de la Jeunesse et des Sports, d'Air Mauritius, de Discovery Rodrigues, de la Compagnie Nationale du Transport, du Economic Development Board, de Media Events, de Phoenix Beverages et aussi des compagnies qui gèrent les quatre *malls* où nous avons fait les *road shows* pendant les quatre jours. Mes remerciements vont aussi à chaque membre de la délégation pour leur joie de vivre, rigueur, discipline et l'entraide dont chacun a fait preuve. Nous avons fait de nos différences une force et nous avons pu passer d'excellents moments ensemble.

Je dois rappeler, M. le président, que pour réaliser cette activité, il y a eu tout un travail derrière par les différents officiers. Cela n'a pas été de tout repos mais nous y sommes parvenus.

- La commission de la Femme et de l'Entreprenariat avait la responsabilité de sélectionner les participants/participantes pour les produits artisanaux et agro ;
- La commission de la Culture avait la charge de sélectionner les artistes, et
- La commission du Tourisme s'est occupé de toute la logistique et de la participation sur le Salon de Prêt à Partir.

M. le président, des emplacements furent mis gratuitement à notre disposition. Je voudrai ici ajouter, M. le président, que suite à une réunion avec le propriétaire de plusieurs de ces sites, nous avons eu son accord de principe pour l'organisation d'autre *road shows* qui peuvent être organisés simultanément sur plusieurs sites. Cela nous aidera énormément en termes de visibilité et de campagne promotionnelle.

Je tiens à faire ressortir, M. le président, que pour cette tournée, l'esprit d'équipe a primé. Et le mot d'ordre c'était 'Team Building et RODRIGUES AVANT TOUT'.

Nous devant toujours garder en tête, M. le président, que l'île Maurice demeure notre marché principal sur le plan touristique. En 2023, nous avons accueilli 73,600 visiteurs provenant de l'île Maurice comparé à 51,700 en 2022. Le marché Mauricien se taille la part du lion avec des arrivées touristiques de 74%.

Qui dit tourisme sous-entend développement de l'entrepreneuriat, de l'artisanat, de notre art culinaire. Ce qui signifie donc une revenue pour notre population. Le secteur du tourisme touche au moins 3,800 personnes directement et indirectement générant plus Rs 2 milliards de revenus repartis à travers les différents acteurs de ce secteur. Nous devrions tout faire pour maintenir le cap tout en préservant l'équilibre entre le niveau de développement et la consolidation de notre environnement et de notre écosystème.

Je dois aussi rappeler, M. le président, qu'au cours de cette « Tournée Rodriguaise », les visiteurs ont pu découvrir et apprécier la culture Rodriguaise lors de chaque événement. Il y a eu de l'animation, des spectacles de danse traditionnelle, de la cuisine Rodriguaise permettant ainsi aux visiteurs de se plonger complètement dans la richesse culturelle de l'île. Cela permettra d'accroître le nombre de visiteurs pour Rodrigues et ce qui entraînera automatiquement l'augmentation des ventes pour nos artisans.

Il faut aussi mentionner, M. le président, qu'on a pu rencontrer nombreux Rodriguaises et Rodriguais à Maurice, des centaines pour ne pas dire des milliers qui ont partagés leurs joies de revoir leur confrères et consœurs et de retrouver leur île Rodrigues à Maurice le temps d'une danse ou d'un plat typiquement Rodriguais.

M. le président, suite aux différentes discussions avec les entrepreneurs pendant le séjour et aussi d'après les rapports soumis par les officiers, il est un fait que cette sortie promotionnelle à Maurice avait toute sa raison d'être. Les entrepreneurs en sus d'avoir vendu leurs produits à Maurice ont aussi pu établir des contacts avec différents acheteurs/hommes d'affaires afin de pouvoir écouler leurs produits en plus grande quantité.

Les opérateurs du secteur Touristique n'étaient pas en reste non plus, M. le président. Même si la destination est déjà très prisée par les Mauriciens, il était de notre devoir et responsabilité de continuer à maintenir la campagne et de garder le cap pour les années à venir en attendant la mise en opération de la nouvelle piste prévue pour fin 2027. Certains opérateurs touristiques ont même eu des réservations pour la période pascalle de 2025 et au-delà.

Je suis d'avis que Rodrigues doit continuer à maintenir sa présence sur le Salon de Prêt à Partir et aussi continuer à faire de telles tournées promotionnelles au moins une fois chaque année. Le grand public a répondu en masse à notre sollicitation. En un mot Rodrigues attire, M. le président. Nous avons tous été témoin de l'engouement autour de la délégation.

/UNREVISED/

Pour terminer, M. le président, il est un fait que le projecteur était braqué sur Rodrigues pendant ces quelques jours, ce qui a permis d'accroître notre visibilité à Maurice. L'île était présente dans presque tous les médias de l'île Maurice ainsi que sur les réseaux sociaux. Des articles de presse ont été publiés avant le départ et pendant le séjour de la délégation à Maurice. Des reportages ont été réalisés par MBC Radio/TV, L'Express, Le Mauricien, Radio One, Radio Plus, Ile Maurice Tourisme, Hello Rodrigues pour ne citer qu'eux.

M. le président, je vous remercie de m'avoir donné l'occasion de m'exprimer dans cette auguste Assemblée. Merci.

(Applause)

PROGRESS STATUS - 4EME JEUX DE RODRIGUES

Mr Ravina: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to apprise the House of the progress status with respect to the organisation of '*4^{eme} Jeux de Rodrigues*'.

The House would recall Chief Commissioner in his budget speech 2023/2024 announced that my Commission will organise the '*Jeux de Rodrigues*'. This important sports event will thus be organised for the fourth time in from 27 to 30 November 2024, after a break of more than 15 years, across 15 sports disciplines namely, football, volleyball, basketball, handball, rugby, athletics, judo, wrestling, swimming, taekwondo, boxing, trail, weight lifting and karate and *pétanque*.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, an organising committee has been set up by my Commission with the technical collaboration of concerned regional sports committees to organise the competition which has the following objectives to: -

- (a) promote the development of elite athletes;
- (b) strengthen the bond of friendship among local athletes;
- (c) provide a high level in which new talents can be detected;
- (d) to increase the process of upgrading of sports infrastructure;
- (e) provide a platform for regional sports committees to organise high level events.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, the final entries for participation in the games was 29 July 2024 and based on the inputs of regional committees and representatives of the four zones,

/UNREVISED/

procurement of equipment for the finals has been initiated. It should be noted that delivery of equipment for training has started and will be completed by the end of this month.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, a one-off grant to 11 local artists for painting of 24 logos of '4^{eme} Jeux de Rodrigues' on selected sports and public infrastructures. Painting works will start by mid-September 2024.

I wish also to inform the House that official launching of the Logo, Games song, Games Anthem and Mascot of '4^{eme} Jeux de Rodrigues' was held on Friday 30 August 2024 at the Centre for Sustainable and Integrated Development, in the presence of members of the Executive Council, representatives of Regional Sport Committees, sponsors and the Organising Committee.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, the logo, mascot, games song and game anthem are the four main features that will set the tone for the. The presentation of these items has increased awareness of the games in the population at large '4^{eme} Jeux de Rodrigues'.

The conception and musical arrangement and transcription of the game anthem was made by a team lead by Mr Jean Noel Armand who was assisted by Mr Bruno Perrine and Mr Delaitre Genave. The game song has been written and prepared by a team lead by Mr Doyal Edouard and assisted by M. Bernardin Moutien and Mr Christopher Casimir. A team of local singers have been retained to interpret the song.

