

/UNREVISED/

No. 11 of 2024

RODRIGUES

FIFTH REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENTARY

DEBATES

(HANSARD)

(UNREVISED)

TUESDAY 05 NOVEMBER 2024

/UNREVISED DRAFT/

CONTENTS

PAPERS

ADJOURNMENT

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. 11 of 2024

Sitting of Tuesday 05 November 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/119) - Fishing activities – Fong Chang Ii/Hawking & Voyekov Banks
- (No. B/120) - Controlled commodities
- (No. B/121) - Involvement/advisors RRA – Overt political activities
- (No. B/122) - Resignation - Advisor
- (No. B/123) - Sharing of information/dive clubs– Crown Of Thorns Star (COTS)
- (No. B/124) - ‘*Akademi kreol de rodrigues*’ (*AKRD*)
- (No. B/125) - Project – Acquisition/New computed tomography scanner (CT scan) – Budget Speech 2024-2025
- (No. B/126) - Upgrading – Football ground/Grande Montagne
- (No. B/127) - Organisation of concerts - Rodrigues
- (No. B/128) - Bandwidth – Mauritius & Submarine (MARS) Cable
- (No. B/129) - Rehabilitation control & removal – Invasive trees – Sylvo Pastoral Area/Montagne Cali
- (No. B/130) - Cases of fire victims since March 2022 to date
- (No. B/131) - Registered fisherman cards
- (No. B/132) - Drilling works/Borehole - Araucaria

ADJOURNMENT

/UNREVISED DRAFT/

QUESTIONS (*Written*)

- | | | |
|-------------|---|--|
| (No. B/133) | - | Bad state/Concrete road – Late centenarian Marie Andore/Petit Gabriel |
| (No. B/134) | - | Issues/Road users – Road Fond La Bonté to Baie Aux Huitres |
| (No. A/7) | | Octopus fishery - Rodrigues |
| (No. A/8) | | Renaming of villages/Rodrigues |
| (No. A/9) | | Cohort – Health Care Assistant |
| (No. A/10) | | Recruitment – Prisons Officers |
| (No. A/11) | | Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)– Breast Cancer Care Mauritius |
| (No. A/12) | | Patients – Stress Test/January 2024 |
| (No. A/13) | | Recent embargo – Meat imports/Rodrigues |
| (No. A/14) | | Point-Of-Care (POC) haematology/biochemistry analysers for biomedical tests & analyses |
| (No. A/15) | | Fire outbreaks – Roche Bon Dieu dumping site |
| (No. A/16) | | <i>‘Kreol Rodrige’</i> – Secondary schools/Rodrigues |

/UNREVISED/

PAPERS LAID

A. Deputy Chief Commissioner's Office

- i. Audited Financial Statement of the Rodrigues Trading and Marketing Co (RTMC) Ltd for the Year 2022.

B. Commission for Tourism, Employment, Labour and Industrial Relations, Information Technology and Telecommunications

- i. Annual Report for Discovery Rodrigues Company Ltd. for financial year 2018;
- ii. Annual Report for Discovery Rodrigues Company Ltd. for financial year 2019;
- iii. Annual Report for Discovery Rodrigues Company Ltd. for financial year 2020;
- iv. Annual Report for Discovery Rodrigues Company Ltd. for financial year 2021;
- v. Annual Report for Discovery Rodrigues Company Ltd. for financial year 2022, and
- vi. Annual Report for Discovery Rodrigues Company Ltd. for financial year 2023.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Mr Chairperson: Yes, Minority Leader.

FISHING ACTIVITIES – FONG CHANG II/HAWKING & VOYEKOV BANKS

(No. B/119) Mrs R.M.F. Gaspard Pierre Louis, C.S.K. (Minority Leader) asked the Commissioner for Fisheries and Others whether he will inform the House on if his Commission is involved in fishing activities by Fong Chang II on the Hawkins and Voyekov Banks, which began on 20 October 2014, and (a) state and table the procedures, conditions and required clearances for the fishing vessel's operations, as well as the relevant institutions involved; (b) table the clearances obtained for the specific activities, and (c) state and table the criteria for the selection of local fishers together with the conditions attached thereto?

/UNREVISED/

Mr Perrine: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Commission for Fisheries of which I am responsible aims to enhance the local fishing sector by building the skills and capacity of our local fishermen. This initiative ensures a sustainable future for the fishing industry in Rodrigues.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, through hands-on experience on highly equipped fishing vessels, untrained fishermen can gain practical skills in advanced fishing techniques, which are crucial for modern, sustainable fishing practices.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, at the outset, I wish to inform the House that the longliner fishing vessel, FV Chang Fong II is a Mauritian fishing vessel which is registered under the Mauritian flag.

Upon the initiative of the representative of the company during their recent visit to Rodrigues in September 2024, they met representatives of three fishermen groups in Rodrigues who have on their own free will expressed their wish to participate as trainee fishers in the longline fishing trials to be organised by the fishing company. This has been reported by the representative of the aforesaid company itself.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, as the authority responsible for Fisheries, my Commission is aware of the collaboration but is not the authority granting clearances for the fishing vessel's operation.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, Chang Fong II is a fishing vessel registered in Mauritius. Under the new Fisheries Act, only the Ministry is empowered to issue fishing licence to registered vessels in the Maritime Zone. The company who holds the licence, may recruit fishers for its fishing company and campaigns, including fishers who holds Fishing Bank Cards temporary or permanent. In Mauritius which includes Rodrigues as well. The company is not accountable to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly if it recruits fishers residing in Rodrigues as this falls within the realm of freedom of occupation as per EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. So, Mr Chairperson, Sir, parts (a), (b) and (c) of the question, does not fall within the purview of the Commission and therefore, I am not in a position to table any document concerning this project. Thank you.

The Minority Leader: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Commissioner is saying that the company is not accountable to the Commission for Fisheries, that is what he said. However, we saw, we have seen on the media that the Chief Commissioner and the Commissioner for Fisheries were there for the launching of the project. It is an important project implying

/UNREVISED/

Rodriguan fishers. I would like to know from the Commissioner whether the Executive Council, the highest authority of this island has been apprised and has approved this project and what is in this approval?

Mr Perrine: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I will answer for myself and the Chief Commissioner to reply for himself. If you attend launching of the project, this does not mean it is the project of the Commission. So, being on the jetty to see off the fishermen leaving Rodrigues does this imply that this is the project of the Commission? No, it is not like this. So, the Commissioner of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly has been apprised of the project, of the trials.

(Interruptions)

Yes, but I repelled frankly, this is a project that has been approved by the Ministry of Fisheries under the law and we, we have nothing to say and the contract is between the fishermen and the company. We cannot intervene in a private contract which has been signed by the fishermen and the company. So, as I have said at the beginning of my answer, it is very important for Rodrigues that Rodriguan fishermen participate in trials so as to have skill and capacity for the development of the fisheries industry.

The Minority Leader: I think that the Commissioner for Fisheries sometimes is talking about training and sometimes about trials. We would like to know which is which. And, the Commissioner is saying there is no correspondence and also that Rodrigues has got nothing to say while we are fully autonomous in fisheries. Is the Commissioner aware that there is correspondence dated 17 October mentioning the authorisation to train Rodriguan fishers in longline fishing techniques what at part (c), it is clearly spelt this correspondence is signed by the Acting Senior Chief Executive that the vessel should comply with any condition as may be imposed by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly. So, has the Commission, working on behalf of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly as a responsible government fully autonomous in fisheries has the Commission impose or propose any condition because they are fishing in our...

Mr Volbert: *On a point of order, Mr Chairperson, Sir.* J'aimerais savoir quel est l'authenticité de ce papier, de ce document que la Minority Leader fait référence ?

Mr Chairperson: A point of order. Can you substantiate Minority Leader on the paper that you are... Okay?

(Interruptions)

So, what I will ask you, at the end you circulate a copy so that we can authenticate it.

The Minority Leader: Mr Chairperson, Sir, so I am ready to circulate this paper, this document which as I said has been signed by the Acting Senior Chief Executive, Mrs T. Sukhlall and with reference FCR7532P253V2. So, I am ready to substantiate. Is the Commissioner aware of this correspondence?

Mr Perrine: Mr Chairperson, Sir, it is very funny. She is asking to table, she has already the copy. I do not understand what you are saying.

(Interruptions)

I do not know. We will inquire where... This is a confidential...

(Interruptions)

Shut your mouth!

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: Kindly, remove your work, please. Member, Baptiste please remove your word. Withdraw.

Order please!

Mr Perrine: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I will answer question which are put to me sincerely, as correct as possible. But I will ask the opposition not to provoke me telling me that I am not giving me true information. But they will have it.

(Interruptions)

Now, she is talking about training. But there is no lecturer or naval academy on the boat. What training is she talking about? These are trials. I do not know who is talking about training, there is no training at all. Training you have to have a naval school, you have lecturers. May be she will go on the boat to be a lecturer; I do not know. Okay?

The Minority Leader: Mr Chairperson, Sir, this is clear that the Commissioner does not master his file, I am so sorry. He himself talked about training in his answer. You have been using words that you do not know what is the meaning. I am so sorry for you. And, I would like the Commissioner to inform the House actually how many Rodriguans are there on this fishing boat?

/UNREVISED/

Mr Perrine: We do not have only Rodriguan fishermen on the boat. This question I need to find the answer because you have also Malaysian, Indonesian on the boat. Then I do not know how many fishermen there are. My answer is, I do not know how many fishermen there are on the boat.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, in the answer provided by the Commissioner, he mentioned prior to the tabling of the letter, he said that his Commission is no way involved. I would like to ask the Commissioner whether there has been the blessing of his Commission for the selection of the Rodriguan fishers on that particular vessel and if there were any conditions attached as regards their fishing card, if ever, they complete the training?

Mr Perrine: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the selection of fishers was done by the company itself. And, I have just said that it is a private contract between a company and the fisherman and they have agreed and signed it. For me, it is understood that they have accepted both side and there is no question of intervening or choosing political agent to send on the boat. So, it was decided by the group themselves. There has been no intervention of my Commission in this issue. Because as it was done in the past, what we will see is that we send '*ti copain*'; people *proche de la commission*. This has been done – you can make your investigation – by the fishermen themselves. I can tell you that there are three groups now and before the end of the year we will have at least ten groups.

Mr Lisette: Yes, Mr Chairperson, Sir, on the day of the return of the ship I was here and I noticed that the Commissioner for Fisheries was on the quay here. Did he receive any complaint from the Rodriguan fishers and, if yes, of what nature and what did he do as regards to this complaint?

Mr Perrine: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I receive up to now no request or no complaint. You know I was on the jetty to see that Fisheries Officers, the government Officers that were there, clearance for boat was done according to the law. I talk to a Coast Guard, MRA and other Fisheries Officers and I have discussed with the Head Fishers, that is, the person in charge of the group and he said he was satisfied and he asked to go for another trip to the company.

Mr Lisette: Yes, Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am very surprised by the answer of the Commissioner being given that I am an opposition Member and he is in the government, he is a Commissioner and these fishers they come at the gate and they complaint to me. I do not understand how come as a representative of the authority they never complaint to you.

/UNREVISED/

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: Put your question, please.

Mr Lisette: Yes, my question is coming. I would like to know from the Commissioner as regards to the Rodriguan fishers whom he met on the quay on the day of the return of the ship whether, they complaint about any *maltraitance* on board by the company?

Mr Chairperson: Put another question.

Mr Perrine: No, I will answer.

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: I have said that this question is not allowed.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, malheureusement le commissaire voudrait répondre, on voulait savoir. Le commissaire peut-il nous dire si ce bateau qui est parti le 20 et retourner en avance, si oui, pourquoi ?

Mr Perrine: You know, I am not the captain of the boat but according to the condition, the captain may return to Rodrigues at any time which he finds fit to come back. I would like to say that I was on the boat but what was reported to me that some ladies there requested one Member – *vinn nou pou fer renion tanto vinn lakaz*. This is not in the progress of Rodrigues, of the fisheries. We should not politicise everything. The Member was there to bring disorder, make trouble.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, on a point of order. He is casting allegation and I would like him to withdraw that allegation, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: I am on my feet. Mr Commissioner, I have already ruled that the previous question was not allowed. Even if I do not have control on your answer, so refrain from answering the question which was not allowed for the benefits of the House.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I stand by my point of order as regards to that casting of allegation that he made to my person as regards to that I was there to cause disorder on that day.

Mr Chairperson: Okay, please withdraw.

(Interruptions)

/UNREVISED/

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am responsible of my answer. I am in charge here. This I maintain. A Member, I do not know whom but a Member was there asking the woman to come *pou organiz renion tanto*. I maintain that.

Mr Chairperson: But Mr Commissioner, for the benefit of the House, kindly withdraw.

Mr Perrine: I withdraw.

Mr Chairperson: Mr Agathe.

Dr Agathe: J'aimerais avoir une clarification sur la position de la commission parce que dans sa réponse il a dit que la commission n'a donné aucune *clearance*. Est-ce que c'est le cas, est-ce que c'est bien le cas ? Et, si c'est le cas, j'aimerais poser d'autre question au commissaire.

Mr Chairperson: But the Commissioner already answered the question in his main answer. Come with a next question, please.

Dr Agathe: Donc, dans ce cas, si la commission n'a donné aucune *clearance*, qui est responsable du *welfare* des pêcheurs, de la sécurité des pêcheurs quand ils quittent le port à Rodrigues. Est-ce que la commission s'estime même si un permis a été délivrée à Maurice par le ministère qu'elle qu'en tant qu'autorité ici à Rodrigues elle n'est pas responsable du *welfare* et de la sécurité des pêcheurs ?

Mr Chairperson: Sorry, to which part of the main question are you referring to for your supplementary question?

Yes, Commissioner.

(Interruptions)

Mr Perrine: Mr Chairperson, Sir, a stupid question. But if Rodriguans are on a fishing boat on Banc de Nazareth is RRA responsible of that? If Rodriguans fishermen are on Nazareth Bank are RRA responsible of that? You should know what question you are asking. Because we concerning the direction of Rodrigues, we stick to it. We are responsible for what Rodrigues is controlling or *gérer*. But we cannot control something which is outside our limits.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, *it is common knowledge that on 20 October, there was seven Rodriguans who went on board with some strangers and then on the 27, they*

came and the boat took two new persons and il y avait quatre qui étaient descendus. Et, le commissaire vient nous dire aujourd'hui que la commission n'a rien à avoir avec ces personnes qui viennent et qui sortent alors que nous savons qu'il y a *le Departure Certificate* et le *Landing Certificate* qui est très important. Le commissaire, puisque c'est la dernière question comme le *Chairperson* a dit, est-ce que le commissaire peut nous dire si le jour, le 27 octobre, au départ, pour le deuxième départ du quai de Rodrigues, il y a eu un *Departure Certificate*, une lettre émanant d'un officier de FPS qui était en conge qui a été repêché chez lui, qui n'était pas en service, qui est venu pour signer ce document, qui est comme le *Departure Certificate* et dont le commissaire est au courant. Donc, un officier, un haut officier, qui a signé ce document comme le *Departure* et qui a même mal écrit son nom lui-même puisqu'il n'était pas en état de travailler. Est-ce que le commissaire peut nous dire ça ?