With regard, the mascot, we are benefiting from the sponsorship of the Academy of Design and Innovation of Mauritius for its design and production. Our collaboration with the academy also includes design of pictograms of the disciplines listed for the games. My Commission will provide for materials required for the production for the Mascot.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to thank to the Regional Sport Committees for their technical contribution. Special thanks also to the Organising Committee and other collaborators for their commitment in making this event a success for the community at large.

Mr Chairperson, thank you.

(Applause)

ADJOURNMENT

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I beg to move that the House do now adjourn to Tuesday 05 November 2024 at 10.30 hours. Thank you.

/UNREVISED/

The Deputy Chief Commissioner, rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

MATTERS RAISED

MANQUE D'ABRIS BUS – ILE MICHEL

The Fourth Island Region Member (Mr Speville): Merci, M. le président, de me donner la parole dans cette auguste Assemblée. Ma requête s'adresse au commissaire des Infrastructures. Je constate que le nouveau gouvernement continue de faire le travail commencer par l'ancien gouvernement. Cependant, il m'a été rapporté qu'il y a un manque d'abris bus à Ile Michel dans la Région 2. Ce déficit crucial d'abris bus cause énormément de problème aux usagers, au public vulnérable notamment, obliger d'attendre debout sous le soleil, la pluie ou le vent le passage du bus.

M. le président, au nom de nos petits écoliers qui subissent quotidiennement ces désagréments je souhaite que la commission des Infrastructures va faire le nécessaire afin d'offrir un service de qualité et qui répond au attente de la population.

Je vous remercie, M. le président.

The Chief Commissioner: M. le président, permettez-moi de répondre en l'absence du commissaire des Infrastructures Publiques. Je prends note de la demande du respecté Membre. C'est vrai que nous avons une liste d'abris bus à construire, c'est vrai qu'il y a beaucoup de demande. Nous en avons fait plusieurs et cette année-ci dans le budget nous avons prévu à faire beaucoup plus d'abris bus. Nous avons fait à Maréchal, l'endroit où il n'y avait pas d'abris bus. Nous avons fait, nous avons terminé l'abris bus et la gare, je dirais, y compris toilette dont le Membre a posé beaucoup de question dans le passé. Nous avons terminé à Rivière Coco et bien sûr on va venir avec l'abris bus d'Ile Michel. Merci.

LACK AND UNRELIABILITY – PUBLIC TRANSPORT SERVICES

– ALLEE TAMARIN

The Second Island Region Member (Ms Raffaut): Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the Commissioner for Transport and Others on behalf of parents and students, most precisely, on the time schedule for bus in the morning. As you know in Region 4 mainly at Allée Tamarin, there is a bus which comes at 7.00 a.m. picks up the students by 7.15 a.m. then goes to Port Mathurin. There have been complaints from parents even the Village Community has looked into the matter. And, with the forthcoming of

SC/HSC internal examinations, I would like the Commissioner to look into the matter to look into the matter, if an enquiry can be carried out by his officers to remedy to such pressure mainly, the students who are stressed with examinations. I thank you, Mr Chairperson.

The Chief Commissioner: Certainement, s'il y a eu des complaints on va faire. Même au niveau, je suis responsable de tous ce qui est de développement communautaires. On va voir dans la commission et aussi voir avec le commissaire des Transports pour voir comment résoudre ce problème. Cependant, j'inviterais aussi le Membre, aller aussi à la NTA pour faire des complaints parce que là-bas aussi on prend des doléances et voir comment régler le problème.

(Interruptions)

Non, j'ai invité, okay je ne vous ai pas invité, j'ai invité la respecté Membre aller à la NTA parce que ça peut se faire. On est très réceptif à ça. On demande d'ailleurs au publique d'aller si jamais, il y a des soucis parce que c'est vrai que c'est important et bien sûr voire comment aider ces gens. Le but ultime s'est aider les usagers de la route, le publique en général pour avoir un meilleur service de transport.

REGLEMENT – UTILISATION DES SACS EN PLASTIQUE A RODRIGUES

The Second Local Region Member of Baie Aux Huitres (Ms. K. Roussety): M. le président, je voudrais saisir le temps que m'accorde la Chambre pour attirer l'attention des autorités concerner sur un problème récurrent de notre société qui nous concerne tous et qui nous préoccupe beaucoup du côté de la minorité.

Alors que le monde faisait face au sempiternel problème lié au sac plastique non biodégradable. Rodrigues n'était pas épargner. Les sacs plastiques devenant une vraie nuisance pour l'environnement, le gouvernement régional OPR avait trouvé la solution idéale pour y remédier en votant le règlement – '*Prohibitions of use of plastic bags*' – *Regulations 2014* qui a pris effet le 1 janvier 2016. En effet, le gouvernement d'alors a vu la nécessité d'instaurer avec cette loi pour protéger notre environnement avec pour objectif de Rodrigues une île écologique. Le gouvernement sortant OPR avait constaté que l'utilisation des sacs en plastique devenait un fléau pour notre environnement terrestre et marin. Cependant, depuis quelque temps, il n'est un secret pour personne, on voit une résurgence de sac en plastique à travers l'île. Ce qu'à mon humble avis, je trouve très grave. Certaine personne ne respecte pas cette loi. Il y a même des personnes qui vendent des sacs en plastiques sur les réseaux sociaux. Avec aisance on voit au marché de Port Mathurin, dans des commerces et autres

places, de plus les sacs en plastiques sont non-biodégradable, M. le président. La question qui nous interpelle de ce côté de la Chambre, est-ce que le règlement sur l'interdiction des sacs plastiques non-biodégradable n'est plus en vigueur à Rodrigues ?

M. le président, je souhaite que le commissaire de l'Environnement prendra en considération cet appel fait ici concernant le règlement d'interdire l'utilisation des sacs en plastiques à Rodrigues. Merci, M. le président.

The Chief Commissioner: M. le président, c'est vrai il y a le règlement. D'ailleurs, moi aussi j'ai travaillé là-dessus à l'époque. Bien sûr, le règlement est en vigueur. Mais ce n'est pas le commissaire qui va aller *enforce* les lois. D'ailleurs, j'ai attiré l'attention...

(Interruptions)

Justement, je suis d'accord avec vous. J'ai attiré l'attention du Chef de la Police, j'ai attiré l'attention des Police de l'Environnement. Mais tous ce qui est *enforcement* dans le règlement, il y a aussi...

(Interruptions)

Pardon ? *Yes*. J'ai attiré aussi l'attention des officiers des Bois et Forêt pour justement *enforce the law*. Donc, bien sûr je vais reprendre la question mais ça a toujours été le cas. Moi-même, la dernière j'avais dit, j'ai vu moi aussi sur Facebook, il y a quelqu'un qui vendait. Et là, j'ai parlé à la Police de l'Environnement. Ils ont fait une décente. Ils ont eu des sacs en plastiques. Donc, c'est vrai ce n'est pas très joli de voir les sacs en plastiques partout. Donc, je veux vous rassurer qu'on va aussi... Bien sûr, on vient de l'avant bientôt avec un autre règlement pour voir tous ce qui est... Vous vous parlez de sac en plastique mais il y a toute la question de bouteille en plastique. Bouteille en plastique et bouteille en verre.

(Interruptions)

Voilà, votre attitude ! votre attitude qui n'est pas trop correcte. Et vous, on fond de vous, si vous pouviez venir avec des tonnes de sac en plastique et donner aux gens, vous l'aurez fait à voire votre mentalité, la mentalité que vous avez. Mais nous on va faire de notre mieux pour justement *enforce*...