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: Order, please!

Mr Perrine: Mr Chairperson, Sir, please let me explain this. If they have documents or anything that they think is not proper and is against regulations, refer it to the Police. Why you come and ask question here. Refer to the Police and the Police will do the job. I would like to say one thing, Mr Chairperson, Sir, to end this debate. You know this is happening because Rodrigues is no longer controlling certain part of the territory in the sea. And, they are...

(Interruptions)

No, listen to me! *Zot ekoute kan mo koze. Be vinn fer li twa!*

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: Order, please!

(Interruptions)

Mr Perrine: Mr Chairperson, Sir...

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: Order, please!

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: Minority Leader. Okay, complete your answer.

/UNREVISED/

(Interruptions)

Mr Perrine: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I will table a copy of the RRA Act, which has been amended 17 times during their mandate. They have not done anything. They sit there.

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: I am on my feet. We move to next question. Mr Baptiste.

CONTROLLED COMMODITIES

(No. B/120) Mr L. D. Baptiste (Second Local Region Member for Grande Montagne) asked the Commissioner for Consumer Protection and Others whether, in regard to controlled commodities in Rodrigues, she will state to the House if there have been any (a) changes in the mechanism/modus operandi used to determine the related prices and, if so, to give details thereon, including the outcome thereof, and (b) products removed from the list and, if so, to give the reasons?

Mr Chairperson: Order, please. Allow the Commissioner to answer the question.

Ms. Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, in Mauritius control products are controlled under maximum mark-up regime and a price fixing information system is implemented since June 2017 with main objective to enable the electronic submission processing and approval of costing returns with the aim to set a maximum retail price for all controlled commodities. The system also allows amongst others the real time generation of pricing reports for monitoring of prices, the enforcement of Regulation by the Consumer Affairs Unit and for analytical reports for policy decision. Some exporters to Rodrigues was exploiting the existing differences in price control mechanism between Mauritius and Rodrigues to inflate their margins at the expense of Rodriguan's customers. These exporters who often already operate retail outlet in Mauritius and benefit from retail margins on controlled goods purchase these items from their own retail operation via sister companies before exporting them to Rodrigues. Once in Rodrigues they benefitted from additional margins under the local price control system resulting in artificially inflated prices.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, based on the foregoing and to remedy to the inefficiency in the former pricing mechanism, I personally approach the outgoing Minister of Commerce and Consumer Protection in Mauritius to work out a proper mechanism that will bring more efficiency in the processing of prices of controlled commodities in Rodrigues and a series of meetings were held between representative of her office, staff of my Commission and myself

to find solution to remedy to the prevailing situation. Subsequently, a study was undertaken by the Ministry of Commerce and Consumer Protection in February 2024 and subsequent working session with the Commission for Consumer Protection, Price Fixing Unit in Rodrigues. And, recommendation was made by the price fixing process in Rodrigues be reviewed at the earliest and computerised.

The approval of the Executive Council as well as the Cabinet were subsequently obtained for the price fixing information system of the Ministry of Commerce and Consumer Protection to be extended to Rodrigues allowing for electronic submission, processing and approval of costing returns incorporating features similar to the system used in Mauritius. The extension of the price fixing information system allows importers to use the price fixing information system to submit their costing for both Mauritius and Rodrigues altogether with adjustment for fixed rate grade and incentive margins. The same maximum mark-up mechanism used in Mauritius are applied in Rodrigues for most controlled products to ensure consistency. For the seven controlled products specific to Rodrigues namely, animal feed, canned poultry, butter, margarine, canned tuna, canned meat, tea and locally manufactured edible oil, the system incorporate additional features to calculate the lowest purchase price and account for specific cost such as, dock charges and freight and, thereafter the margins are applied.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, the new computerised price fixing mechanism, that is, the price fixing information system was launched in Rodrigues in the presence of the representative of the Ministry of Commerce and Consumer Protection on 02 October 2024 together with the sensitisation of stakeholders and the civil society on the new price fixing mechanism. During the same period hence, on training with traders, importers, the business community was carried out on the use of the price fixing information system as well as sensitisation of consumers and retailers on the new system and on how to check prices of controlled commodities online.

With regard to part (b) of the question, two products were deleted on the list of controlled commodities for Rodrigues mainly, pasta and canned sausages. This decision was taken in consultation with civil society organisations including Association des Consommateurs de l'Ile Rodrigues, Rodrigues Council of Social Services during a consultative meeting organised by the Commission for Consumer Protection and Price Fixing Unit. The two commodities are used occasionally by households and pasta is traditionally not considered as a staple food in Rodrigues.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to seize the occasion to thank the, outgoing Minister of Commerce in Mauritius, the Hon. Mrs Marie Christiane Dorine Chukowry and the staff of her Ministry for their prompt consideration for a computerisation system for the Price Fixing Unit of Rodrigues for more efficiency in the process of fixing of prices of controlled commodities for Rodrigues and for their invaluable assistances all throughout the process. I extend my thanks also to the traders, importers as well as stakeholders of the civil society which have actively participated in the consultation process prior to the introduction of the new price fixing information system. And, for having provided their views and approval to proceed with the new mechanism. Thank you, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

Mr Baptiste: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Commissioner has mentioned about the change in the mechanism and she pointed out that local importers with the other system used to add their additional price margin and artificially inflate the prices of the products. Is the Commissioner aware that as from the coming into force of this Regulations in October, the prices of most of the controlled commodities in Rodrigues have increased substantially and, if so, why?

Ms. Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, for instance, I would like to take for example milk powder. It has been observed that the approved prices of powder milk for Mauritius was on the rise compared to its previous consignment in October 2024. The current approved prices for powder milk 1 kg was Rs274.90 and for Rodrigues Rs305.97. The increase in the prices is due to increase in import cost of the product in Mauritius and this has ultimately led to an increase in the approved prices in Rodrigues.

Mr Baptiste: You talked about milk powder, what about animal feed, for example. Here I see Meadows brand, broiler finisher, BRF 25 kg, the price was initially fixed at Rs448 and now it is Rs676. An increase of more than Rs228 for all animal feeds, all infant milk, all milk, diapers, all these prices have increased. And, as I have also done my homework, I have contacted some suppliers in Mauritius and I understand that there has been no change in the price at source. Can the Commissioner inform the House whether the new system has changed and that there has been change in the margins given to importers and retailers? That is why the prices have increased.

Ms. Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, for some products, some of the controlled products, prices were approved by way of Regulations and were done manually. Any increase or decrease in prices were not being reflected immediately in Rodrigues due to the lead time

involved across the supplied chain. This is why the respected Member now see that the price increases because the system whenever it is increased in Mauritius it increases directly in Rodrigues because the system electronically controlled. Now for instance for animal feed, I will like to reassure the House that the Ministry and the Commission for Consumer Affairs, we are monitoring any increase or the abnormal increase in prices so that we can do all the necessary steps to modify, for instance, for example about the fixed rate or the fixed margin for certain products.

Mr Baptiste: I am surprised by this answer. It defeats the purpose of the change in the system then. Previously, the system used, we used to wait for the consignment to reach Rodrigues before the costing are being submitted. Because we must ensure that the products are really coming in Rodrigues and that the prices then will be considered for change. Why is it now that it is being controlled in Mauritius rather than in Rodrigues?

Ms. Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the prices are not controlled in Mauritius. It is the system in Mauritius that has been extended to Rodrigues because all the difficulties faced by the importers and the consumers in Rodrigues. For instance, the importers when they go to Mauritius to buy for their different goods, they have their invoices and they have to scan all these documents to print it on the system because they already know that they will put these products on the next boat arriving to Rodrigues. This is how we calculate the new price for products that will enter to Rodrigues.

Mr Baptiste: I would like to ask the Commissioner at which point in time will the invoices be considered. Suppose now there is an increase in the price of milk in Mauritius and that the milk has not yet reached Rodrigues...

(Interruptions)

These are not hypothetical. We should understand the way. Will the costing be submitted as soon as they make the purchase in Mauritius or whether these will be considered when it reaches the port here and being verified as it used to be in the past by officers of the MRA or Shipping?

Ms. Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, we are not in the late 1980's, we are in 2024. We have many vessels coming to Rodrigues each week. So, the product will reach Rodrigues at a delay of two days, three days. And, we have a maximum in the law which cater for a maximum of ten days so that the importers they put all their documents online to receive the

prices. We are also monitoring the price of these products in Rodrigues to monitor any changes.

Mr Chairperson: Next. Okay.

Mr Lisette: Just one point, Mr Chairperson. Let us think clear, we understand the efficiency of the system that you were introduced for importers, we understand the efficiency of the process of importers – we do not have any question on the matter, but our interest, our *preoccupation* is towards the customers of Rodrigues. This is why I would like to ask the Commissioner, if I understand well from what she said, I am an importer – allow me, Mr Chairperson, so that I have an ... question. I am an importer, I buy something in Mauritius, I can electronically introduce my invoice on the system and then next week another importer can also introduce his invoice on the system, meaning that we are going to have fluctuation of prices almost every week, not only that, but there will also be what is known as windfall gain. Windfall gain in the sense that those who have bought their products at a lower cost will find themselves selling at a higher cost in the next invoice that is going to introduce in the system. There was a better control when this was being done manually in Rodrigues. Is the Commissioner aware of that advantage that was brought to the customer with the old system?

Ms. Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I know that this system is very difficult to understand for us here because our commercial activities in Rodrigues is different from that of Mauritius. Yes, allow me to...

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: Allow the Commissioner to... You want to answer in the place of the Commissioner?

I want to be clear, if a Member already knows the answer why should you put the question for wasting the time of the Chamber?

(Interruptions)

For the people?

I am sorry. You should not waste the time of the House.

(Interruptions)

Are you challenging my ruling Madam?

Okay. I take it for a no.

Commissioner go on.

Ms. Agathe: Yes, as I was saying is that we have the wholesaler here in Rodrigues, they wear two caps, for instance, they are wholesaler, they are retailer at the same time also. And, I would like to inform the House that with the former system what all the Members were saying about the price fluctuating each time, this was going with the former system and there was very, very, difficult things that we were talking with the different importers so that to ensure that products come to Rodrigues. We should not like doing a blame game, we are trying our best to do the most for the consumers in Rodrigues and as Commissioner for Consumer Protection I have to deal with the part of the importers also to ensure that the goods arrive to the consumers with the best price for them. I would like to reassure the House that with this system we have the maximum wholesale price and the maximum retail price because the Ministry in Mauritius they do not have the maximum retail price. In Rodrigues we have ensured that we have the maximum retail price to ensure that the retailers, the retail outlets have their products and they can have the margins to sell with the different consumers. But also the system is not a perfect one. It is true that the system is not perfect, we are working on it and we have also, you can see on the platform online that we have the different price for Mauritius and Rodrigues, we can compare, we can use this as a document to work with the Ministry further so that we can try to harmonise the prices of the control goods for Mauritius and Rodrigues. Thank you.

Mr Chairperson: Okay, next question. We move to next question.

(Interruptions)

I said next question!

INVOLVEMENT/ADVISORS RRA – OVERT POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

(No. B/121) Mrs R.M.F. Gaspard Pierre Louis, C.S.K. (Minority Leader) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the involvement of Advisors of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly in overt political activities, he will state if (a) there are any guidelines governing same and in line with the Public Service Code of Ethics, and (b) they are permitted to engage in such activities as public campaigning and delivering speeches on political platforms?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that the conditions of employment of advisers of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly are specified in their respective contract and does not provide the application of the Code of Ethics for the Public Officers.

Moreover, there are no guidelines in their respective conditions of employment governing their participation in political activities. Thank you.

Mr Lisette: I would like to ask the Chief Commissioner whether Advisors are considered as Public Officers?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, according to my answer since the Code of Ethics for Public Officers are not applicable to the Advisors, the answer is clear.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, Advisors are paid from public funds and they are Public Officers. On this basis...

Mr Chairperson: Okay, I am on my feet.

The Chief Commissioner already gave an answer. Now you put a direct question. Because your question is the contrary of what he answered and I have no control on answers. So, put a direct questions and I will allow the question.

Mr Lisette: My question, Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to know from the Chief Commissioner whether any time there is no kind of restriction whatsoever as regards to involvement of Advisors in politics especially in other political matters.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I think that should be made clear here is that, these Advisors they are political nominees. You will agree with me. And, in their contract as I have said there are no guidelines in their conditions of employment governing their participation in political activities. Should we include it, we can look at it? We can consider it later. If you have any complaint you can complain, it is okay or even you can go to the Police, if ever you see things are not going as it should be but as far as we are concerned, as far as their contract are concerned there are no guidelines in their conditions of employment governing their participation in political activities.

Mr Lisette: In the sense of such clear indication in their contract does that mean that the Advisors are allowed...

Mr Chairperson: I am sorry; this question has already been answered.

(Interruptions)

I ruled that this has already been answered.

The Minority Leader: Mr Chairperson, Sir, may I ask the Chief Commissioner whether it has been brought to his notice by the Office of the Island Chief Executive that

/UNREVISED/

there is a Circular dated 2007 mentioning clearly that Advisors cannot participate in political matters.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, there is Circular at that time – 2007. So, now we have a new a new government with new policies and the contract has been prepared by another Legal Advisor, a new one.

(Interruptions)

Yes, we keep saying that in their contract there is nothing which says...

(Interruptions)

What are you talking about circular? I have not seen the circular.

(Interruptions)

No, no, it is 2007. All the files are somewhere, there has been fire in the office there, in the archive. So, I will keep saying. There are no guidelines in their conditions of employment. Of course, they cannot do whatever they want because if for example, they contravened the existing law... Of course, we cannot do whatever we want. You cannot do whatever you want. But as far as political activities are concerned these are political nominees and in their contract there is nothing which says that they cannot participate in political activities. Maybe, Mr Chairperson, Sir, we have to look into it. I do agree with you, if you are raising the point. We can consider, yes. You have been talking about the circular in 2007, I will ask the ICE to give it to me and we are going to see. But for the time being it should be made clear that there is nothing specified in their respective contract. Thank you.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, being given that the answer of the Chief Commissioner is clear there is nothing mentioned in the contract of the Advisors. Does he not consider that the circular of 2007 should still be implemented and enforced?

Mr Chairperson: I am sorry. But this is precisely what he said in his answer. He is going to look into it.

(Interruptions)

He is going to look into it.

(Interruptions)

/UNREVISED/

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I think you do not understand my point of view. My point of view is that he said that we are going to look into the matter if ever the circular exists.

Mr Chairperson: Sorry, respected Member. I am not here to listen to point of view, I am here to listen to question. So, put another question and I will see whether it is allowable or not.

Mr Lisette: My question is clear is whether the 2007 Circular is still in force?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I have already answered to the question.

Mr Chairperson: Next question.

The Minority Leader: Given that Advisors though they are political nominees they are being paid from public funds. The Chief Commissioner says that they are not considered as public officers. Can he inform the House in which category they fall then, if they are not public officers and they are paid by public funds?

The Chief Commissioner: Yes, Mr Chairperson, Sir, they are political nominees, of course, they have they perform their duty as Advisor, eventually they are to get paid, they are getting and that is it. As far as category is concerned, they are Advisors.

Mr Chairperson: Okay. Next question, please. Minority Leader.

RESIGNATION - ADVISOR

(No. B/122) Mrs R.M.F. Gaspard Pierre Louis, C.S.K. (Minority Leader) asked the Chief Commissioner whether there has been the resignation of an Advisor recently and, if in the affirmative, to provide details thereof?

The Chief Commissioner: Yes, Mr Chairperson, Sir, Mr P.V.P., who was employed as Adviser on Education on a contractual basis in the Rodrigues Regional Assembly since 27 June 2022 and has resigned with immediate effect, on 14 October 2024. He specified in his answer it was due to unforeseen circumstances which were not really specified in his letter.

The Minority Leader: May I know from the Chief Commissioner, he said that he was appointed on contract as Adviser for Education. Can the Chief Commissioner inform the House whether he changed posting during his contract, instead of being at education?

/UNREVISED/

The Chief Commissioner: Yes, Mr Chairperson, Sir, that is true. There was a temporary posting at the Commission for Agriculture. This is a normal process, Mr Chairperson, Sir. This is a normal process.

(Interruptions)

Yes, of course. We have example in the past, you did the same thing. So, why are you seeming so curious that he has changed in posting. Yes, he has changed his posting and he work with the Commissioner of Agriculture. Thank you.

Mr Chairperson: Next question. Dr. Agathe.

**SHARING OF INFORMATION/DIVE CLUBS
– CROWN OF THORNES STAR (COTS)**

(No. B/123) Dr. H. AGATHE (First Local Region Member of Grande Montagne) asked the Commissioner for Fisheries and Others whether, in regard to the sharing of information by dive clubs on the presence of the Crown of Thorns Star (COTS) Fish on the forereef of Rodrigues in September 2024, he will state to the House the (a) reasons why the removal operation scheduled for 21 September was cancelled; (b) current situation regarding the presence of COTS; (c) action plan to avoid an explosion of the COTS' population, and (d) cost implications for such an action plan?

Mr Perrine: Mr Chairperson, Sir, following the preliminary observations made by Dive Clubs and Shoals Rodrigues, it was noted that some 10 COTS have been sited inside the lagoon of SEMPA. Proposal for removal operation scheduled for 21 September 2024 was called off due to the sensitiveness of the operation which would require special attention so as not to stress the COTS as the latter may instantly lay its eggs if stressed. This would have possibly lead to a proliferation of the COTS instead. Mr Chairperson, Sir, it should be noted that the COTS can lay about 65 million eggs per year. So, therefore, the decision was taken to hire a consultant to undertake a COTS assessment survey in Rodrigues and to propose an appropriate plan of action to control the COTS proliferation.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, regarding the current situation concerning the presence of COTS, a consultant was hired from Mauritius to undertake a COTS assessment survey in Rodrigues and to come up with an appropriate plan of action for COTS control.

The services of Eco Marine Consultants Ltd were hired to undertake the assignment. The consultant is currently conducting the works as per the Terms of Reference and is in

Rodrigues since 27 October to do the work. The duration of the contract is 10 days and the submission of the final report is due by mid-November 2024.

During his mission in Rodrigues, a consultative meeting was held on 28 October with stakeholders using the SEMPA region and to take stock where COTS have been sighted recently. Field surveys were undertaken thereafter within the region of SEMPA on a total of 24 sites including the inner and outer lagoon. The stakeholders including SEMPA, Bouba Diving Centre, fisherman participated in the surveys.

The census survey has revealed a total of 35 COTS, all located within the channel and pass of SEMPA, and some at offshore site at depth of 23 metres. COTS size range between 35 to 60 cm in diameter. The feeding scars were recorded mainly on branching coral species *Acropora* and *Pocillopora*, as well as some massive coral species (*Platygyra*).

Based on the COTS outbreak threshold of the National protocol for Mauritius (i.e. five COTS during a 45 minutes dive session). Preliminary report therefore, suggest that the prevision of National Protocol has not been met to declare an outbreak in Rodrigues.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards section (c) of the question, to avoid an explosion of the COTS' population, I must say that following the preliminary observations made by the consultant, an action plan will be devised to control COTS that has been sighted in the lagoon of SEMPA.

A workshop was organised recently at Les Cocotiers Hotel to present the preliminary findings of the surveys. A detailed plan of action for COTS management, control and monitoring is expected from the consultant's final deliverable report.

Potential strategy for control might include:

- (i) physical removal on a short term but same is not recommended;
- (ii) vinegar injection using specialised COTS control kits is highly recommended for future control sessions. These kits will need to be purchased in Australia. Additionally, SEMPA officers and relevant stakeholders will need to be trained on the use of these kit;
- (iii) an awareness campaign and a national COTS sighting reporting system will need to be designed and implemented, and
- (iv) a special team of intervention comprising relevant stakeholders will need to be put in place for COTS control intervention.

/UNREVISED/

Mr Chairperson, Sir, as per the Terms of Reference, the consultant will complete the survey component of his assignment and his report will be submitted for recommendation and action plan. And, his report for recommendation and action plan is being awaited for next week. In this report a cost implication of such an action plan will be included. Thank you, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

Dr Agathe: M. le président, j'aimerais savoir quelles sont les qualifications du consultant qui a mené le *field survey* pour relever la présence des COTS à Rodrigues ?

Mr Perrine: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I do not have the document with me but I will table his qualifications. He is from Eco Marine Consultants in Mauritius, he has worked for Mauritius Oceanography Institute (MOI) for a long time and he is as now starting his own company. He is not working only in Mauritius, in Australia and abroad also. He is a very experienced officer and he has worked especially on COTS elimination, survey and assessment. And, we are waiting for his preliminary report and we will see further he will continue to do a further survey for us, that is, implementation of the action plan or we are going to seek assistance from MOI.

Dr Agathe: Est-ce que le commissaire pourrait nous dire combien a coûté ce contrat à l'Assemblée ?

Mr Perrine: I do not have the exact figure. But you know it was a direct contract so there is a limit that cannot be exceeded. But the Member may understand that it was a question of urgency and that we cannot wait to follow long procedures or asking the Ministry of Fisheries to help us, it will take three, four months, so with the approval of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, we have given a direct consultancy. I think it is about Rs200,000, I do not know, to the consultant.

Dr Agathe: ...pointait le risque qui existe du fait que l'été arriver et qu'il peut y avoir des pontes, les COTS peuvent commencer à pondre avec l'accroissement de la température de l'eau avec l'arrivée de l'été ?

Mr Perrine: According to the primary report that this should have to be confirmed, Mr Chairperson, Sir. According to him what number of COTS cited within the lagoon is not alarming but some COTS has been cited at the entrance of Grande Passe and outside the reef. And so, we had some time to deal with this issue. I agree with respected Member that in summer it will be a big problem in Rodrigues if we do not at now. So, we will have to import the kits from Australia and set up a team intervention. We should not remove, as they were

supposed to do in September, because it is not recommended. We have to use injection of vinegar and, this we have a special kit that we will have to import from Australia. So, according to my prevision we will start as early as beginning of December.

Mr Chairperson: Next question.

‘AKADEMI KREOL DE RODRIGUES’ (AKRD)

(No. B/124) Ms M. N. Raffaut (Second Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner for Arts and Culture and Others whether, in regard to ‘Akademi Kreol de Rodrigues’ (AKRD), he will, for the benefit of the House, state (a) and table the composition of the different committee/s thereunder indicating their position and allowance disbursed therefor, if any, and (b) the measures and projects undertaken since March 2022 to date?

Mr Ravina: Mr. Chairperson Sir, as regards to part (a) of the question, I am hereby tabling the composition of the ‘Akademi Kreol Rodrige’. It is a committee in itself and does not have any sub-committee under its purview. The Executive Council at its meeting held on Friday 08 August 2022 approved the new composition of the ‘Akademi Kreol Rodrige’ (AKRo) under basically the same Terms of Reference established upon the setting up of this committee in 2019.

I also wish to inform the House that the members of the AKRo are eligible for a one-off grant of Rs5,000 per member, which is payable after completion of assignments given to them by the Commission. As at date no one-off grant has been disbursed, but the AKRo is still carrying out its advisory role near the Commission.

As regards to part (b) of the question, Mr Chairperson, Sir, I wish to bring to the attention of the House that AKRo is basically a committee set-up administratively under the Commission for Arts and Culture and its main mandate is to advise the Commission on the measures, activities and projects to be undertaken to develop and promote our mother tongue. It is therefore an advisory committee. The implementing agency of the measures/project/programme/activities proposed by the AKRo remains the Arts and Culture Department.

The measures undertaken by AKRo since March 2022 are as follows:

- **Measures and activities in 2022:**

Distribution of copies of Diksioner Kreol Rodrige (DKR) in the context of the “Journée Internationale de la Langue et la Culture Créoles”.

- Following the launching of the DKR in 2021, a number of 200 copies were printed and approximately 100 dictionaries were given out to members of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, all Commissions, contributors, stakeholders and partners such as primary and secondary institutions, vocational institutions, Youth Centres, CELPAC and CLAC, media institutions and NGOs amongst others to mark the “Journée Internationale de la Langue et la Culture Créoles”, celebrated each year on 28 October 2022.

Round Table on “Kreol Rodrige – Devlopman Resan ek Defi ki pe Vini”

To mark the 20th Anniversary of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly in 2022, the Commission for Arts and Culture organised a Round Table entitled “*Kreol Rodrige – Devlopman resan ek defi ki pe vini*” on Tuesday 18 October 2022 at the Cultural and Leisure Centre, Mon Plaisir.

The round table was an opportunity for locals and visiting academics from Mauritius to reflect on the latest developments with regard to the *Kreol Rodrige* and avenues for future growth as well as challenges that may arise by focusing on the following themes:

- The place of *Kreol Rodrige* within the Republic of Mauritius (political, identity and pedagogical perspective);
- A comparative analysis of ethnographic data collected for “*Atlas Linguistique et Ethnographique de l’Île Rodrigues*” (ALERO), by R. Chaudenson in the 1970s to contemporary data;
- The *Diksioner Kreol Rodrige*;
- The place and role of the media and new technologies in the evolution of the relationship that people have with their language.
- The round table targeted approximately 150 invitees from various fields, ranging from representative of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, representatives of private sector, NGOs, educators, lexicographic contributors and data collectors.

- **Measures and activities in 2023:**

During the year 2023, the main of activities/projects organised by my Commission with the support of the “Akademi Kreol Rodrige” were the celebration of the UNESCO International Mother Language Day on 21 February 2023 and the celebration of the International Day for Creole Culture and Language on the 28 October 2023 which are annually marked by my Commission.

UNESCO International Mother Language Day 2023

Mr Chairperson, Sir, a series of activities were organised that year with the support of the AKRo in the context of the UNESCO International Mother Language Day celebrated on every 21st February. These activities were as follows:

- (a) a TV programme for vulgarisation and promotion of ‘Kreol Rodrige’;
- (b) the reading of a message in every academic institution on the history, development and importance of mother language in the learning process, and
- (c) induction course on ‘Kreol Rodrige’ and workshop for the newly appointed members of the AKRo.

Journée Internationale de la Langue et de la Culture Créole 2023

In the context of the celebrations of the International Day for Creole Language and Culture celebrated every 28th October 2023, a cultural exchange was organised on this day at the Cultural and Leisure Centre, Mon Plaisir with the participation of a music band from Reunion Island and the local music bands and artists. The cultural exchange started at 13.00 hrs with an exhibition of different music disks from Reunion Island and the Indian Ocean and was followed a musical exchange with the group Tapok from Reunion Island and group Mannyok from Rodrigues.

- **Measures and activities in 2024:**

UNESCO International Mother Language Day Celebrations 2024

In the context of the celebration of the UNESCO International Mother Tongue Day 2024, a delegation from the University of Mauritius proceeded on official mission to Rodrigues to organise the following programmes in collaboration with my Commission from Monday 26 February to Wednesday 06 March 2024:

The delivery of two short-courses: a foundation course, and supplementary course intended for local stakeholders...

The Minority Leader: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Commissioner is taking the whole duration of the PQ time for these question.

Mr Chairperson: Sit down, Madam. I am very sorry; I have no control over the answer. Proceed to finish.

(Interruptions)

Mr Ravina: The delivery of two short-courses: a foundation course, and supplementary course intended for local stakeholders, public officers and the public entitled "Lir ek Ekrir Kreol Rodrige - Kour Fondasion" and "Lir ek Ekrir Kreol Rodrige - Kour Kominikasion ek Administrasion" leading to an MQA approved certificate of successful completion or certificate of attendance;

Mr Chairperson Sir, I wish to draw to the attention of the House that the conduct of these first time courses to promote our mother tongue language has been a success with the participation of:

- 83 persons for the foundation course, and
- 60 persons for the supplementary course.
 - (i) the holding of a workshop regarding the conceptualisation and finalisation of a pocket dictionary on KR;
 - (ii) the holding of a meeting regarding the commercialization of the Diksioner Kreol Rodrige (DKR);

- (iii) the holding of a meeting with the relevant local stakeholders regarding the sensitisation campaign that the Commission wishes to launch regarding the promotion of KR in Rodrigues, and
- (iv) the holding of a meeting with the relevant local stakeholders regarding the writing-up of literature books in KR (which could be eventually used at secondary level).

Thank you, Mr Chairperson Sir.

Ms Raffaut: Yes, Mr Chairperson, can the Commissioner inform the House, whether the Artist Assistance Scheme is making provision to promote writing in ‘Kreol Rodrige’?