(Interruptions)

Oui, mon attention a déjà été attiré depuis longtemps et nous ont fait le travail. Merci beaucoup.

RTMC – RECOLTE DES OIGNONS

The First Local Region member of Grande Montagne (Dr Agathe): M. le président, je vous remercie de me permettre de faire une déclaration qui s'adresse au commissaire responsable de la RTMC au sujet de la récolte des oignons. Alors, nous arrivons en ce moment au début de la récolte de l'oignon. Nous savons que c'est une culture importante ici tant du point de vue du tonnage que du nombre de planteur engagé. Jusqu'ici la RTMC ne s'est pas engagé comme c'était habituellement le cas chaque année. Les planteurs attendent des nouvelles de RTMC. Alors, nous savons que la RTMC est un acteur très important, très connu des planteurs car il permet la revendre des oignons sur le marché local et il agit aussi comme régulateur. Donc, sans la RTMC les oignons sont achetés par des acheteurs venant de Maurice qui les exportent sur Maurice et ne permet pas aux Rodriguais de consommer ce produit local de haute qualité. Alors, les planteurs m'ont informé que si la RTMC n'arrive pas comme acheteur primeur, ils vont vendre les oignons de meilleure qualité auprès des acheteurs Mauriciens puisqu'ils vont prendre de la qualité puisqu'ils sont en premier et ce qui va rester ces des oignons de moindre qualité pour le marché local. Et aussi, à la question du prix comment ils vont faire, comment ils vont se débrouiller pour obtenir de bon prix. Alors, je voudrais faire l'écho des planteurs et donc demander au commissaire responsable qu'est-ce que RTMC va faire et de communiquer aux planteurs pour qu'ils sachent quoi faire. Je vous remercie pour votre attention.

The Chief Commissioner: Encore une fois en l'absence du commissaire responsable de la RTMC, je prends note de ce qu'a dit le respectable Membre et on va voir justement avec la RTMC comment ils vont réagir face à justement à la récolte des oignons à Rodrigues. Bien sûr, je sais que la RTMC participe chaque année dans l'achat de ces produits-là et je vais voir ça avec la commission et la RTMC. Et j'inviterais aussi pour plus de renseignement le Membre à venir peut-être la prochaine fois avec une question pour avoir plus de renseignement. Merci.

DIFFICULTE – PATIENTS A TRANSFERER A MAURICE – TRAITEMENT PAS DISPONIBLE A RODRIGUES

The First Local Region Member of Saint Gabriel (Mr Ramdally): M. le président, j'aimerais encore une fois attirer l'attention de la commissaire de la Santé sur les difficultés des patients à transférer à Maurice pour des traitements qui ne sont pas disponibles à Rodrigues. Ainsi que depuis un certain temps pour un simple scan. Donc, les difficultés sont

de plusieurs ordres. Donc, il y a premièrement le problème de logement. Donc, aujourd'hui, M. le président, il y a un flou total sur ce qui est admis dans un hôtel et qui ne l'ai pas. Donc, ceci occasionne beaucoup d'incompréhension dans la population et jusqu'à même une radio proche du pouvoir commence à faire remonter la souffrir de nos compatriote, M. le président.

Donc, le deuxième problème c'est l'aide de Rs300 qui devait être donne aux patients pour les soulager financièrement. Donc, les patients qui ont des rendez-vous fréquemment vont et viennent de Maurice plusieurs fois. Je connais même un patient qui est parti quatre fois et n'a rien reçu jusqu'à l'heure où nous parlons, M. le président.

Donc, autre problème est le suivi des patients référer à Maurice. Ils doivent faire tous les parcours de consultation à leur arriver à Maurice. Donc, c'est la raison pourquoi je demande au commissaire de vraiment se pencher ces problèmes pour apporter un vrai soulagement à nos compatriotes, dont nos pères, nos mères, nos sœurs, frères, cousins qui déjà ont beaucoup de soucis de santé. Merci, M. le président.

Mr Volbert: Je vais commencer par le dernier ce qui est frais dans ma mémoire en ce qui concerne ces patients qui font un devoir à consulter de nouveau à leur arriver à Maurice. Et, c'est vrai, parce que c'est pour ça on envoie ces patient-là à Maurice, c'est pour avoir des soins un peu plus pousser, plus approprier, c'est pour ça que les médecins de là-bas, les spécialistes de là-bas consultent de nouveau ces patients-là avant de les admettent dans les salles.

Et en ce qui concerne le Rs300, c'est vrai qu'il y a ce problème et pas plus tard que mercredi dernier, jeudi dernier, je pense on a soulevé ça et il y a le Management Support Officer (MSO), un Clerc, qui va être poste à l'hôpital pour donner un coup de main à cette dame, ce Clerc qui est là-bas pour rédiger les papiers et faire avancer les papiers. Parce qu'on a qu'un seul Clerc qui fait tous ces travaux donc le problème va être résolu dans les jours, les semaines à venir.

Et le premier en ce qui concerne les places dans un hôtel, vous savez très bien qu'on a que 70 places dans l'hôtel avec qui vous avez fait le pacte. D'ailleurs, ce n'était pas trop, trop au norme et on travaille là-dessus. On fait le nécessaire avec le tender parce que vous avez donne ça sans tender, il n'y avait rien. Et on avait mis que 70 places à la disposition des patients Rodriguais mais si c'était plein on ne peut rien faire. Parce que notre politique c'est de ne pas garder les patients, les personnes malades ici, on les embarque. On n'en a pas trouvé les soins pour ces personnes-là ici, on les envoie à Maurice pour avoir des soins, des

traitements appropriés, c'est pour cela qu'il y a tous ces patients qu'on envoie à Maurice, c'est pour leur bien. Et la plupart de ces patients retournent guéri, *okay*. Que quelques qui malheureusement qui sont décédés mais on fait de notre mieux en ce qui concerne le CT Scan, comme vous avez dit, et jusqu'à ce que ça soit réparé – qui est prévu pour le 8, je pense, dimanche le 8, les techniciens arrivent. Et la procédure pour en acheter un nouveau scan est en cours et on envoie ces patients-là à Maurice, on ne peut pas les laisser mourir ces patients ici. Merci.

SERVICE DE DIALYSE – PROBLEMES DES PATIENTS DIALYSER

The Minority Leader: M. le président, permettez-moi cette après-midi d'être la voix de nos compatriotes qui ont besoin de ce service très important qui est le service de dialyse à l'hôpital de Crève-Cœur. Ce matin j'ai eu l'occasion de voir et de rencontrer ces quelques patients qui attendent à l'hôpital de Crève-Cœur et il paraît que depuis quelque temps ils endurent beaucoup de difficulté. Donc déjà, ils arrivent à l'hôpital à 7hr et à 10hr, l'heure où je passais-la-bas, ils attendaient encore, on avait pas commencé à faire donc tous les procédures et j'ai appris ils n'ont commencé qu'à 11hr. De 7hr à 11hr ils attendent et paraît que ce n'est pas seulement aujourd'hui que ça se passe comme ça. Ça se passe comme ça depuis quelques jours. Donc, il paraît aussi que le problème c'est par rapport aux appareils défectueux. Il paraît qu'il y a neuf sur 17 en état de marche. Donc, presque la moitié et on comprend la souffrance de ces personnes. Il y a un d'entre eux qui vient de décéder cette semaine, un jeune, donc cette situation les préoccupe davantage. Et il nous parle du problème en terme du nombre d'officiers. Il paraît qu'il y a que deux officiers pour aider ce patient. Il nous parle aussi des absences répétées des membres du staff. Monsieur le commissaire va sûrement savoir pourquoi. Il y a l'absence aussi d'un espace pour prendre leur repas. On en a parlé ici depuis quelques temps. Il y a le problème de transport pour ces patients dialyser. Il y a aussi l'odeur nauséabonde dans la salle. Je ne sais pas pour quelle raison, c'est une salle neuve. Donc, encore une fois le commissaire va sûrement savoir quel est le problème.