Mr Ravina: For the time being, Mr Chairperson, we are working on this issue to provide funds for this issue.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, donc le commissaire a étalé longuement sur les projets qui avaient démarrés avant et je vois que c’est plus la commission et pas l’académie. He said that the academy has got an advisory role, may I know from him since the new setting up of the new committee in 2022 what has been the new proposals, the new advices, the new measures that the academy have proposed.

Mr Ravina: Mr Chairperson, the role of the committee is to advise me for any further project and any measures. Up to now they have not submitted to me any new project or any new measures for the ‘Akademi of Kreol Rodrige’.

Mr Chairperson: Okay, next question.

**PROJECT – ACQUISITION/NEW COMPUTED TOMOGRAPHY SCANNER
(CT SCAN) – BUDGET SPEECH 2024-2025**

(No. B/125) Mr J. R. Ramdally (First Local Region Member for Saint Gabriel) asked the Commissioner for Health and Others whether, in regard to the project for the acquisition of a new Computed Tomography Scanner (CT scan) as announced in Budget Speech 2024-2025, he will inform the House as to where matters stand?

Mr Volbert: Mr Chairperson, Sir, as announced in the Budget Speech for Financial Year 2024/2025 at paragraph 182, the budget of the Commission for Health regarding Medical Equipment has increased by Rs35 M as compared to the Budget of Financial Year 2023/2024, that is from Rs58 M in Financial Year 2023/2024 to Rs93 M in Financial Year 2024/2025, to enable the acquisition of a new CT Scan amongst others.

I wish to inform the House that procedures are ongoing for the acquisition of same. Tenders will be launched shortly.

Mr Ramdally: M. le président, est-ce que je peux demander au commissaire si le nouveau système va être appliqué dans le nouveau local ?

Mr Volbert: *Comme j'ai dit dans ma réponse que tenders will be launched shortly, procedures are ongoing. I think so.*

The Minority Leader: M. le président, puis-je demander au commissaire étant donné qu'il y aura un nouveau local, nous savons que ça va prendre du temps pour l'installation, pour la construction de ce nouveau local, est-ce qu'on peut savoir du commissaire où est-ce que ce bâtiment pour abriter le nouveau CT Scan va être placé dans la cour de l'hôpital ?

Mr Volbert: J'ai déjà répondu à la question. J'ai dit que le nouveau CT Scan va être placé dans le bâtiment qu'on sert actuellement pour ce CT Scan qui est en panne. Donc, on va donner à Joël Leopold ce CT Scan qu'on a et on va placer le nouveau quand ça va arriver.

Mr Ramdally: M. le président, étant donné qu'il y a un problème grave depuis l'année dernière avec le CT Scan, quelle méthode de *procurement* va être adoptée pour l'acquisition de cet appareil ?

Mr Volbert: Comme tous les méthodes, M. le président, il y a qu'une méthode qui est servie qui est régularisée par la loi, c'est la méthode qu'on va s'en servir.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, étant donné que le commissaire nous dit qu'il va installer le nouvel appareil dans le même bâtiment, ce qui veut dire qu'on n'aura jamais un *back up* ? Un moment il parlait que l'actuel, dans son discours budgétaire, l'actuel bâtiment, l'actuel scanner sera réparé et utilisé comme *back up*, un deuxième, et le nouveau on aura donc, c'est-à-dire, deux appareils. Est-ce que en plaçant les deux dans le même bâtiment c'est ce qu'il compte faire ou bien *we will scrap* - il parle de Joël à un moment. *Is he considering to scrap away... ?*

Mr Volbert: C'est pourquoi j'ai dit qu'on va retirer qu'on va donner ça dans les vieilles ferrailles parce que ce qu'on a ce n'est pas réparable. Donc, on va devoir placer le nouveau c'est pour ça qu'on a fait le nécessaire pour avoir les documents du ministère *of Health and Wellness* pour qu'on a un nouveau CT Scan. Donc, ce qu'on a là, on ne peut pas servir, on ne va pas pouvoir servir. Donc, on va retirer et on va placer le nouveau dans la place.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, the budget for Rodrigues Regional Assembly was voted in this Assembly in April 2024 and since then there has elapsed, I mean, almost eight months and we very well know that the CT Scan at Queen Elizabeth is out of order. I would like to know why the Commission has taken so long for finalising the procedures knowing very well that it is of utmost importance for Rodrigues and you had the fund, you can say you had the fund as far as April though it was voted in the National Assembly in June or July. Why have you taken so long to finalise the procedures for the conduct?

Mr Volbert: Le respecté Membre sait très bien que le *Financial Year* prend effet à partir le 1^{er} juillet de chaque année. Donc, on voulait réparer l'actuel CT Scan, le *supplier* nous a donné le default part qui était supposément default, il m'a donné le document, et on a fait le nécessaire. Et puis, quand sont venus, le mois dernier, trois semaines de cela, ils ont trouvé d'autres pièces, parts qui sont affectés. Donc, on ne va pas pouvoir, entre guillemet, je le dis - 'réparer ça pour l'instant' et c'est pour ça qu'on est parti à Maurice dans une mission pour contacter le ministère de la Santé et ils nous ont aidés à préparer le tender et ce qui va *launch shortly* pour l'acquisition d'un nouveau.

Mr Ramdally: *Mr Chairperson*, étant donné que le commissaire a mentionné la somme de Rs93 millions pour le CT Scan et d'autres appareils. Dans le budget c'était aussi le MRI. Est-ce qu'il pense que la somme va suffire ?

Mr Volbert: Ce n'est pas moi qui prépare le tender. Donc, s'il faudra trouver de l'argent pour ajouter pour pouvoir acheter un CT Scan, on va le faire. Parce que comme ils ont dit, c'est *utmost importance*. Donc, on va faire le nécessaire. Ne vous en faites pas.

The Minority Leader: *M. le président, est-ce que le commissaire peut nous dire when are we expecting to have, according to the plan, I think you have a sort of plan. When are we expecting to have this new CT Scan install and commission?*

Mr Volbert: Je n'ai pas la réponse dans l'immédiat mais je pense *as soon as possible*. Très bientôt.

Mr Chairperson: Next question.

UPGRADING – FOOTBALL GROUND/GRANDE MONTAGNE

(No. B/126) Mr J. P. Spéville (Fourth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner for Youth & Sports and Others whether, in regard to the upgrading of football

ground at Grande Montagne, he will state (a) the scope of work; (b) the amount earmarked for the whole project, and(c) since when the football ground is not in use?

Mr Ravina: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the development and upgrading of sports infrastructure around the island remains a priority for my Commission and this Regional Government. This is why my Commission has embarked on a series of upgrading works at various sports infrastructures with a view to improve the safety of athletes' and the public in general.

Grande Montagne football ground is one of our priorities on this list. The playground is actually in a very bad condition as a result of wear and tear and adverse climatic conditions. The last major upgrading works carried out on the playground dates back to more than 25 years ago.

This is why the Executive Council, at its meeting of 25 October 2024 has approved the upgrading of the playground as from November 2024, so that it can be used safely for competitions, training and other sports activities in the short term.

Mr Chairperson, sir, as regards to part (a) of the question, the scope of work is as follows:

- (i) Filling with top soil;
- (ii) Levelling of football ground using grader, and
- (iii) Upgrading of boundary fence.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards to part (b) of the question, the amount earmarked for the whole project is estimated at Rs678,000.

With regard part (c) of the question, Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that the football grounds have remained in use until the start of the upgrading works on Tuesday 29 October 2024. Training sessions by the different teams and Ecole de Foot were ongoing on the playground up to the date the upgrading works started.

However, competitions were not scheduled on the playground since the start of the season 2024/2025, that is, from 04 September 2024. Thank you Mr Chairperson.

Mr Spéville: Mr Chairperson, Sir, is the Commissioner aware that there is water-logging on the playground and, if it is so, can he inform the House if there is any comprehensive strategy addressing the drainage system as a part of the playground upgrade

to prevent water-logging and maintain the quality of the field to ensure the safety of the players playing over there?

Mr Ravina: Mr Chairperson, Sir, as I mentioned in my answer, the scope of work is also for the drainage of the playground.

Mr Baptiste: Can the Commissioner inform the House why if you say that the ground is still in use, why official matches were not played there since March this year, even the two teams from the region had to go to the grounds far away?

Mr Ravina: I wish to draw the attention of the House that the football ground was in use for training up to 29 October but according to the Rodrigues Football Regional Committee, they have informed me that the playground is not practical for official competition, only for training.

The Minority Leader: Can the Commissioner confirm whether the decision to have a JCB on this to dig during the preparation of 12 March 2024...

Mr Chairperson: Minority Leader, please. The Standing Order 19(2)(g) is very clear about this. Put your question and refrain from this.

The Minority Leader: Can the Commissioner confirm whether the fact that his Commission decided to have a JCB to dig on the playground, this has caused the deterioration of this playground and this has made that the players can no longer play?

Mr Volbert: Mr Chairperson, I am not in a position to answer to this question.

Mr Chairperson: Okay, next question.

ORGANISATION OF CONCERTS - RODRIGUES

(No. B/127) Ms K. Roussety (Second Local Region Member of Baie Aux Huîtres) asked the Commissioner for Arts and Culture and Others whether, in regard to the organisation of concerts in Rodrigues, he will, for the benefit of the House, state if there is a new policy for the organisation thereof and, if so, to provide the relevant details?

Mr Ravina: Mr Chairperson, Sir, in regard to the organisation of concerts in Rodrigues, I wish to inform the House that my Commission is only concerned with the concerts organised at the Malabar Podium or at one of the sports infrastructure falling under my Commission's purview.

/UNREVISED/

The House will note that, as from the 07 April 2023, the conditions to grant the podium and sports infrastructures were revised and the new conditions were applicable only for public ticketed musical events (commercial) and public political events (non-commercial).

I wish to point out that for non-commercial public events, such as religious gatherings, the applicant and/or applicant organisation has to cater only for a refundable deposit fee of Rs5,000.

Furthermore, Mr Chairperson, Sir, in the same line and taking as reference the conditions for the use of sports infrastructure in Mauritius, particularly, the Germain Commarmond Stadium, which is usually rented for the organisation of local and international cultural events, the conditions to grant authorisation for the use of the podium at Malabar and the sports infrastructures were further amended, to fit the local context, for the commercial and non-commercial use in line with the decision of the Executive Council at its meeting held on Friday 04 August 2023. An undertaking application, with its list of conditions, was introduced and vetted by the Legal Adviser of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly to be signed prior to the utilisation of the site, be it for both commercial and non-commercial use, as per the following categories: -

- (a) Public ticketed musical events (commercial);
- (b) Public events (non-commercial), and
- (c) Public political events (non-commercial).

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I also wish to inform the house that as from September 2023 up to now, in compliance with Executive Council's Decision dated 16 June 2023, "*No occasional licence is being issued for the organisation of concerts or other related activities during the end of year examinations period, that is from the start of October to end of November of each year depending on time table.*"

Furthermore, Mr Chairperson, Sir, since the 16 February 2024, the Executive Council has decided to revise in a first instance the frequency of holding concerts at the Malabar podium, granting authorisation to use the podium only once per month for only public ticketed musical events (commercial use), or on one of the sports infrastructure, on a first come first serve basis. Thank you, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

/UNREVISED/

Ms. Roussety: Est-ce que le commissaire des Arts et de la Culture peut préciser à la Chambre combien de concert a été organisé après la politique mise par votre commission et donner les noms des organisateurs ?

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

Mr Lisette: I would like to ask the Commissioner for Art and Culture, whether that decision of holding one concert per month at a frequency of once per month was taken in consultation with the artists' community?

Mr Volbert: Mr Chairperson, it is a policy decision and it is also a decision of the Executive Council.

Mr Lisette: ...the policy is based on consultations sometimes and we very well know that there is a grudge among the artists as regards to that decision. I would like to ask him why they were not consulted to know about their views as regards to that policy?

Mr Ravina: Mr Chairperson, as regards to that question, I would like to say that up to now I have not received any complaint or have not received any request from the artists.

The Minority Leader: Mr Chairperson, Sir, we already know that any decision, whether from the Executive Council or the Commission should emanate from a basis. Can we know what the basis behind the decision of organising one concert per month? Why or have you reach to this decision?

Mr Ravina: M. le président, vous savez avec la montée du fléau à Rodrigues surtout avec nos jeunes à Rodrigues surtout lorsqu'il s'agit de la drogue et tout, c'est *l'Executive Council* lui-même qui a décidé pour pouvoir freiner un petit peu ce fléau-là, c'est préférable de donner une seule fois par mois un concert.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I come back to the question, my previous question. The Commissioner said that there is no complaint, I would like to know from him whether there has been any request for holding concerts which have been turned down by his Commission so far?

Mr Ravina: Mr Chairperson, as regards to that question, I will look into it.

Mr Ramdally: Ces conditions s'applique que pour Malabar ou c'est pour Rodrigues entier ?

Mr Ravina: Pour Malabar et pour tous les infrastructures sportives qui se trouve *under the purview of my Commission*.

Mr Chairperson: Next question.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, donc si j'ai bien compris le commissaire nous dit que cette décision d'organiser un concert chaque mois c'est par rapport à sa politique pour freiner les fléaux sociaux ? Ne pense-t-il pas que c'est une échappatoire et c'est une responsabilité de sa part au lieu de vraiment venir avec une politique solide pour combattre les fléaux sociaux. On ne peut pas freiner les artistes en les empêchant de gagner leurs vies parce que vous voulez contrôler les fléaux sociaux. Quelle est votre responsabilité par rapport à ça ?

Mr Ravina: M. le président, c'est une mesure de précaution justement pour prévenir, pour protéger nos jeunes. C'est pourquoi cette mesure a été pris, M. le président.

Mr Chairperson: Next question. Okay last question. Go on, last.

Mr Baptiste: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to know whether there has been any report indicating that the organisation of concerts are major sources that influenced the *fléaux Sociaux* in Rodrigues?

(Interruptions)

Mr Ravina: Mr Chairperson, yes, after several decisions from my Commission, we have noticed that it is urgent to provide only one concert per month. Yes.

Mr Chairperson: Okay, next question.

BANDWIDTH – MAURITIUS & SUBMARINE (MARS) CABLE

(No. B/128) 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 bandwidth available on the Mauritius and Rodrigues Submarine (MARS) cable in Rodrigues, he will state the (a) policy of the Regional Government therefor; (b) actual capacity and usage of bandwidth by the different categories of users and the costs, if any, and (c) status of the payments of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly therefor and the average monthly cost for the usage by the respective Commissions?