Donc, ce matin j'ai entendu le commissaire dire que le 8, les techniciens vont arriver. Je dois dire que je trouve ça très tardivement. On est aujourd'hui le 3, on a tous les jours des vols. Ce problème perdure. Je ne sais pas pourquoi on ne peut pas faire beaucoup plus vite que ça pour soulager la souffrance de ces personnes.

Donc, je demande au commissaire de la Santé et au Chef commissaire de prendre cette situation comme une situation d'urgence parce que ces personnes déjà ils souffrent des

problèmes assez difficiles maintenant on ajoute à leur problème des problèmes. Donc, beaucoup de stress. J'espère que le plus vite ce problème sera résolu et que surtout on peut trouver des solutions durables pour éviter que ces personnes ré-couramment font face à ces difficultés. Merci pour votre attention.

Mr Volbert: C'est vrai. Ce n'est pas neuf appareils dialyser qui est en panne, c'est sept. Sept appareils qui n'est pas fonctionnel à l'heure où je vous parle. Quel est ce politicien qui n'aurait pas aimé que tout marche bien pour qu'il soit au top des tops. Okay. Donc, on ne fait pas de la politique avec la santé. On a ce problème, on fait tout pour résoudre ce problème. C'est vrai il y avait un manque de staff ce matin que ni moi, ni le *Departmental Head* a la responsabilité. Ces staffs peut-être sont fatigués, peut-être ils ont écrit un jour de congé, je ne sais pas quel est le problème. Mais on a initié, on a demandé à initier, le Departmental Head a initié une enquête pour savoir pourquoi ces staffs n'ont pas pointés à leurs postes ce matin. En ce qui concerne ce problème comme je vous ai dit, moi j'aurais aimé de ne pas emmener la politique au milieu de ce service. Je vous dis pourquoi ? Parce que vous êtes parti... Moi quand j'étais dans l'opposition, j'ai dit des choses quand il fallait mais je n'ai jamais été dans l'enceinte de l'hôpital pour aller faire le 'live'. C'est bien malsain de votre part. Excusez-moi. Mais on aurait pu...

(Interruptions)

C'est bien malsain. Nous étions à l'extérieur de l'hôpital. Ça c'est la deuxième fois que vous êtes là-bas. Et nous allons prendre... parce que vous avez été dans la salle de dialyse que vous n'êtes pas autorisé parce qu'il y a les microbes, il y a les bactéries que vous auriez pu emmener dans la salle. Nous allons mener une enquête pour voir qui est le responsable.

(Interruptions)

Mais de toute façon on fait le nécessaire. Il y a un manque de place sur les vols d'Air Mauritius. On fait tout et il y a les techniciens qui arrivent et on va demander à ces techniciens de faire les maintenances sur tous les appareils. Et je pense que d'ici lundi, mardi se sera okay.

At 3.33 p.m., the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday 05 November 2025 at 10.30 a.m.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

CT SCAN SERVICES AT QUEEN ELIZABETH HOSPITAL

(No. B/110) Ms K. Roussety (Second Local Region Member of Baie Aux Huîtres) asked the Commissioner for Health and Others whether, in regard to the CT Scan services at Queen Elizabeth Hospital, he will, for the benefit of the House, state:

- (a) since when these services are not available and the reasons thereof;
- (b) if any enquiry has been carried out in relation thereto giving the outcome thereof, if any, and
- (c) any actions taken by his Commission to ensure that patients requiring such services are not penalised?

Reply: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that the CT Scan is out of order since 01 December 2023.

I am also informed that the CT Scan was out of service due to Error Code (OXc 0900011) and test could not be performed.

Consequently, a request was sent by concerned officers on 04 December 2023 to the supplier, FTM (Mauritius) Ltd for a quotation for urgent repairs of the CT Scan.

I am further informed that it was only on 12 January 2024 that the supplier submitted a quotation for intervention on the CT Scan.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed also that a team comprising of one engineer from TECMED and one engineer of FTM (Mauritius) Ltd was in Rodrigues between 05 to 10 February 2024 accordingly for I quote: “*Labour corrective and maintenance*” as mentioned in the quotation submitted in January 2024.

The contract for same was consequently awarded for an amount of Rs422,050.

Further to this mission in Rodrigues, a report on the interventions to be further carried out on the CT Scan was submitted by FTM (Mauritius) Ltd February 2024.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I wish to inform the House that after this intervention of February 2024 the CT Scan was still not operational.

/UNREVISED/

In addition, I wish to inform the House that as per the report of the Biomedical Engineering Technician posted at QEH dated 22 February 2024, the latter has informed that further to troubleshooting, it seems that two electronic boards are damaged as per the report submitted by FTM (Mauritius) Ltd.

It has been brought to my attention that a contract for repairs was awarded consequently in March 2024 to the tune of Rs1,868,850.

Along with its letter of acceptance dated April 2024, FTM (Mauritius) Ltd further informed my Commission of overdue invoices of a total amount of Rs6,880,430.43 which includes amongst others, two outstanding claims dated 31 May 2017 and 19 October 2018 – which are untraceable at level of my Commission. I wish to inform the House that as at date, needful has already been done for the payment of those claims for which relevant documents are available at the level of my Commission.

I am also informed that the reasons of the breakdowns relate to the machine itself. Furthermore, several breakdowns are due to faulty inverter, faulty air-conditioning, film expired at the time of delivery faulty printer.

Regarding part (c.) of the question, I wish to inform the House that there has an enquiry made by a team from the Biomedical Engineering & Healthcare Technology Units of the Ministry of Health and Wellness.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, if you allow me I would like to quote one of the observations and main issues highlighted in the report: I quote:

“Technical issue related to breakdown of CT Scanner, were discussed with the technician to assess their functional status. However, comprehensive service reports were not available for closer inspection of the troubleshooting interventions.”

End of quote.

I wish to further quote as per same report that:

“There is no Healthcare Technologist to look after critical care/life support equipment and medical gas plant. Prior to 22 February 2024, Mr Verte was looking after all medical equipment that included the equipment portfolio of BME, HTW and ESD departments. However, the latter addressed a letter to the

/UNREVISED/

senior authorities on 22 February 2024 stating that he will no longer look after Healthcare technologist's portfolio of medical equipment."

End of quote.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, in addition to needful for the repairs of the CT Scan, my Commission will shortly initiate procedures for the acquisition of a new one.

In fact, a team of Bio Medical Engineers and other technicians of the Ministry of Health and Wellness shall be proceeding to Rodrigues this month of September to further investigate in the recurring breakdowns of the different equipment and to assist the staff of the Health Services in finalising the different specifications to ensure that we have the right equipment along with adequate aftersales services in Rodrigues.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, for time being, we are ensuring that appropriate arrangements are being made so that all patients requiring to undergo a CT Scan may proceed to Mauritius for same.