Mr Wong So: Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards to part (a) with the operationalisation of the Mauritius and Rodrigues Sub-Marine (MARS) Cable in 2018, the internet penetration

on the island has increased significantly. With such facility, many opportunities are opened to the Rodriguan population especially with the high speed internet connectivity. Out of 8 Tbps capacity on MARS, only 100 Gbps has been activated and 15.4 Gbps is being used out of it. The responsibility of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly is to build up the right ecosystem to ensure that the MARS cable is being used efficiently. To build the right ecosystem, we need to have the following: -

- (1) Very good internet connectivity;
- (2) Trained labour force in the sector, and
- (3) Adequate infrastructure.

Once the ecosystem is setup, we can expect new investors in the ICT field to start business in Rodrigues. Subsequently, Mr Chairperson, Sir, to ensure that all these components are put in place, I am pleased to inform the House that my Commission has come up with the following measures: -

1. Empower the young Rodriguans with the vision to prepare qualified labour force to meet the demand of potential investors in the ICT field, whereby:
 - (a) We have trained more than 375 young Rodriguans to join the BPO/Call Centre section through the training course Fundamentals in ICT/BPO Businesses, and
 - (b) We started new training course in Web Development and Mobile Technologies in April of this year and already completed two batches of trainees whereby 31 candidates have successfully passed their examination. This training prepares the young people to become professional web and mobile apps developers.

In this regard, Mr Chairperson, Sir, I further wish to inform the House that my Commission has already conducted screening of the third batch of 20 candidates for the course to be started in January 2025.

The objective of the programme is to train 100 young Rodriguans to join this activity. It is worth to note, Mr Chairperson, Sir, that a company in Rodrigues is showing interest in these skills.

2. Mr Chairperson, Sir, we have reconstituted the Rodrigues ICT development and Promotion Ltd (RICTDP Ltd) with a new Board of Directors to render the

company operational as it has been inactive for long period. The company will proceed with the recruitment of a General Manager for the smooth functioning and operation of the company. The objective of the company is to market Rodrigues as an ideal place for doing business in the ICT field. At the same time, this will increase the allocation of bandwidth on MARS cable.

3. Mr Chairperson, Sir, we are in the process of launching tender to recruit a consultant/consulting firm to further help us in the elaboration of a strategic plan for the development of the of the ICT sector in Rodrigues.

4. Mr Chairperson, Sir, we have decided to increase the Free Wi-Fi spots from 23 to 46. In this regard, I have the pleasure to announce that approval has already been conveyed by the Prime Minister's Office and the Information and Communication Technology Authority (ICTA) has started the procurement exercise. The new Wi-Fi spots will be available in market, at bus terminals, hospitals, Health Centres and public libraries around the island. Implementation should be done and completed by the end of this year.

Furthermore, my Commission is coming up with the provision of internet connectivity through Wi-Fi in public places. 13 sites have been identified. The tender has been launched and closing date is scheduled for 14 November 2024. We are also starting the project Free Wi-Fi Island whereby 21 sites have been identified and tender is being floated this week.

5. Mr Chairperson, Sir, we have developed Incentives for local investors, whereby:

- (a) fully furnished office spaces;
- (b) internet connectivity, and
- (c) electricity,

are being put at their disposal for a period of two years of operation. This incubation period will help the young investors to focus more on the development of his/her business and less on the burden pertaining to rent and other running expenses.

In the same line, Mr Chairperson, Sir, I further wish to inform the House that we have also developed incentives for Digital Nomads so that they can have a place to continue

/UNREVISED/

working when they are in Rodrigues. As mentioned in the Budget Speech 2023/2024, they will have to pay for such facilities. I must specify that these incentives are coupled with the operationalisation of the Technopark.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards to part (b) of the question, please note that on the MARS Cable there are 80 wavelengths of 100 Gbps which makes a total capacity of 8 Tbps.

Today there is only one wavelength of 100 Gbps that is activated. This is being distributed on a Submarine Line Terminating Equipment of 10 Ports of 10 Gbps capacity each. Out of the 10 ports only three are being used to allocate bandwidth to the different customers. This list is as follows: -

Customer	Bandwidth allocate (Gbps)
Mauritius Telecom	8.5
Cellplus	2.6
Rodrigues Regional Assembly	0.25
Emtel	4
Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation (MBC)	0.05
Total	15.4

Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards to part (c) of the question, I am informed that payment for MARS cable is made on a quarter basis and the details are as follows:

Product Description	Amount for one quarter (USD)
Quarterly fee for the provision of an initial bandwidth of 100 Mbps through the MARS undersea Fibre Optic Cable between Mauritius and Rodrigues	437,318.26

/UNREVISED/

Product Description	Amount for one quarter (USD)
Quarterly Fee for the provision of an internet connectivity of 5Gbps	100,145.74
Sub Total amount payable by the Commission	537464.00

I thank you Mr Chairperson, Sir, for your kind attention.

The Minority Leader: Mr Chairperson, Sir, after five years of operation this is complete failure that the Commissioner for ICT comes and tells us that we are only using 15% of the 100 Gbps allocated. While, I do not know whether he is aware that we have the Auditax reports where we have the bandwidth allocation strategy. After five years we should be as at now using at least 50% of the 100 Gbps allocated. Can I know from the Commissioner why have we not reach this point at this time?

Mr Wong So: M. le président, concernant le secteur informatique, faut-il savoir que le rôle de l'Assemblée Régionale de Rodrigues n'a qu'un rôle de facilitateur. On n'est pas des investisseurs. On n'est là pas pour *promote* éventuellement qui que ce soit en tant que compagnie qui voudrait investir à Rodrigues. Par contre, il est de notre devoir nous en tant que l'Assemblée Régionale de donner toutes les outils nécessaires à ce que l'investisseur lorsqu'il arrive à Rodrigues, il a tous les facilités nécessaires, telle que, *as I mentioned in my paper*, nous avons formé pas mal de jeune dans le secteur dans le sens que si vous, Madame de la minorité, vous voulez investir dans ce secteur vous avez déjà un potentiel de gens qui sont déjà formes dans le secteur. N'attendait pas à ce que le Rodrigues Regional Assembly devienne actionnaire dans une compagnie, comme certain qui on voulut faire à un moment donner. Bon, je voulais juste préciser ça. Bon, nous notre rôle se limite à être un facilitateur dans l'exécution et l'opération des assurances de ce secteur. Il n'est pas de notre devoir, je vais vous dire une chose et que cette Chambre doit savoir, qu'au niveau des opérateurs qui travaillent dans ce secteur, il y a une compétition féroce entre les opérateurs dans le sens que la façon le câble MARS a été confectionne ça a été au détriment de certains opérateurs. Vous savez très bien de quoi je parle. Vous avez été dedans, vous savez très bien ce que je suis en train de dire en tant que commissaire de ICT, vous avez été le commissaire de ICT, vous

savez très bien qu'il y a certain opérateur qui se plaint justement dans l'élaboration du cout d'opération de ce système. Donc, nous on est prêt à aider qui que ce soit. J'allais mentionner qu'éventuellement concernant le *office space*, que ce soit l'électricité et autre besoin pour l'installation mais il n'est pas de notre devoir nous d'aller chercher. Juste pour votre information, quand on est arrivé au pouvoir en mars 2022, j'ai été le premier a visité le Technopark. J'ai visité le 26 avril 2022 et j'étais emballé comme tout que le site aller être rendu à l'Assemblée Régionale d'une certaine manière dans les plus brefs délais. A ce jour, à l'heure où je vous parle, M. le président, le site n'est toujours pas opérationnel. N'incomber pas la faute au RRA. Parce qu'il y a une compagnie qui s'appelle, vous le savez très bien, le Business Park of Baladirou Co Ltd, donc le Chairman et le CEO, je crois, le Development Bank of Mauritius, donc nous avons deux représentants mais qui sont minoritaire dans le *board*, ils n'ont pas voire au chapitre comme il se doit, ce qui me fait dire que le Technopark n'est pas opérationnel, n'est pas rendu, justement.

(Interruptions)

Ça c'est vous qui le dites.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, j'ai entendu le commissaire de l'Informatique dire que RRA utilise aujourd'hui 0.25 Gbps, ce qui nous revient a 250 Mbps. Donc, je sais que c'était un contrat qu'on avait avec un des opérateurs. Est-ce que je peux savoir du commissaire combien de ces 250 Mbps, l'Assemblée Régionale utilise aujourd'hui, et combien ça nous coûte chaque mois ?

Mr Wong So: Vous savez, M. le président, l'allocation de *bandwidth* à ce niveau il nous appartient à ce niveau, au niveau de l'Assemblée Régionale de faire la répartition à travers toutes les commissions, y compris cette auguste Assemblée où nous sommes. De ce fait que le montant global qu'on est en train de payer pour opérer ce câble MARS est chiffré à plus de, tenez-vous bien, plus de Rs110 millions par an.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, le commissaire n'a pas bien cerné ma question. Je ne demande pas le montant que nous faisons pour le ré-paiement du câble. Je vous demande, par rapport à 250 Mb que l'Assemblée Régionale à comme contrat avec un opérateur, combien de cette capacité l'Assemblée Régionale utilise actuellement et combien cela nous coûte pour le 250 Mbps.

Mr Wong So: Merci, Madam. Je vois que vous méprisez bien le sujet. Je demanderais au Président de bien vouloir me laissez quelque temps pour pouvoir fournir à l'Assemblée les informations requises.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, je veux demander au commissaire est-ce que c'est vrai, il y a 250 Mb, vous avez dit qu'il y a 250 Mb, est-ce que c'est vrai que seulement 20% de cela est utilisé par l'Assemblée Régionale et que les commissions ont d'autres accès internet qu'on paye *over and above* cette connectivité ?

Mr Wong So: M. le président, a ma connaissance je ne suis pas au courant de ce que Madame la Minority Leader est en train de mentionner. Moi, ce que je sais, que bon valeur du jour, le document qui m'a été fourni – 0.25 Giga bytes est occupé par le RRA et de ce fait, c'est la vitesse qu'on utilise éventuellement pour fournir à toutes les commissions, y compris l'Assemblée.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, dans le cadre du contrat que nous avons par rapport au câble MARS, c'était convenu déjà que nous actuellement *2 Gbps of internet bandwidth* et que *after five years this will increase to 5 Gbps*. Est-ce que je peux savoir du commissaire combien de ces *2 Gbps are we using and whether we have reached after five years this 5 Gbps that we should be using?*

Mr Wong So: M. le président, c'est avec grand plaisir que je vais répondre à cette question. Vous savez, ce contrat de câble MARS a été *tailor made* comme j'ai dit auparavant dans certaine circonstance. L'Assemblée Régionale de l'époque avait clairement stipule dans le contrat qu'on allait utilise 2 Giga bytes et que deux ans après on va basculer sur 5 Giga Bytes. La question que je me pose valeur du jour, comment ils sont arrivés à ce chiffre de 5, sachant pas très bien comment ils vont aller utiliser les 2 existant ? Je vais vous le dire. Ils n'avaient pas d'option valeur du jour sauf, ce qui a été mentionné dans le contrat, le RRA est obligé de payer ce qui est dû en dollar Américain, s'il vous plait, à Mauritius Telecom. Ce qui fait que valeur du jour même si on n'utilise pas malgré tout on a basculé sur le 5 Giga bytes, le montant qui est dû comme paiement pour le câble MARS est dû et on le paye au frais des contribuables.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, évidemment c'est un contrat. Si vous venez vous ne continuez pas le travail, automatiquement vous devrez payer. Je voudrais demander au commissaire, est-il au courant qu'il y a justement ce rapport sur le *bandwidth allocation strategy* qui démontre clairement qu'après cinq ans de connectivite sur le câble MARS, avec

un projet bien défini, vous dites que vous n'avez pas responsabilité de *promote investors*. *How can you promote for tourism and you cannot promote for ICT? There is something fishy in that.* Est-ce que le commissaire peut nous dire s'il est au courant de ce document et que c'est bien stipulé dans ce document que si on fait le travail comme il se doit, arriver à la cinquième année *we should be break even, that is, we are selling the Gbps and we are getting money. Is he aware of this or is he playing with this project?*

Mr Wong So: M. le président, c'est avec grand plaisir que je vais vous annoncer quelque chose. Dans le sens, l'opérationnalisation de la compagnie ICT Development and Promotion Ltd, à l'heure que je vous parle, M. le président, je le répète, à l'heure je vous parle, *l'approval du PMO n'est pas reçu. J'espère que vous arrivez à comprendre la chose. C'est que à l'heure que je vous parle en tant que commissaire de ICT, l'approval pour opérer la compagnie, la compagnie existe déjà, cette compagnie nous on a fait tout notre mieux pour pouvoir opérer. Parce que sous votre mandat cette compagnie devait être radie.*

(Interruptions)

Oui, parce que pour non-opérationnalisation, devez être radie. C'est que nous on a fait à notre niveau. On a payé des amendes.

(Interruptions)

Madame, si vous voulez poser... mais posez votre question, on va vous donner les chiffres. On a payé...

(Interruptions)

Non, non, non, non. Vous ne voulez pas entendre la vérité. Vous ne voulez pas entendre la vérité. Mais écoutez...

(Interruptions)

Non, pas excité ! Pas excité, pas excité, pas excité.

Je peux même vous citez le nom de l'officier du Prime Minister's Office qui nous a écrit tout récemment pour nous dire que...

(Interruptions)

Non, non, non ! Vous êtes d'accord. Comment vous voulez qu'on fasse de la promotion éventuellement quand vous vous... La compagnie n'est pas opérationnelle. Je vous parle...

(Interruptions)

Je vous parle... M. le président, permettez-moi, à l'heure où je vous parle aujourd'hui...

Mr Chairperson: Order, please!

Mr Wong So: ...le 5 novembre 2024, la compagnie n'est pas opérationnelle. Merci

Mr Chairperson: Last question.

The Minority Leader: Je vois que ça ne vaut pas trop la peine. Donc, je peux demander au commissaire qu'est-ce que vous allez faire pour assurer aujourd'hui, comme vous avez dit dans votre réponse, nous utilisons que 15% de cette connectivité, quel est votre projet pour pouvoir maximiser l'utilisation de ce que nous payons – vous avez parlé de Rs110 millions ?

Mr Wong So: M. le président, Madame la minorité, je crois n'a pas écouté la réponse. Je vous ai donné la stratégie de ma commission qu'est-ce qu'on va faire dans les semaines, dans les mois à venir concernant notre stratégie pour le développement de l'informatique. On va recruter un General Manager, il y aura un consultant ou une firme qui va travailler pour nous aider.

(Interruptions)

Mais bien sûr, je vous le redis, la compagnie n'est pas opérationnelle, Madame. Qu'est-ce que vous voulez qu'on fasse davantage ?

Mr Chairperson: Okay, next question, please.