CANCER PATIENTS/RODRIGUES

(No. B/111) Mr J. R. Ramdally (First Local Region Member for Saint Gabriel) asked the Commissioner for Health and Others whether, in regard to cancer patients in Rodrigues, he will, for the benefit of the House, state the total number thereof and:

- (a) give and table a breakdown of the number of persons diagnosed per age group, per sex and per type of cancer for the last five years;
- (b) specify if any study has been initiated and/or completed in relation thereto, indicating the outcomes, if any, and
- (c) detail on the support provided thereto from detection to receiving treatment?

Reply: Mr Chairperson, Sir, referring to part (a) of the question, I have been apprised of the following figures information regarding the number of persons diagnosed per age group, per sex and per type of cancer as from 2019.

For 2019, the total number of persons diagnosed was 148. I am tabling the breakdown of information as requested.

/UNREVISED/

For 2020, the total number of persons diagnosed was 134. Out of this number, 83 were admitted and details pertaining to those admissions are tabled as requested. Regarding the remaining 51, data is still being compiled and shall be tabled at a later stage.

For 2021, the number of cases diagnosed was 147, out of which 96 were admitted and data tabled as requested and for the remaining 51, data is still being compiled and shall be tabled at a later stage.

The total number of persons diagnosed for the year 2022 was 134 and information pertaining to number of persons admitted is being tabled.

In 2023, the total number of persons diagnosed was 157 and I am hereby tabling information pertaining to the 146 persons admitted as requested.

As per the figures submitted to my Office, the figures up to August 2024 show 140 persons diagnosed and information is being tabled as requested.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards part (b) of the question, please be informed for the benefit of the house that a study is currently being carried out lead by the University of Mauritius in Rodrigues.

The study involves both the University of Mauritius, a Rodriguan PHD student, and is funded externally by American Embassy amongst others.

My Commission is acting as facilitator by providing adequate human resources in terms of Doctors, nurses, records officers, coupled with access to laboratory services to process blood samples.

This study aims at identifying the exact genes that leads to cancer in the Rodriguan cancer patients and their close relatives.

At present the study is at the stage of blood sampling, sample concentration and preservation stage which will shortly be sent to South Africa for genetic mapping

At the conclusion of the study, we will be able to do genetic screening prior to a person developing the cancer thus counselling him or her for yearly screening of cancers and in this way identify cancers at a very early stage.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (c) of the question, I am informed that the diagnosis of cancer is done either during the various screening campaigns delivered by the Health Promotion Unit of my Commission. Thereafter, the concerned are further referred to

/UNREVISED/

the appropriate specialized unit of Queen Elizabeth Hospital or at the level of the hospital itself.

All diagnoses are confirmed by Histopathology Reports which are the results of either a biopsy, Fine needle aspiration cytology (FNAC), or the specimen of the mass the surgeon operated on.

Once diagnosis is confirmed, patient is referred to the Oncologist who is now at the New Cancer Hospital (NCC) in Mauritius for further Management.

Depending on the case, those operable in Rodrigues are first operated then upon complete scar healing, they are sent for chemotherapy and/or Radiotherapy at the NCC.

Complicated cases requiring multiple specialities, some of which are not available in Rodrigues, are transferred for operation, chemo and/or Radiotherapy.

All transfers are arranged by the Social worker's office, and depending on the case patients are accompanied by one relative and/or one Nurse and/or one Doctor or SAMU team.

Any psychological support is provided by the Oncology RMO and if need be by the Psychiatrist.

Please be informed that once in Mauritius the patient and the relatives are provided with accommodation facilities and other financial assistance as per established protocols.

Air tickets are all catered for by the Commission.

In case of death of the patient in Mauritius, undertaker services and repatriation are catered for by my Commission.

UPGRADING WORKS

(No. B/112) Mr L. D. Baptiste (Second Local Region Member for Grande Montagne) asked the Commissioner for Health and Others whether, in regard to the upgrading works at Port Mathurin Market toilet blocks, from 2022 to date, he will, for the benefit of the House, provide the:

- (a) scope of works, project cost and duration thereof;
- (b) procurement method used for the award of the contract, indicating the list of bidders, the different bids together with the name of the successful bidder, and

(c) amount paid therefor and from which vote item?

Reply: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I wish to inform the House that my Commission had been receiving several complaints regarding the condition of the Toilet blocks at Port Mathurin Market which is annexed to the agro-processing and the meat stalls.

I was informed that the condition and state of the toilet blocks were in a pitiful state for long and that some people were making use of the hand basin at the toilets for other inappropriate uses like for example cleaning of fish amongst others.

The House will concur that such a practice is not permissible and not *'flatteur'* for the image and reputation of our Island which is known worldwide as being a model of clean and sound environment.

Consequently, given that it was an urgent matter related to sanitary issue and a threat to public health, I requested the then Departmental Head to carry out a site visit and to report on the above.

Further to the site visit of the premises at the Port Mathurin Market, it was observed that the infrastructure needed some upgrading works in view of providing a proper working environment for those who hold a stall at the market but also for the different officers who are posted there.

Given that the number of complaints regarding the toilet kept on increasing and was becoming alarming and given that as Commissioner of Health, as per the areas of responsibility bestowed on me, I am responsible of all matters pertaining to Public Health and my duties are to ensure that infrastructure of good standard are available for any user of the market premises, I therefore personally led a delegation comprising of the then Departmental Head, the officers of the Public Health Unit and other technical staff to take stock of the situation prior to a decision being taken on the works to be done.

As a first measure, a general cleaning of the premises was carried out by the staff of Rodclean Ltd and needful was done to have the services of Surveillant (formerly security guards) at the market.

It was also agreed that in view of resolving this issue and ensuring a better control of the premises, the then DH would proceed with appropriate procedures to ensure that the following works are done:

- Supply and Fix of doors;

/UNREVISED/

- Placement of barbed wire;
- Repair works of the plumbing network.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, as a policy maker, my duties regarding this project stop here. Any procedure regarding works to be done or any supply of goods or services should be done as per the Public Procurement Act and Public Procurement Regulations and the responsibility of ensuring strict compliance thereof rests with the Accounting Officer.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards to scope of works and any activities related to same, I wish to inform the House that such information is of a very technical nature and I am not the competent person to provide those.

Pertaining to the last part of the question, I am informed that as at date no payment has been effected yet. I wish to apprise the House that I have been further informed that the claim was received in July 2024. The processing of same for payment rests with the relevant officers of my Commission.

**MANAGING DIRECTOR OF RODCLEAN LTD – CHANGES BROUGHT TO
TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF APPOINTMENT**

(No. B/113) Mr J. R. Ramdally (First Local Region Member for Saint Gabriel) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the Managing Director of Rodclean Ltd, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information on any change that has been brought to the terms and conditions of his appointment, stating the benefits, allowances and privileges associated to the post as from January 2024?

Reply: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to inform the house that the actual Board of Directors of Rodclean Ltd is in office since the month of March 2022.

In view of the increased in scope of works of the Company, the Chairman of the board of Directors has been called upon to step in for the sound management of the company. As such, the post has been restyled as Chairman/ Managing Director.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, the scope of works of the company has kept on changing with numerous requests received for the services of the Company.

In order to meet the daily challenges of scavenging, the company had to recruit additional workers. This addition to the workforce has also led to a complete reorganization of the activities of Rodclean.

/UNREVISED/

Mr Chairperson, Sir, the services of Rodclean is of paramount importance in our quest to reach the status of an ecological island. The services of the company comprise, over and above, the daily collection of wastes, the company is also responsible inter alia of daily activities of works around the island amongst others.