**REHABILITATION CONTROL & REMOVAL – INVASIVE TREES – SYLVO
PASTORAL AREA/MONTAGNE CALI**

(No. B/129) Mr N. Lisette (First Local Region Member for Baie aux Huîtres) asked the Commissioner for Agriculture and Others whether, in regard to the rehabilitation, control and removal of invasive trees in the Sylvo Pastoral Area of Montagne Cali, he will, for the benefit of the House, state the (a) scope of work involved; (b) expected cost of the project and the source of funding, and (c) methods used for the selection of the service providers?

Mr Perrine: Mr Chairperson, Sir, Mt Cali in Rodrigues was introduced as a restoration area under the European Development Fund (EDF) project in the year 1987. This initiative was part of the EDF funding framework aimed at promoting Sustainable Land Management through the setting up of 13 Sylvo Pastoral Areas around the island.

/UNREVISED/

Mr Chairperson, Sir, after the conclusion of the EDF Project in Rodrigues, particularly around the Year 1995, Mt Cali's Sylvo Pastoral Area continues to face ongoing challenges related to bio-diversity preservation and invasive species control.

However, without the continued funding after the end of EDF Project in Rodrigues, infrastructures such as fence and Watchman posts encountered deferred maintenance issues, including Mt Cali Sylvo Pastoral Area. To note that the fenced area at Mt Cali has been very beneficial to the Forestry Services as new forests have emerged and the growing tree seedlings were protected from grazing animals. In addition, breeders in the vicinity and around the island have accessed to fodder grown in this Sylvo Pastoral Area to feed their animals, especially, there was a project to introduce the cut and carry system.

It is regretful to note that the fenced areas have been more or less abandoned after 20 years of construction and have not been replaced in all Sylvo Pastoral Areas around Rodrigues, which include Mt Cali.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, as a caring government, since the year 2022, my Commission has decided to rehabilitate the Sylvo Pastoral Areas in Rodrigues of which include Mt Cali with a view to: -

- (i) promote Sustainable Land Management, and
- (ii) assist our breeders through continuous fodder production.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards part (a), the scope of work will involve the rehabilitation and ecological restoration of the Sylvo Pastoral Area of Mt Cali. The primary activities include: -

- (i) Removal of invasive tree species that disrupt the native ecosystem;
- (ii) Control of regrowth;
- (iii) Rehabilitation of native vegetation by planting endemic plant species to restore the local ecosystem and improve biodiversity and plantation of fodder;
- (iv) Fencing of the earmarked zone under the project, and
- (v) Construction of two Watchman posts.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, the estimated total cost for the project based on initial planning is Rs20.9 M. It implies a significant budget being given the high increase in price of inputs for restoration of degraded areas.

/UNREVISED/

The end of FED funding in Rodrigues has led Rodrigues to seek alternative partnership to continue the restauration and conservation. Our efforts remain focused on balancing ecological restoration with Sustainable Land Management practices, emphasising community involvement to foster long-term environmental stewardship across at Mt Cali.

To note that a proposal for the co-financing of Mt Cali Pastoral Area has been made to the UNDP through the Sustainable Land Management Project. This project has obtained a positive response from all breeders in the vicinity of Mt Cali including Baie Malgache, Allée Tamarin, Anse Pensia and Montagne Tonnerre.

Therefore, this will be eco-funding for this project. Part will be funded under the Commission for Agriculture to the tune of Rs15.9 M and the other part under the United Nations Development Project under the project ‘Sustainable Land Management’(SLM) Project to the tune of Rs5 M.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regard part (c), to date no service providers have been selected to undertake the different tasks under the project.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, of course, we welcome such a project for the interest of the breeders, in the sense that it started under the alternative livelihood during the COVID project. I would like to ask the Commissioner for Agriculture, whether all breeders who use that pastoral area, I mean including, Oyster Bay, Allée Tamarin and Baie Diamant will have the possibility to participate in the project?

Mr Perrine: Mr Chairperson, Sir, of course they will be included in the project. Because as I have said, the region of Mt Cali – you know it is a very area, it about 75 hectares, I think the first is Cascade Pigeon. It is in the 13 Sylvo Pastoral Areas set up through the FED. So, I will give you this: Cascade Pigeon: 200 hectares; Baie Malgache: 175 hectares, which is Mte Du Sable/Baie Malgache 2, include Mt Cali: 75 hectares; Baie Malgache 3/Baie Diamant: 62 hectares; Mt Plate: 60 hectares; Rivière Banane: 167 hectares; Baladirou: 65 hectares; Cascade Jean Louis: 100 hectares; Mourouk: 60 hectares; Rivière Coco: 160 hectares; Mt Cabris/Rivière Coco including Deux Montagnes: 160 hectares; Mte Cabris Est: 170 hectares; Grande Montagne: 25 hectares, and Anse Quitor: 75 hectares. In all, 1,354 hectares was protected by fence and *gérer* by FED in order that all breeders could be able to have fodder for the new system that FED wanted to introduce in Rodrigues – us also we want to introduce this system because we cannot go on with animal open grazing in Rodrigues. So, this is a very important project and my Commission will give

all necessary support and include all the breeders in the region to get involved in this project and this will serve as a model for the other Sylvo Pastoral Area that we abandoned in Rodrigues, it will be a model and afterwards we will go to other pastoral area which have been abandoned we will rehabilitate. It will serve as an example. And, I thank the respected Member for his positive attitude to help the breeders in the region.

Mr Lisette: I will like to ask the Commissioner whether he has been made aware that there has been protest from breeders, especially from those of Oyster Bay during a meeting held at Allée Tamarin in the presence of the representative of UNDP because they have been ejected somehow out of the project and, if yes, what is his course of action in the matter?

Mr Perrine: Mr Chairperson, Sir, this is a problem that we are facing all over Rodrigues. You know, because these people who have been protesting are not members of the association at Allée Tamarin. So, we are solving this problem and we are asking the committee to open the door, all breeders to be welcomed and will work together. So, I think that this will be a model that can be introduced in other part of Rodrigues.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, this is the issue that can cause damage to that project if everybody is not taken on board, being given that all these planters that I have mentioned and that you have mentioned in your answer they did participate in the alternative livelihood project during the whole project and now some of them are finding themselves out of the project and they are users of that pastoral area. So, I just want to make a request in the form of a question that the Commissioner see to it that all the breeders' community are rightly taken on board for the project.

Mr Perrine: Of course. Thank you, Mr Chairperson. I would like to say that the Member should have noticed that I have not personally participated in the meeting because of political issues. The breeders themselves they organised the meeting without officers of my Commission. But I have not been present personally in this issue. Because I know that this will cause division. I want all breeders in the region to join in the project so that to make it successful so as to be served as example for the other Sylvo Pastoral Areas. Thank you.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, nous savons que dans ce genre de projet, les bailleurs de fond ont une approche genre. Est-ce que le commissaire peut nous dire s'il y a eu cette considération aussi dans le cadre de l'implémentation de ce projet ?

Mr Perrine: *Oui.* Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to ask the collaboration all Members. We have had a problem with recruitment of Labourers for agricultural

/UNREVISED/

development where it involves un-users' participation. And, this project also, what I foresee will have problem to recruit beneficiary to participate, what we call, un-users' participation. To procure the services of labourers through this project is a problem. In Mauritius they say that this system, procurement of services, that is, un-user participation, there is no project like this in Mauritius. And, in Rodrigues we are facing this problem, we want to introduce this system in the field with planters, that the planters themselves they work in their field and the services are being procured so that they do the work and paid by foreign organisation, UNDP, FAO, all others. This is a new system, I agree with you that we have to introduce in Rodrigues where community participate in all this, this development rehabilitation work.

Mr Chairperson: Question.

CASES OF FIRE VICTIMS SINCE MARCH 2022 TO DATE

(No. B/130) Mr L. D. Baptiste (Second Local Region Member for Grande Montagne) asked the Commissioner for Housing and Others whether, in regard to cases of fire victims since March 2022 to date, he will state the (a) number thereof; (b) number of housing units destroyed and requested or recommended for assistance for the construction of a new house or repairs of existing house at the level of his Commission, and (c) amount disbursed in relation thereto and the number of families whose housing unit have not been completed as at date?

Mr Volbert: Mr Chairperson Sir, prior to proceeding to the reply to the questions of the respected Member regarding the number of cases of fire victims reported to my Commission for assistance in terms of housing facilities since 2022, allow me to present a brief retrospective on same subject.

From January 2020 to February 2022, I am informed that there have been nine cases of fire victims reported.

Time period	No of fire victims
From March to December 2020	6
From January to December 2021	3
Total	9

/UNREVISED/

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am also informed that out of those nine reported cases, there had been eight recommended cases whereby one was recommended for construction of a new house and seven for repairs of existing houses.

Mr Chairperson Sir, I would also like to further inform the House pertaining to the type of Housing Unit that the fire victims possessed prior to the fire and the type that was allocated and/or the repairs that were carried out:

Firstly, for the six fire victims for period March to December 2020; the types of housing unit prior to the fire and the type of housing assistance/facilities provided are as follows:

SNO	Type of housing unit before fire	Type of housing unit allocated
1	Concrete house 1200 feet square	Repairs to ceiling
2	Trust Fund 24 m ²	Repairs of CIS Roof and supply of aluminium openings
3	Concrete House 11.5 m ²	Repairs of openings
4	Trust Fund 24 m ² and CIS annexed	Payment of labour for repair of house and supply of openings
5	CIS one room	Supply of construction materials
6	CIS house 18.6 m ²	Payment of labour and construction materials for CIS housing unit

Secondly, for those persons impacted by fire in 2021 and who sought assistance from the Commission, the type of house before the fire and the type of assistance provided is as follows:

SN.	Type of housing unit before fire	Type of housing unit allocated
1.	Concrete Building of two rooms	Housing Assistance of Rs62,274.75 for repairs of slab

/UNREVISED/

SN.	Type of housing unit before fire	Type of housing unit allocated
2.	Trust Fund 24 m ² and annexed CIS 14 m ²	Supply of aluminium openings and repairs of roof
3.	Concrete 160 m ²	Electrical materials and paint

Mr Chairperson, Sir, as per information gathered, I have taken cognisance that a sum of Rs603,832.25 had been disbursed accordingly for the purpose of fire victims' cases reported to benefit housing facilities.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I wish to inform the House that since March 2022 to date there have been 16 cases of fire victims reported to my Commission for assistance for Housing facilities.

If you allow me, I wish to provide the details regarding the number of cases reported per year since we took Office in 2022:

Time period	No of cases of fire victims reported to this Office
From March to December 2022	3
From January to December 2023	6
From January 2024 up to date	7
Total	16

Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards part (b) of the question, I have been informed that there have been 14 cases recommended for assistance so far out of the 16 and two are under process.

I wish also to bring to the attention of the House the following information pertaining to the type of housing unit before the fire and the type of assistance, in terms of improved surface area, type of house and repairs being provided by my Commission for those 14 cases.

/UNREVISED/

SN.	Type of housing unit before fire	Type of housing unit approved for allocation
1.	CIS house 18 m ²	Concrete house of 50 m ²
2.	CIS house 26 m ²	CIS 3-room of 35 m ²
3.	CIS 9.29 m ²	Concrete house with CIS roof 44.5 m ²
4.	CIS 9.26 m ²	Concrete house with CIS roof 33.5 m ²
5.	Concrete house of 50 m ²	New rendering works to ceiling
6.	Trust Fund house 24 m ² + CIS of 66.89 m ²	Repairs of ceiling plastering and opening s
7.	Trust Fund house 24 m ² + CIS Kitchen	Repairs of CIS Kitchen (materials supplied)
8.	Coral block wall and CIS roof of 18.6 m ²	Concrete house of 50 m ²
9.	Concrete house of 75 m ² (a room of 10m ² completely burnt)	Repairs of 10 m ² room (materials supplied)
10.	Trust Fund 24 m ² and CIS 22.2 m ² annexed	Building materials for annexed CIS
11.	Concrete house 50 m ²	Roof slab casting
12.	Concrete house 9.3 m ²	Repairs of one room
13.	Concrete house and annexed 9 m ² CIS	New CIS 9 m ² (<i>Only annexed CIS was damaged</i>).
14.	CIS house 22.2 m ²	New CIS 3 rooms (35 m ²)

In fact, as I just mentioned, you will note that out of the 14 recommended cases, seven were recommended for construction of new houses and seven for repairs of existing houses, based on the reports of Engineers and Inspectors of Works.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, most of those fire victims are on the Social Register of Mauritius (SRM) and the policy of this Regional Government is to ensure that each family or individual is provided with a decent and appropriate housing unit.

/UNREVISED/

My policy as the Commissioner for Housing is to assist the needy and vulnerable families to have access to a decent housing unit which would be cyclone or other calamities resistant.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as regards to part (c) of the question, I am informed that a total of Rs4,850,991.10 has been approved for the completion of all the 14 housing units as detailed below:

Time period	No of fire victims	No of recommended cases	Type of assistance	Number of completed cases	Number not completed and reason	Amount disbursed Rs
March to December 2022	4	4	i) 1 repairs of existing house ii) 3 new houses	4	0	1,903,500.00
January to December 2023	6	6	i) 4 repairs of existing house ii) 2 new houses	5 completed, i.e. 4 repairs and 1 new house completed	One housing unit has reached beam level and materials for casting of slab will be delivered after the polling day.	1,756,995.00
January 2024 up to date	6	4	i) 2 repairs of existing house ii) 2 new houses	Repairs completed for one housing unit	Tender is under process for launching for the 3 remaining housing units	965,496.10
Total	16	14	14	10		4,850,991.10

/UNREVISED/

Mr Chairperson, Sir, the House is informed that procedures have been initiated by my Commission for the construction of the three houses of fire victims, amongst the six cases for period January 2024 to date, by contractors. Thank you.

Mr Baptiste: Mr Chairperson, Sir, you are to understand that these people have faced difficult situations sometimes unexpected situations. Would I know from the Commissioner whether any fast track system could be put in place because I understand that some people are still awaiting for repairs or construction of their houses since 2023. So, what do you intend to put in place as a fast tract system to ensure that these people are not penalised for so long?

Mr Volbert: M. le président, ces victimes avaient choisis le *self-help*, c'est-à-dire, on donne des matériaux. Mais comme on a vu que ça tarde et on a pris la décision comme j'ai dit dans ma réponse, on a alloué ces maisons-là aux contracteurs pour que ces maisons terminent au plus vite possible.

Mr Chairperson: Next question.