- Cleaning of drains
- Embellishment
- Grass trimming and trees pruning
- Cleaning of public toilets, public roads and public beaches
- Waste collection including recyclable, domestic, bulky and green wastes
- Cleaning of toilets at hospitals and Commissions
- Upgrading and embellishment of public gardens and the rehabilitation of infrastructures on public beaches

Consequently, the responsibilities of the Chairman/Managing Director have widened.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, the post of Chairman/Managing Director has also been restyled as Executive Chairman following a decision of the Executive Council on 14 June 2024. In the same context, the monthly salary of the Executive Chairman has been increased to Rs68,000 as from the month of July 2024. A telephone allowance of Rs1,500 monthly is also paid to the executive chairman.

STATUS OF EMPLOYMENT - RODRIGUES

(No. B/115) Mr L. D. Baptiste (Second Local Region Member for Grande Montagne) asked the Commissioner for Employment and Others whether, in regard to the status of employment in Rodrigues, he will inform the House on:

- (a) the number of registered unemployed as at the end of each month of June for the years 2019 to 2024;
- (b) the number of vacancies reported at the Employment Information Centre since July 2022 to date, the number of jobseekers referred, and the number of jobseekers placed for various vacancies, and
- (c) his policy to reduce the high rate of youth unemployment?

Reply: Mr Chairperson, Sir, with regard to the status of employment in Rodrigues, I wish to inform the House that a total number of 31,038 registered unemployed in respect of

/UNREVISED/

both male and female as at the end of each month of June for the year 2019 to 2024, as follows: -

June 2019			
Registered Jobseekers	Male	Female	Both Sexes
Unemployed	1734	2414	4148
In employment	721	562	1283
Total			5431
June2020			
Registered Jobseekers	Male	Female	Both sexes
Unemployed	1681	2295	3976
In employment	744	599	1343
Total			5319
June 2021			
Registered Jobseekers	Male	Female	Both sexes
Unemployed	1513	2138	3651
In employment	722	677	1399
Total			5050
June 2022			
Registered Jobseekers	Male	Female	Both sexes
Unemployed	1685	2370	4055
In employment	692	742	1434
Total			5489
June 2023			
Registered Jobseekers	Male	Female	Both sexes
Unemployed	1498	2243	3741
In employment	543	671	1214
Total			4955
June 2024			
Registered Jobseekers	Male	Female	Both sexes
Unemployed	1401	2217	3618
In employment	531	645	1176
Total			4794

/UNREVISED/

As regards to part (b), Mr Chairperson, Sir, the number of vacancies reported at the Employment Information Centre since July 2022 to date, the number of Jobseekers referred, and the number of jobseekers placed for various vacancies are as follows: -

JULY 2022 TO DATE		
Number of Vacancies Notified	Number of Jobseekers referred	Number of Jobseekers Placed
166	5711	125

Subsequently, concerning part (c), I wish to inform the House that the main policy of my Commission (Employment) to reduce the high rate of youth unemployment in Rodrigues is the development of new training programmes and job placement to empower these unemployed youths by providing them with the necessary skills and provision of financial and logistical assistance to help them to create an income generating activity to earn their living decently. These measures comprise, among others:

(i) Workshop

The Ministry of Labour, Human Resource Development and Training enacted the National Employment Act in 2017 which provides for the setting up of a National Employment Department to replace the Employment Service to meet the new challenges of the labour market.

Therefore, the Employment Service is being re-engineered in Mauritius and Rodrigues to become the National Employment Department (NED). As such, new services are being offered by the Employment Department among which is “Atelier de Travail”. These workshops are organized for school leavers and youth to empower and prepare them to face the Labour market and be more successful in securing a job.

(i) Employment Relief Programme (ERP)

The Employment Department implements schemes proper to the RRA, namely the Employment Relief Programme (ERP) and the Plan de Prestation Transitoire. The aim of the ERP is to empower jobseekers age between 18 to 50 years old by providing them with practical and theoretical training through placement with the aim of converting them into productive labour force and they can also opt to start an income

generating activity. Since 2015 to date, some 1343 jobseekers have been placed under the programme.

(ii) Plan de Prestation Transitoire (PPT)

The objective of the PPT is to offer non-refundable financial assistance and entrepreneurial support to ex- trainees of the ERP to enable them to earn their living independently by engaging themselves in an income generating project on a small scale. 135 Projects have been funded as at date.

(iii) Youth Employment Programme

In order to facilitate the transition of youth from education to employment and to provide them with the core skills required by different sectors of the economy, the government has implemented the YEP. The main objective of the programme is to enable unemployed youth between the age of 16 and 35 inclusive to obtain training/placement for an initial period of one year, to ensure that appropriate training is provided to youth to promote the development of necessary skills in the Labour force, etc. In collaboration with Yep secretariat, this office acts as a facilitator where numerous youth have obtained training/ placement and even permanent employment. As at date, 39 young persons are in post under YEP Public.

**COLLECTION & DISSEMINATION – WEATHER INFORMATION/MAURITIUS
METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES - RODRIGUES**

(No. B/117) Dr H. Agathe (First Local Region Member for Grande Montagne) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the collection and dissemination of weather information by the Mauritius Meteorological Services in Rodrigues, he will state (a) the number of Automatic Weather Stations installed and operational, and (b) table the monthly rainfall data for the island since January 2020 to date?

Reply: Mr Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question; the number of Automatic Weather Station installed in Rodrigues is 6, out of which five are operational at Plaine Corail, Patate Theophile, Montagne du Sable, Songes and Rivière Banane respectively following general maintenance effected by the technical team of the Mauritius Meteorological Services, who were in Rodrigues from 21 to 31 August 2024.

I am informed that the Automatic Weather Station at Citronelle has not been operational as from January 2022 due to breakdown of its data logger. I am also informed by

/UNREVISED/

the Mauritius Meteorological Services that the spare part required for its repair is not available and most probably will have to be replaced by another Automatic Weather Station whose spare parts are readily available.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards to part (b), I am tabling the requested information concerning the rainfall data for Rodrigues since January 2020 to date as provided by the Mauritius Meteorological Services.

Part (b):

The monthly rainfall in millimetres for period January 2020 to July 2024

Monthly Rainfall Data for Pointe Canon for the year 2020 - 2024												
Month Year	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
2020	123.0	105.9	304.2	127.0	81.3	41.1	36.4	32.4	34.1	47.3	53.0	55.2
2021	84.5	86.7	32.5	80.6	80.3	101.7	101.7	156.6	59.0	24.8	43.2	166.8
2022	122.5	111.1	149.0	126.0	87.4	62.9	62.9	41.2	32.8	34.2	20.4	12.6
2023	117.6	49.1	148.4	58.4	90.3	61.1	61.1	38.6	40.5	82.1	60.6	134.1
2024	190.6	191.8	181.4	90.8	170.2	19.1	19.1	-	-	-	-	-

Table 1: Showing monthly rainfall data for period January 2020 to July 2024 at Pointe Canon

Monthly Rainfall Data for Plaine Corail for the year 2020 - 2024												
Month Year	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
2020	123.0	105.9	304.2	127.0	81.3	41.1	36.4	32.4	34.1	47.3	53.0	55.2
2021	84.5	86.7	32.5	80.6	80.3	112.4	101.7	156.6	59.0	24.8	43.2	166.8
2022	122.5	111.1	149.0	126.0	87.4	63.0	62.9	41.2	32.8	34.2	20.4	12.6
2023	117.6	49.1	148.4	58.4	90.3	52.6	61.1	38.6	40.5	82.1	60.6	134.1
2024	249.9	90.7	130.3	47.7	109.1	59.9	16.6	-	-	-	-	-

Table 2: Showing monthly rainfall data for period 2020 to 2024 at Plaine Corail

/UNREVISED/

Monthly Rainfall Measured at Montagne du Sable (Rodrigues) (AWS)												
Month Year	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
2020	-	73	222	131	94	36	47	36	36	53	58	80
2021	98	89	65	97	82	99	94	150	81	18	41	
2022	116	107	128	93	74	60	72	57	35	42	21	16
2023	141	35	154	64	83	53	79	56	40	98	35	-
2024	No Data											

Monthly Rainfall Measured at Patate Theophile (Rodrigues) (AWS)												
Month Year	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
2020	No Data				31	25	31	28	41	35	40	39
2021	75	50	68	94	78	48	65	95	42	20	54	127
2022	145	98	129	No Data								
2023	No Data		173	40	No Data							
2024	No Data											

Monthly Rainfall Measured at Citronelle (AWS)												
Month Year	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
2021	155	107	103	120	108	146	132	231	89	43	87	213
2022	No Data											
2023	No Data											
2024	No Data											

Monthly Rainfall Measured at Plaine Corail AWS												
Month Year	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
2020	No Data						19	27	17	81	23	37
2021	37	80	26	No Data		17	23	56	36	9	36	103
2022	130	95	108	67	43	22	31	23	23	34	7	16
2023	135	19	117	35	69	17	66	41	29	36	59	0
2024	No Data		112	39	No Data		16					

GENDER BASED VIOLENCE - RODRIGUES

(No. B/118) **Ms M. N. Raffaut (Second Island Region Member)** asked the Commissioner for Women's Affairs and Others whether, in regard to gender based violence in Rodrigues, she will, for the benefit of the House, state and table the number of cases reported at her Commission since 2022 to date, indicating (a) if any action plan has been prepared to address the issue in the short, medium and long term and, if so, to table same, and (b) details of actions already taken?

Reply: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I thank the respected Member, Ms. M. N. Raffaut, for asking this question. As the house is aware, gender based violence affects the safety, dignity, and rights of individuals, particularly women and vulnerable groups and fighting gender-based violence (GBV) remains a significant challenge. However, my government is deeply committed to addressing this issue comprehensively and to be able to do so, there is need to devise proper policies and strategies as well as a well-structured action plan.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, regarding statistics pertaining to cases of Gender Based Violence reported at the Family Welfare and Protection Unit (FWPU) of my Commission, the number of cases reported for:

- 2022 are 81, of which 64 females and 17 males
- 2023, 87 reported cases of which 68 females and 19 males

/UNREVISED/

- and from January to August 2024, 97 reported cases of which 84 females and 13 males.

I am tabling the requested information.

The statistics shows an increase in the number of reported cases which is partly associated with the continuous aggressive sensitisation campaigns being organised by officers of the Family Welfare and Protection Unit of my Commission in collaboration with the 'Brigade pour la Protection de la Famille' and the National Empowerment Foundation (NEF) at village level to raise awareness about GBV and the legal avenues available for redressal. Sensitisations are also being made through the media.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am pleased to inform the House that following negotiations with the Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Mauritius and the Republic of Seychelles, my Commission is benefiting from the services of an EU Gender Expert, Mrs. W. LICHUMA, in the context of the implementation of the GOPA Service contract, to review and update the Rodrigues Gender Policy and Costed Action Plan on Gender Based Violence which date back to 2013. In this connection, the EU Gender Expert field a first mission to Rodrigues from 9 to 12 July 2024, whereby she has gathered views to facilitate the review of the Gender Policy and Costed Action Plan on ending GBV, gather views on the Training Needs of Gender Mainstreaming, gather views on the need for Gender Responsive budgeting and on Indicators for monitoring Gender Responsive implementation in the public and private sphere.

I am also pleased to inform the House that my Commission is also working on a Study on the Prevalence of GBV in Rodrigues to be carried out in collaboration with the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family Welfare and the Mauritius Research and Innovation Council (MRIC). In this context a Scoping mission is scheduled from 10 to 13 September 2024 by representatives of PMO's office, the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family Welfare and the MRIC to consult and engage key stakeholders with a view to facilitate the research and access to existing data on GBV across its different forms, enlist support for establishing baseline data on the Prevalence of most predominant forms of GBV in Rodrigues, to understand the GBV data collection and storage mechanism across stakeholders and finally to explore the interest for school-related GBV survey to be extended to Rodrigues. The findings of the study will serve as baseline for devising effective strategies to combat

Gender-Based Violence to be included in the updated Costed Action Plan to address Gender Based Violence.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (b) of the question, as the House is already aware, there are various legislations at the National level which have been enacted, including the Protection from Domestic Violence Act (PDVA) 1997, which aims at safeguarding spouses (and, with subsequent amendments, any other person living under the same roof) from domestic violence. Other Legislations includes the (i) Worker's Rights Act 2019, for safeguarding the rights of workers and which is the first legal document in Mauritius to explicitly acknowledge both 'sexual orientation' and 'gender', (ii) the National Women's Council Act 2016 which aims to modernise and enhance the legislative framework to foster women's empowerment and promote gender equality, particularly through increased participation in social, economic, and political spheres.

In addition to the legislative frameworks, the 'Service de Conseil et de Soutien aux Familles' of my Commission is providing integrated services to victims of domestic violence such as first-hand counselling, 'Groupe de Parole', legal assistance, psychological supports, and admission in temporary shelter. A hotline 24/7 services is also available for reporting of cases. A Men as Partners Programme has also been established in view of engaging men in addressing Gender-Based Violence. To date the Ambassadors have delivered 09 sessions targeting some 280 beneficiaries. The programme has just been re-inforced by enlisting additional ambassadors/trainers.

Furthermore, in view of Empowering Women and promote gender equality, various programmes/activities are being organised targeting women including survivors of domestic violence, which includes new initiatives that have been initiated as from March 2022, such as the Placement programme for vulnerable women in local enterprises which have reached 11 vulnerable women to date who are mostly survivors of domestic violence and the programme d'autonomisation des familles which consists of providing vulnerable families with an income generating activity.

On 22 August 2024, we have inaugurated our first Gender Resource and Wellness Centre at Malabar, which has as missions among others to provide resources, education, and support to empower women and marginalized genders to improve their socio-economic status and overall well-being and raise awareness about gender rights, gender-based violence, and discrimination, and promoting gender sensitivity in the community.

/UNREVISED/

A stele in memory of women victims of violence has been inaugurated in the context of the International Day for elimination of violence against women and girls last year. The stele serves also as a sensitisation tool to remind people about the dramatic consequences of violence against women and girls.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, all what I have mentioned above outlines the current efforts, policies, and future plans of the regional government to address and prevent gender-based violence, highlighting the seriousness with which the issue is being tackled. We will continue our commitment to taking all necessary measures to protect individuals, particularly women and vulnerable groups, from violence and to ensure that perpetrators are held accountable. We will continue to work towards creating a safe and equitable society for all.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

**HIGH LEVEL DRUG COMMITTEE – LIST OF MEMBERS/MISSION &
ACTIVITIES**

(No. A/3) Mr J.P. Spéville (Fourth Island Region Member) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the Rodrigues High Level Drug Committee, he will state and table the list of members therein and give details of their mission and activities up to date?

Reply: The Rodrigues High Level Drug Committee has been set up under the Chairmanship of the Chief Commissioner, in line with the Recommendation of the Action Plan Against Illicit Drugs. The list of members of the committee is annexed.

The role of the Rodrigues High Level Drug Committee is to coordinate and monitor the implementation of the recommendations of the Action Plan Against Illicit Drugs.