REGISTERED FISHERMAN CARDS

(No. B/131) Dr. H. AGATHE (First Local Region Member of Grande Montagne) asked the Commissioner for Fisheries and Others whether, in regard to the grant of Registered Fisherman Cards, he will state to the House (a) the number of new beneficiaries per Fish Landing Station for 2023 and 2024, respectively, and (b) if there has been any change in the criteria used therefor and, if so, to state the reasons thereof?

Mr Perrine: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that the Executive Council at its meeting of 17 March 2023 has approved that five fishermen be issued with Professional Card from a list of 64 fishers who hold their off-lagoon provisional card since December 2021 but were omitted due to oversight by the Fisheries Protection Service in March 2022.

As regards to 2024, no Fisherman Card has been issued since January 2024 until now.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards to part (b) of the question, the criteria approved at the Executive Council meeting dated 30 August 2024 are as follows: -

CIVIL

- (i) The applicant shall be of 18 years old or more but less than 50 years on the date of application.
- (ii) The applicant must be domiciled in Rodrigues.

/UNREVISED/

FISHING EXPERIENCE/TRAINING

- (i) The applicant must be generally known to be involved in off-lagoon fishing (includes immediate off reef fishing – *lapes lor la cote brisant*)) and not merely being an occasional or leisure fisher wishing to benefit from the scheme.
- (ii) The applicant shall not be engaged in any significant employment, trade or other economic activity which in the opinion of the Technical Committee does not make him or her a person living mostly from his/her professional fishing activities.
- (iii) The applicant shall have: -
 - successfully followed an approved training course in off-lagoon fishing or
 - show proof that he/she has been working continuously as a bank fisher or show proof/provide explanations that he/she has been involved continuously as an off-lagoon fisher for more than two years.
- (vi) The applicant shall agree to forego any other social aid at the time of final registration.
- (vii) The applicant must show proof that he/she has access to a boat engaged in off lagoon fishing.
- (viii) Access to fishing boat shall be limited to a maximum of six persons.
- (ix) A boat owner who is not a regular fisher himself/herself (*patron peser*) shall not qualify automatically for the card.
- (x) Applicants who hold Tourism Skipper's Licence are not to be disadvantaged. Such qualification is deemed as a plus if the fisher is a regular fisherman.
- (xi) Priority will be given to the conversion of lagoon fisher who meet above requirements.

SOCIAL CRITERIA

- (i) The applicant shall have a good personality and social character (*pa soular*). The Technical Committee should not recommend applicants who are known to be chronic drinkers or who have anti-social behaviours in their localities.
- (ii) Priority is to be given to caring and responsible heads of households and families with children who meet the above criteria.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

Dr Agathe: Donc, si je comprends bien, M. le président, il n'y a pas eu de carte allouée cette année alors même qu'il y a eu des déclarations de la part du ministre de la Pêche lui-même qui avait un quota de 100 qui était prévu sur les 1,000 qui était annonçait à Maurice qui était prévu pour Rodrigues.

Mr Perrine: No, Mr Chairperson, Sir, we have not issued any card from January up to now. But we have a provision to issue 100 cards maybe more or so according to the Commission for Finance. But it will be issued after the election.

Mr Chairperson: Next question.

DRILLING WORKS/BOREHOLE - ARAUCARIA

(No. B/132) Mr L. D. Baptiste (Second Local Region Member for Grande Montagne) asked the Commissioner for Labour and Industrial Relations and Others whether, in regard to the recent works for the drilling of a borehole at Araucaria, he will state if (a) all related safety laws/guidelines were adhered to; (b) any complaint was received relating to potential health and safety issues and, if so, to give details thereof, and (c) officers of his Commission attended same on site and, if so, to state the recommendations/observations made and, if not, to give reasons therefor?

Mr Wong So: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I do not know why at the outset why this question has been addressed to me because it concerns the drilling of boreholes. But nevertheless, I will try to give some information concerning the detail that you have been asked.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that no site visit has been done on this site to assess if all safety and health legislations were being adhered to by the contractor with regard to the recent works for the drilling of a borehole at Araucaria. The works was carried out by the RPUC, a company which I am aware is fully conversant with the host Regulations and Laws.

With regard to part (b) of the question, Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am further being informed that one, Mrs C.P. made a complaint via telephone to the Occupational Safety and Health Department on the 16 September 2024 at 12.52 hrs stating that construction works were being done next to Araucaria Primary School causing both air and noise pollution, according to her and affecting the health of the children. The complaint was officially registered.

/UNREVISED/

However, Mr Chairperson, Sir, I wish to inform the House that with the coming into operation of the amendment of the Occupational Safety and Health Act 2005, my Commission has to clear the legal issue with the Ministry of Labour and Industrial Relations pertaining to powers of officers of the Occupational Safety and Health of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly to carry site visits and onsite investigations following the amendment of the aforesaid Act.

We are informed that the Ministry of Labour and Industrial Relations has duly sought legal advice from the State Law Office. It is however, to be noted that currently officers of the Occupational Safety and Health department of my Commission is only conducting site visits for issues concerning Trade Licenses for recommendations, sensitisation of employees on safety and health issues on site of works, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, regarding part (c) of the question, officers of the Occupational Safety and Health Department could not attend to the complaint on site because due to the reasons mentioned above.

Thank you for your attention, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

Mr Baptiste: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am quite shocked with this answer. Does it mean that nowadays officers of the Occupational, Safety and Health, they do not have the power to go and do site visits and take contraventions or all these on the site of work?

Mr Wong So: M. le président, je crois savoir que la prochaine fois quand les gens sont en train de lire la réponse il faudra quand même comprendre ce qu'on est en train de dire. L'amendement a été fait tout récemment au niveau de l'Assemblée Nationale ce soir. Ce soir nous avons des officiers du cadre technique qui part à Maurice pour revoir toute la question avec le ministère concerne par rapport à ce qu'il s'agit des site visites et éventuellement la prise des contraventions pour ceux qui sont en contravention. Donc, je voudrais juste vous dire que l'amendement a été fait tout récemment et on est en train de voir la possibilité avec les officiers du ministère du Travail comment seront éventuellement le modus-operandi pour les officiers de Rodrigues.

Mr Baptiste: Can we know exactly when were the amendments made at the level of the Ministry, please?

Mr Wong So: Je prends note et je vais annoncer à la Chambre par la suite.

Mr Baptiste: As far as I know, I have seen it in the newspapers it is somewhere in June or July. And, I would like to know why the Commission has taken so much time to take this issue on board? It is only two nights that officers will be going to Mauritius. Why the Commission has remained so passive concerning such an important law which is very important for the protection of workers for decent work?

Mr Wong So: Je prends note de votre ardeur dans la formulation de votre question. Simplement que je peux vous dire que nous, nous avons à cœur justement l'intérêt des travailleurs, il va de soi que valeur du jour on part à Maurice justement pour régler l'affaire et qu'au retour je pourrais vous annoncez les délibérations sur place.

Mr Baptiste: Anyway. Let us suppose that they are taken to take contraventions but is it at least, was it not the duty of the officers at least to go on site to find out and to report about the situations because as I have been there I have seen no boundary signs, for example, no site boundaries as it is in the guidelines, no public safety fencing and other risk assessment. Can we know why at least if we do not have the power to take contraventions but to advise and to make recommendations, why officers did not go to attend such a complaint? Whereas, as you have mentioned it was just next to a primary school, so these hazards the Commission has not taken this thing as urgent.

Mr Wong So: *Alors, M. le président,* drilling of boreholes, I think is not under my Commission as such but nevertheless this question will have to be raised with the officers concerned whether they are doing their work properly. So, they will be called upon my office to see where matters stand.

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: The Table has been advised that PQs B/133 and B/134 have been withdrawn.

Yes, time is over.

BAD STATE/CONCRETE ROAD – LATE CENTENARIAN MARIE ANDORE/PETIT GABRIEL

(No. B/133) Mr N. Lisette (First Local Region Member for Baie aux Huîtres) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the bad state of the concrete road named after late centenarian Marie Andore at Petit Gabriel, he will, for the benefit of the House state (a) if there has been any complaint received at his Commission therefor and, if

/UNREVISED/

yes, to state since when; (b) if his Commission has carried out any survey in regard thereto and, if yes, to table the report thereof, and (c) the measures his Commission intends to take therefor indicating the time frame?

(Withdrawn)

ISSUES/ROAD USERS – ROAD FOND LA BONTE TO BAIE AUX HUITRES

(No. B/134) Mr N. Lisette (First Local Region Member for Baie aux Huîtres) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the issues faced by road users along the road from Fond La Bonté to Baie aux Huîtres during major events held at the playground, he will state the measures his Commission intends to implement to enhance road safety in the area?

(Withdrawn)

ADJOURNMENT

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I beg to move that the House be now adjourned to Thursday 12 December 2024 at 3.00 p.m.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner, rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Mr Chairperson: The House stands adjourned.

At 1.04 p.m., the Assembly was, on its rising adjourned to Thursday 12 December 2024 at 3.00 p.m.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

OCTOPUS FISHERY - RODRIGUES

(No. A/7) Dr. H. AGATHE (First Local Region Member of Grande Montagne) asked the Commissioner for Fisheries and Others whether, in regard to octopus fishery in Rodrigues, he will, for the benefit of the House (a) state if there has been any change of policy introduced following studies conducted by external experts on the status thereof, and (b) table the figures of daily catch of octopus for the first 15 days following the opening of the fishery after the closed seasons, for the period from 2014 to 2024, along with data on the annual catch for the same period?

/UNREVISED/

Reply: Mr Chairperson, Sir, there has not been any change of policy introduced following studies conducted on octopus fishing in Rodrigues. Any policy change will be subject to Executive Council approval.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, the report of Monitoring and Sustainable Management of Octopus Fishers in Rodrigues, a Multi-Year Analysis by Christopher Bova, Warren Potts, Warwick Sauer and Sylvio Perrine make recommendation for: -

- (a) Four to five sampling sites spread geographically across the most important fishing area;
- (b) The monitoring is conducted at peak fishing periods around spring tides to collect information on: -
 - (i) Information on the fishers
 - (ii) Gear used
 - (iii) Total daily catch
 - (iv) Number, length and weight and sex of octopus, and finally
- (c) to estimate the total amount of octopus exported and consumed locally.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, as the report dated back to June 2023 and the above monitored activities requires additional human resource and funding and that no budget position was made in estimated 2024-2025, my Commission is working on estimates to be submitted in budget estimates 2025-2026.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards to part (b) of the Question, the requested information is being tabled.

RENAMING OF VILLAGES/RODRIGUES

(No. A/8) Mr J. P. Spéville (Fourth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner for Tourism and Others whether, in regard to the work being carried on the renaming of villages in Rodrigues, he will state (a) the scope of work; (b) the cost implication thereof; (c) who is the successful bidder for the execution thereof, and (d) when the work is due to be completed?

Reply: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed by the Discovery Rodrigues Company Ltd that the scope of work consists of design, fabrication and fixing of signboards for villages, Public Beaches and Hiking Paths for 106 villages, 12 public beaches and 5 hiking paths.

/UNREVISED/

Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards to part (b) the Cost implication: The total cost for this project is MUR 4,872,400 split as follows: -

- 1) Fabrication of Signboards at the cost of MUR 2,120,000
- 2) 2nd phase of Fabrication, shipping and fixing of Signboards MUR 2,752,400

Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards to part (c), the successful bidder for the execution of this project is Mr Nicolas Hannelas, Director of Sign Box Ltd.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards to part (d), on the 22nd August 2023 it was agreed to complete the fixing of the signboards upon the request of the Client Discovery Rodrigues Co Ltd without extra charges as delimitation was not yet finalised.

COHORT – HEALTH CARE ASSISTANT

(No. A/9) Mr J. R. Ramdally (First Local Region Member for Saint Gabriel) asked the Commissioner for Health and Others whether, in regard to the most recent cohort of Health Care Assistant recruited by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, he will inform the House on the (a) number of officers recruited together with the date they joined the service, and (b) the various training sessions, if any, they have received to date and, if not, the reasons for the lack thereof?

Reply: Mr Chairperson, Sir, regarding the most recent cohort of Health Care Assistant (HCA), the House is being informed that:

- (a) 13 Health Care Assistant were appointed on 01 April 2024. One Health Care Assistant left afterwards.
- (b) Since their posting, those employees have been granted on-the-job training as required per the Scheme of Service for the post of Health Care Assistant prescribed on 07 May 2010.

However, in line with the numerous requests of Nursing Unions for the provision of additional training to such grades, which I highlight is not compulsory as per the Scheme of Service, I wish to inform that my Commission is making arrangements for these employees, as well as those colleagues HCA who reckon more than 12 years of experience in service and who have never been trained so far, to undergo training in an appropriate institution in view of having a Diploma in Health Care Assistance in a first instance and thereafter with any further training as available in the field of Health Care Assistance.

RECRUITMENT – PRISONS OFFICERS

(No. A/10) **Mrs R.M.F. Gaspard Pierre Louis, C.S.K. (Minority Leader)** asked the Commissioner for Prisons and Reforms Institutions and Others whether, in regard to the recent recruitment of Prisons Officers, he will inform the House on (a) if there is a defined training period prior to their substantive appointment thereof; (b) the training modules they are required to complete, as well as those that have already been completed, and (c) when they will proceed to Mauritius to complete their training?

Reply: Mr Chairperson, Sir, according to their conditions of employment, the new recruits in the grade of Prisons Officer are required to undergo both theoretical and practical training including on-the-job training for a period of at least one year during their probation period.

The training modules are the same as established in Mauritius being given that the instructors were from main office, Mauritius.

The departure for the new recruits have been scheduled as soon as possible before end of Financial Year 2024/2025.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU)

– BREAST CANCER CARE MAURITIUS

(No. A/11) **Ms K. Roussety (Second Local Region Member of Baie aux Huîtres)** asked the Commissioner Health and Others whether, in regard to the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Breast Cancer Care Mauritius and the Commission for Health, he will inform the House on (a) the terms and conditions thereof, and (b) if any activity/project has been undertaken in line with the MOU?

Reply: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I wish to inform the House that a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Breast Cancer Care Mauritius (BCC) and the Commission for Health was signed on 21 May 2022.

I wish also to inform the House that as per same MOU, it is mentioned, the following descriptions for each Party - I quote:

‘Breast Cancer Care is a charitable non-governmental organisation engaged in providing comfort, care and support to breast cancer patients through intensive awareness campaign, free doctor consultations and Therapies in Mauritius’

‘Commission for Health is very much active and engaged in helping non-governmental organisation (NGOs) in undertaking cancer-related filed work. To that effect, Commission for Health have agreed to help Breast Cancer Care for holding and entertaining a host house in Mauritius for Rodriguan who went for treatment in Mauritius’.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards to part (a) of the question, I wish to highlight that as per the General Component of the MOU, it is clearly stipulated that each party agrees to observe the confidentiality and secrecy of the document.