The committee has taken cognizance of the recommendations of Rodrigues Drug Action Plan formulated by the National Drug Secretariat.

The Action Plan rest on four main pillars namely:

- (i) Setting up of an institutional framework for coordination and monitoring of the plan;
- (ii) Upholding human dignity when dealing with people who use drugs;
- (iii) Drug supply reduction by averting entry and cultivation, and
- (iv) Drug demand reduction through prevention, treatment and rehabilitation.

/UNREVISED/

Considering the presence of hard drugs in Rodrigues, the committee has decided that the key priority action should be to prevent the entry of illicit drugs in Rodrigues. The committee further noted that such control may be hampered by the following constraints which have been discussed these issues with the Prime Minister's Office:

- (i) The absence of a scanner for containers at Port Mathurin Port Area;
- (ii) The Police in Rodrigues disposes of only one sniffer dog, and
- (iii) There is a shortage of Police Constables for deployment to the ADSU and at control points at the Port and the airport.

A request has been addressed to the Prime Minister's Office (Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity Division) to envisage that arrangements be made for the screening of containers to be shipped to Rodrigues so that suspicious containers could be scanned prior to their shipment to Rodrigues.

A total provision of Rs4 M has been made during the current financial year to implement the recommendations of the Action Plan Against Illicit drug.

A Substance Abuse Committee on Drugs and Substance Abuse has been set up in April 2024 by the Commission for Health following approval from the High-Level Drug Committee. The aim of the Substance Abuse Committee is to analyse the actual situation of drug and substance abuse and to work out on possible solution on how to reduce/discourage drugs consumption in the Community.

In line with the theme of the 2024 International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking which is "The evidence is clear: Invest in prevention", the National Drug Secretariat conducted a three-day training workshop for the '*Agent de Santé Communautaire*' and representatives of CRAC, Mauritius Police Force (Coast Guard, ADSU), Health Services and Members of the Substance Abuse Committee in Rodrigues. The purpose is to implement the Community Welfare Task Force to ensure sustained interventions at community level with regard to drug use prevention activities.

The Commission for Health and Others and the Commission for Youth and Sports are carrying out sensitisation campaigns against the use of illicit substances.

/UNREVISED/

Composition of the Rodrigues High Level Drug Committee	
1.	Chief Commissioner
2.	Deputy Chief Commissioner
3.	Commissioner for Agriculture and Others
4.	Commissioner for Health and Others
5.	Commissioner for Family Welfare and Others
6.	Commissioner for Tourism and Others
7.	Commissioner for Youth and Sports & Others
8.	Island Chief Executive
9.	Departmental Head, Deputy Chief Commissioner's Office (Education)
10.	Acting Departmental Head, Chief Commissioner's Office (Community
11.	Acting Departmental Head, Commission for Health and Others
12.	Departmental Head, Commission for Agriculture and Others
13.	Departmental Head, Commission for Family Welfare and Others
14.	Departmental Head, Commission for Youth and Sports
15.	Medical Superintendent
16.	Officer in Charge, AIDS Unit
17.	Divisional Commander of Police
18.	Officer in Charge, ADSU
19.	Officer in Charge, Rodrigues Prisons
20.	Officer in Charge, Mauritius Revenue Authority
21.	Officer in Charge, Postal Services
22.	Chairman, CRAC Anti-Drug Group
23.	Bishop of Rodrigues

/UNREVISED/

Composition of the Rodrigues High Level Drug Committee	
24.	Assistant Manager, Financial Operations
25.	Legal Adviser
26.	Adviser, Commission for Health and Others
27.	Adviser, Chief Commissioner's Office
28.	Adviser, Commission for Tourism and Others
29.	Adviser in Communication and Information Matters
30.	President, Rodrigues Regional Youth Council
31.	President, Rodrigues Senior Citizen Association
32.	Chairman, Rodrigues Education Development Company
33.	Chairman, Rodrigues College
34.	Psychiatrist
35.	Psychologist (Education)
36.	Head, Youth
37.	The Officer in Charge, National Coast Guard

NO. OF DEATHS REGISTERED – FROM 2020 TO DATE/RODRIGUES

(No. A/4) **Mr J. P. Spéville (Fourth Island Region Member)** asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the number of deaths registered from 2020 to date in Rodrigues, he will state and table the number per year together with a monthly breakdown thereof?

Reply: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the number of death and still birth registered at the Civil Status Office Rodrigues since 2020 to date is being tabled for the information of the house.

Death and Still Birth from Year 2020 to date

Month	2020		2021		2022		2023		2024	
	Death	Still Birth	Death	Still Birth	Death	Still Birth	Death	Still Birth	Death	Still Birth
January	18	7	36	0	21	0	23	1	48	0
February	24	7	22	2	48	0	19	1	34	1
March	30	2	25	0	41	0	18	1	22	2
April	18	1	29	0	22	0	28	0	21	1
May	20	1	26	1	28	0	31	0	27	2
June	23	1	25	0	25	0	20	0	31	0
July	28	0	22	0	25	0	16	0	35	1
August	59	0	30	1	29	0	25	0	21	0
September	26	0	25	0	24	0	31	0	-	-
October	24	0	13	0	33	0	26	0	-	-
November	24	2	20	0	31	0	14	0	-	-
December	26	0	31	0	31	0	39	0	-	-
TOTAL	320	21	304	4	358	0	290	3	239	7

CONSTRUCTION – RESERVOIR/MONTAGNE CHERIE -BUDGED SPEECH 2021-2022

(No. A/5) Mr N. Lisette (First Local Region Member for Baie Aux Huîtres) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner Whether for the benefit of the House, he will state if his Commission intends to proceed with the construction of the reservoir of Montagne Cherie as spelt out in Budget Speech 2021-2022 and, if not, why not?

Reply: Mr Chairperson Sir, my Commission will give consideration in the future for the construction of a new reservoir in the region of Mt. Cherie, particularly to meet the demand for water in favour of an increasing population in Morcellement Mourouk and to satisfy people in the whole region, thereby relieving pressure from Petit Brulé reservoir.

My Commission and the RPUC have proceeded with new reservoirs at Mt. Piquant (1000 m³) and Manique (2000m³) for the transfer of desalinated water from Pointe Coton.

We have solicited the technical assistance of Societé Canale de Provence (SCP) to help us to determine the exact location of pipelines and new reservoirs in connection with the implementation of the primary water network in Rodrigues. The water specialists of SCP will provide useful advice to ensure that we are on the right path as far as network and construction of new reservoirs are concerned.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

STAFFING POSITION – PUBLIC SECTION/RODRIGUES ESTABLISHMENT

(No. A/6) Mr L.D. Baptiste (Second Local Region Member for Grande Montagne) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the staffing position in the public sector for the Rodrigues Establishment, he will seek information for the benefit of the House, and state and table the number of: -

- (a) funded posts not filled for the financial year 2021-2022;
- (b) public officers who have died/resigned/retired from the service since July 2022 to date;
- (c) officers promoted/changed post within the service, and
- (d) new recruits from outside the service for the same period?

/UNREVISED/

Reply: Some 636 funded posts were not filled for the Financial year 2021-2022.

- (a) The number of public officers who have died/ resigned and retired from service since July 2022 to date are as follows:

Death in service	16
Resignation	10
Retirement	111

- (b) The number of officers promoted/ changed post within the service is as follows:

Number of Promoted	142
Number of changed Post within the service	204

- (c) Since July 2022, 339 persons have been recruited from outside the service.