Therefore, considering same, Mr Chairperson Sir, the House will concur that I cannot disclose any information pertaining to the terms and conditions of same.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards to part (b) of the question, I wish to inform the House that as per records, in line with the MOU, my Commission and the Breast Cancer Care have conducted several activities together as detailed below:

- (i) Screening for breast cancer and vaccination campaign villages in Rodrigues – June 2022
Facilities provided by my Commission: Boarding and Accommodation (*seven members of the BCC*) and Transport Facilities to the tune of Rs75,770.
- (ii) Breast Cancer Care Awareness Campaign for the Pink Month – Mega Sensitisation Campaign on Breast Cancer in Rodrigues, including screening and consultations – October 2022
My Commission provided for logistics, boarding and accommodation to the tune of Rs90,000
- (iii) Accommodation of one patient a Lakaz Warrior for treatment:
 - (a) 18 to 31 January 2023 to the tune of Rs2700;
 - (b) 02 to 28 February 2023 to the tune of Rs5200;
 - (c) 01 to 31 March 2023 to the tune of Rs3,150;
 - (d) 01 to 28 April 2023 to the tune of Rs4,400;
 - (e) 02 to 26 May 2023 to the tune of Rs4,600;
 - (f) 01 to 28 June 2023 to the tune of Rs4,800;
 - (g) 01 to 31 July 2023 to the tune of Rs5,200; and
 - (h) 01 to 11 August 2023 to the tune of Rs1,600.
- (iv) Breast Cancer Care was invited for the World Health Day 2023 in Rodrigues.

- (v) Causerie with the Nursing staff of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital by the Breast Cancer Care – October 2024.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I wish to further inform the House that there had been a request for provision of accommodation facilities to a female patient in September 2022, which was referred to Breast Cancer Care. I would like to highlight that this patient had informed that she would be accompanied by her husband.

Consequently, as per information obtained, the Administrative Secretary of Breast Cancer Care who was contacted for the provision of such services had informed that accommodation at the BCC will be in priority given to women suffering from breast cancer, but the accompanying person should be a woman only.

PATIENTS – STRESS TEST/JANUARY 2024

(No. A/12) Mr J. R. Ramdally (First Local Region Member for Saint Gabriel) asked the Commissioner for Health and Others whether, in regard to patients who have been ordered a stress test since January 2024, he will state, for the benefit of the House, the (a) total number thereof; (b) number of tests performed locally together with the number of patients referred to mainland Mauritius, stating the reasons therefor, and (c) number of patients awaiting therefor as at to date, indicating the maximum waiting time therefor?

Reply: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I have been informed that the new waiting list for year 2024 starts from 12 February 2024 and that so far there were 34 patients recorded on the waiting list.

As regards part (b) of the question, I wish to inform the House that the stress test machine was out of order and no test could be performing locally.

However, patients were given regular review with cardiologist and upon request of the treating specialist, urgent cases were referred to the mainland Mauritius for further management. As for the number of transferred patients, I have been informed by the office of the Ag Health Director, that the book of transfer which was sent for the purpose of auditing is not retrievable at the moment.

With regards to part (c) of the question, in line with the reasons mentioned above pertaining to the exact number of patients, actually the exact number of persons waiting to undergo such tests is being compiled and for sure, there are less than 34 persons waiting.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I wish to inform the House that recently the stress machine has been repaired and is in good working condition.

/UNREVISED/

Actually a cardiologist is present on the island and will help shorten the list further. Visit of Cardiologist is scheduled every 2 months and once the list is cleared which will require a maximum of 2 visits, the maximum waiting time will be two months.

RECENT EMBARGO – MEAT IMPORTS/RODRIGUES

(No. A/13) Dr. H. AGATHE (First Local Region Member of Grande Montagne) asked the Commissioner for Agriculture and Others whether, in regard to the recent embargo on meat imports in Rodrigues, he will inform the House on when the ban is expected to be lifted or eased?

Reply: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the embargo on meat imports in Rodrigues was implemented in the month of June 2024 as a necessary bio-security measure to protect local livestock, ecosystems and public health from potential disease risks associated with imported meat.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, this decision to impose an embargo on meat imports and live animals from Mauritius has been motivated following a letter which was received in the month of May 2024 from the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security informing that they have imported cattle from a Farm in South Africa where Foot and Mouth Disease has been detected.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, my Commission has been very proactive to this matter. A High Powered Committee chaired by myself was set up in the same month composed of relevant stakeholders and the decision to temporarily imposed a ban on meat imports and live animals from Mauritius was made.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, my Commission is actively monitoring the bio-security situation, evaluating the risks associated with lifting or easing the embargo and considering current health data and established guidelines.

The embargo will be reviewed when it is deemed that conditions have stabilized to an acceptable level of risk. These will include assessing factors such as any disease prevalence in Mauritius and ability to implement robust import controls.

**POINT-OF-CARE (POC) HEMATOLOGY/BIOCHEMISTRY ANALYSERS FOR
BIOLMEDICAL TESTS & ANALYSES**

(No. A/14) Mr J. R. Ramdally (First Local Region Member for Saint Gabriel) asked the Commissioner for Health and Others whether, in regard to Point-Of-Care (POC)

Haematology and/or Biochemistry Analysers for biomedical tests and analyses in dispensaries, Health Centres and/or Area Health Centres around Rodrigues procured by his Commission since January 2023, he will state:

- (a) about the number of each type of device procured together with their total cost;
- (b) on the average weekly number of each type of test or analysis effected per centre/dispensary, and
- (c) on the procurement method adopted therefor and the name of the supplier?

Reply: Mr Chairperson Sir, Prior to replying directly to the question of the respected Member, I would like to provide the following information for the benefit of the House so as to explain what is a Point of Care Device, the purpose and benefits of same.

Point of care (POC) diagnostic devices also known as near patient testing and are used to obtain diagnostic results while with the patient or close to the patient.

Such devices can be used in doctors' offices, hospitals, and in patients' homes, POCT diagnostic devices give quick feedback on many sorts of medical tests. and are used for any analytical test performed outside laboratory setting. In fact, their primary users are non-laboratory healthcare workers.

POC diagnostic devices are used to test glucose and cholesterol levels, do electrolyte and enzyme analysis, test for drugs of abuse and for infectious diseases, and for pregnancy testing. Blood gases, cardiac markers, and faecal occult blood tests can also be done with POC diagnostic devices. There are several advantages to doing the tests at the point of care, including quick results and faster implementation of therapy, if needed. Point-Of-Care (POC) Haematology and/or Biochemistry Analysers for biomedical tests and analyses are used to measures various aspects of blood composition, such as haemoglobin, white blood cells, and platelets but also glucose and cholesterol levels. This technology has been acquired for the following benefits:

- Quick results and faster implementation of therapy, if needed;
- Portability;
- Convenience;
- Speed;

/UNREVISED/

- Connectivity;
- Sample Quality;
- Quality Assurance;
- Rapid results;
- POC analysers can provide results quickly, which can be critical in emergency situations;
- No trained personnel required

POC analysers can be used without the need for trained laboratory personnel.

- Less invasive

POC analysers often require smaller amounts of blood or other specimens than traditional laboratory tests

This technology has been procured to obtain diagnostic results while with the patient or close to the patient and are being used in Community Health Centres and two Area Health Centres.

As regards part (a) of the question, I am informed that a contract was awarded in May 2023 for the supply, installation and commissioning of 8 units of Point of Care Biochemistry and 8 units of Point of Care Haematology for a total amount of Rs7,800,000 (excluding VAT).

Referring to part (b) of the question, I am informed that the average weekly number of tests done per type and per centre varies according to the catchment area and the number of general practitioner consultation/specialist per centre or dispensary.

To get a picture, Dr Christopher Prudence AHC, La Ferme 1 to 5 Full blood counts per week and Cascade Jean Louis CHC, 1 to 2 FBCs per week Biochemistry tests are used in more extreme emergency cases and the average weekly test is 0 to 1 test.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, part (c) of the question refers to procurement method applied and same of supplier. However, I wish to point out that all information and activities pertaining to procurement rest with the Accounting Officer.

Therefore, I am not in a position to further detail on the procurement method used as far as in my capacity of Policy Maker my responsibility rests with providing the Accounting Officer with my policy and vision for the concerned sector.

/UNREVISED/

However, I have been informed that the further to procurement procedures, a letter of award had been accordingly submitted to a bidder, Biswal Trading Ltd.

FIRE OUTBREAKS – ROCHE BON DIEU DUMPING SITE

(No. A/15) Mr J. P. Spéville (Fourth Island Region Member) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to fire outbreaks at Roche Bon Dieu dumping site since January 2024, he will state and table (a) the number of lorries involved in the transport of soil or water; (b) the number of trips completed by each lorry, and (c) their corresponding cost?

Reply: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the number of lorries involved in the transport of soil and water, the number of trips completed by each lorry and their corresponding cost are being tabled for the information of the House.

- (a) The number of vehicles involved in the transportation of soil or water is nine including the Rodclean water bowser as detailed hereunder: -

DATE	LORRY	DETAILS
27 July 2024	135RAZ92	Transport of soil to Dumping Site
	11RMR15	Transport of water to Dumping site
03 August 24	135 RAZ 92	Transport of Soil to Dumping site
	45 R MY 21	Transport of Soil to dumping site
06 August 2024	45RMY21	Transport of soil to Dumping Site
	11RMR 15	Transport of water to Dumping site
06 September 24	63 R JL 20	Transport of Soil to dumping site
	172 R DC 19	Transport of Soil to dumping site
	11RMR 15	Transport of water to Dumping site

/UNREVISED/

DATE	LORRY	DETAILS
07 September 24	8 R JN 21	Transport of Soil to dumping site
	172 R DC 19	Transport of Soil to dumping site
	9 R ZW 97	Transport of water to dumping site
	147 R DC 19	Transport of water to dumping site
	11RMR15	Transport of water to dumping site
08 September 24	8 R JN 21	Transport of Soil to dumping site
	172 R DC 19	Transport of Soil to dumping site
	63 R JL 20	Transport of Soil to dumping site
	453 R JZ 08	Transport of water to dumping site
	147 R DC 19	Transport of water to dumping site
	11RMR15	Transport of water to dumping site
16 September 24	172 R DC 19	Transport of Soil to dumping site
	45 R MY 21	Transport of Soil to dumping site
	11RMR15	Transport of water to Dumping site
18 October 24	135 RAZ 92	Transport of Soil to Dumping site
	45 R MY 21	Transport of Soil to dumping site
	9 R ZW 97	Transport of water to

/UNREVISED/

DATE	LORRY	DETAILS
		dumping site
	11RMR15	Transport of water to Dumping site
19 October 24	135 RAZ 92	Transport of Soil to Dumping site
	45 R MY 21	Transport of Soil to dumping site
	9 R ZW 97	Transport of water to dumping site
	11RMR15	Transport of water to dumping site

- (b) The number of trips performed per lorry is as hereunder: -

Water : five (5) trips

Soil : Small lorry thirty (30) trips and big lorry forty (40) trips.

The number of trips varies depending on the time the lorries arrive on site.

- (c) The amount paid are as hereunder: -

Lorry	Amount paid (Rs)
172RDC19	45,000
135RAZ92	63,000
45RMY21	166,500
453RZJ08	7,500
9RZW97	7,500
8RJN21	21,000
63RJL 20	21,000
147RDC19	15,000

‘KREOL RODRIGE’ – SECONDARY SCHOOLS/RODRIGUES

(No. A/16) Ms M. N. Raffaut (Second Island Region Member) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the teaching of ‘Kreol Rodrige’ in secondary schools in Rodrigues, he will inform the House on where matters stand?

Reply: Mr Chairperson, Sir, ‘Kreol Rodrige’ has been integrated in the primary school curriculum since January 2020. It was introduced in Grades 1 and 2 across all 12 government primary schools and up to Grade 4 in the five RCA schools. To date, ‘Kreol Rodrige’ is taught from Grades 1 to 5 in government schools and up to Grade 6 in RCA Schools. ‘Kreol Rodrige’ is not currently taught in secondary schools in Rodrigues.

The introduction of ‘Kreol Rodrige’ at secondary school level is a lengthy process and requires several steps that need to be followed to ensure the smooth introduction of teaching of ‘Kreol Rodrige’ at secondary level. As such, this includes the following:

- (i) Carry out a survey on the number of students willing to study ‘Kreol Rodrige’ as a subject;
- (ii) survey on the number of Educators that will be required for teaching of ‘Kreol Rodrige’ in all secondary schools and the potential candidates with the requirements set by the PSEA for enlistment of Educators for the teaching of ‘Kreol Rodrige’ in secondary schools;
- (iii) initiate necessary procedures for the recruitment of trainee Educators for teaching of ‘Kreol Rodrige’ and make necessary arrangement with the Mauritius Institute of Education for running of appropriate programme;
- iv) conceptualise kreol/morisien textbooks into ‘Kreol Rodrige’ for Grades 7 to 9 in the first instance;
- v) vet and validate the textbooks by a technical panel;
- vi) recruit qualified Educators, and
- vii) notify the Mauritius Examinations on the expected date of the introduction of ‘Kreol Rodrige’ in secondary schools to enable sufficient time for the design of assessment papers for the NCE assessment.

/UNREVISED/

In view of the above, the Regional Government is still exploring the potentiality of introducing ‘Kreol Rodrige’ in secondary schools as it is believed that learning in the mother tongue is essential to enhance other critical thinking skills, second language and literacy skills. Research has also shown that native language plays a crucial role in the development of personal, social and cultural identity.

In addition, following the publication of the dictionary of ‘Kreol Rodrige’, the possibility to hold consultations with the Mauritius Institute of Education and the University of Mauritius in collaboration with the ‘Akademi Kreol Rodrig’ (AKRo) will be looked into to discuss the modalities for the conceptualisation of textbooks for the secondary sector in view of the introduction of teaching of ‘Kreol Rodrige’ as from Grades 7 to 9.

However, another major impediment to the introduction of ‘Kreol Rodrige’ in secondary schools is the unavailability of qualified Educators.

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

- (a) Degree in French and Kreol Studies, offered by the University of Mauritius and a PGCE or an alternative qualification in education from a recognised institution or
- (b) B.Ed in Kreol Repiblik Moris offered by the Mauritius Institute of Education (MIE). The Mauritius Institute of Education (MIE) has launched a Post Graduate Certificate in Education in Kreol Repiblik Moris (PGCE KRM) programme in July 2023. The students are trained in the teaching-learning of both Kreol Morisien and Kreol Rodrige. Currently, one student from Rodrigues is following the course.