



**SIXTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**PARLIAMENTARY**

**DEBATES**

**(HANSARD)**

**(UNREVISED)**

**FIRST SESSION**

**TUESDAY 16 APRIL 2019**

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**(Formed by Hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth)**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth                        | Prime Minister, Minister of Home Affairs, External Communications and National Development Unit, Minister of Finance and Economic Development |
| Hon. Ivan Leslie Collendavelloo, GCSK, SC          | Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities  |
| Hon. Sir Anerood Jugnauth, GCSK, KCMG, QC          | Minister Mentor, Minister of Defence, Minister for Rodrigues  |
| Hon. Mrs Fazila Jeewa-Daureeawoo                   | Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands, Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare        |
| Hon. Yogida Sawmynaden                             | Minister of Technology, Communication and Innovation  |
| Hon. Nandcoomar Bodha, GCSK                        | Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade               |
| Hon. Mrs Leela Devi Dookun-Luchoomun               | Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research   |
| Hon. Anil Kumarsingh Gayan, SC                     | Minister of Tourism   |
| Dr. the Hon. Mohammad Anwar Husnoo                 | Minister of Health and Quality of Life  |
| Hon. Prithvirajsing Roopun                         | Minister of Arts and Culture  |
| Hon. Marie Joseph Noël Etienne Ghislain Sinatambou | Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity, and Environment and Sustainable Development   |
| Hon. Mahen Kumar Seeruttun                         | Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security   |
| Hon. Ashit Kumar Gungah                            | Minister of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection  |
| Hon. Maneesh Gobin                                 | Attorney General, Minister of Justice, Human Rights and Institutional Reforms   |
| Hon. Jean Christophe Stephan Toussaint             | Minister of Youth and Sports  |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Hon. Soomilduth Bholah                          | Minister of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives                      |
| Hon. Marie Roland Alain Wong Yen<br>Cheong, MSK | Minister of Social Integration and Economic<br>Empowerment             |
| Hon. Premdut Koonjoo                            | Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries<br>and Shipping |
| Hon. Soodesh Satkam Callichurn                  | Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations,<br>Employment and Training   |
| Hon. Purmanund Jhugroo                          | Minister of Housing and Lands  |
| Hon. Marie Cyril Eddy Boissézon                 | Minister of Civil Service and Administrative<br>Reforms                |
| Hon. Dharmendar Sesungkur                       | Minister of Financial Services and Good<br>Governance                  |

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| Deputy Speaker                   | Lesjongard, Georges Pierre            |
| Deputy Chairperson of Committees | Jahangeer, Hon. Ahmad Bashir          |
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| Serjeant-at-Arms                 | Pannoo, Mr Vinod                      |

**MAURITIUS**

**Sixth National Assembly**

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**FIRST SESSION**

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**Debate No. 03 of 2019**

**Sitting of 16 April 2019**

The Assembly met in the Assembly House, Port Louis at 11.30 a.m.

**The National Anthem was played**

*(Madam Speaker in the Chair)*

**PAPERS LAID**

**The Prime Minister:** Madam Speaker, the Papers have been laid on the Table.

**A. Office of the President**

The Annual Report of the National Human Rights Commission for the year 2018.  
(In Original)

**B. Prime Minister's Office**

(a) Certificate of Urgency in respect of the following Bills (In Original):

- (i) The Immigration (Amendment) Bill (No. III of 2019);
- (ii) The Mauritius Research and Innovation Council Bill (No. IV of 2019);
- (iii) The Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill (No. V of 2019)

(b) The Financial Statements and Audited Reports of the Prime Minister's Cyclone Relief Fund for the year ended 30 June 2018. (In Original)

(c) The Financing Agreement dated 05 April 2019 between the SIC Development Co. Ltd and Government of Mauritius. (In Original)

**C. Ministry of Local Government and Outer Islands, Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare**

The District Council of Black River (other Public Place Naming) Regulations 2019.  
(Government Notice No. 62 of 2019)

**D. Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research**

The Annual Report 2016-2017 of the Mauritius Institute of Education.

**E. Ministry of Health and Quality of Life**

The Dental Council (Registration of Dental Surgeons and Dental Specialists) (Amendment) Regulations 2019. (Government Notice No. 61 of 2019)

**F. Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection**

(a) The Annual Report of the State Trading Corporation for the year 2017.

(b) The Consumer Protection (Control of Imports) (Amendment) Regulations 2019.  
(Government Notice No. 56 of 2019)

**G. Attorney General's Office, Ministry of Justice, Human Rights and Institutional Reforms**

- (a) The Courts (Amendment of Schedule) Rules 2019. (Government Notice No. 57 of 2019)
- (b) The Legal Aid and Legal Assistance (Fees) Rules 2019. (Government Notice No. 58 of 2019)
- (c) The Intermediate Court (Mediation) Rules. (Government Notice No. 59 of 2019)
- (d) The Courts (Review of Master's Decision) Rules 2019. (Government Notice No.60 of 2019)
- (e) International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) – Concluding observations on the fifth periodic report of Mauritius dated 05 April 2019. (In Original)
- (f) International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) – Concluding observations on the combined twentieth to twenty-third periodic reports of Mauritius dated 19 September 2018. (In Original)
- (g) Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) - Concluding observations on the eighth periodic report of Mauritius dated 14 November 2018. (In Original)

**H. Ministry of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives**

The Financial Statements of the Cooperative Development Fund for the year ended 30 June 2017. (In Original)

**I. Ministry of Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training**

The Non-Citizens (Employment Restriction) Exemptions (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2019. (Government Notice No. 55 of 2019)

**ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS****FOND DU SAC - FLOODING**

**The Leader of the Opposition (Mr X. L. Duval)** (*by Private Notice*) asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity, and Environment and Sustainable Development whether, in regard to the recent cases of flooding at Fond du Sac Village, he will –

- (a) state if an expert study has been conducted as to remedial works required and, if so, table copy thereof;
- (b) give details of lands already acquired, including date of acquisition, and of lands remaining to be acquired;
- (c) give an estimated timeframe for implementation of works, and
- (d) state if financial compensation is being paid and, if so, indicate the eligibility criteria therefor and number of beneficiaries thereof.

**Mr Sinatambou:** I would like to thank the hon. Leader of the Opposition for coming with this question. I think the first thing we should do, on both sides of the House, is to express our sympathy for all those household owners and people who have been sinistered with the bad weather which has been happening not only in Fond du Sac but elsewhere on the island.

Madam Speaker, as the House is aware, it is a known and accepted fact that climate change has increased the frequency, intensity and severity of disasters, particularly for small and vulnerable Small Island Developing States like Mauritius.

According to the last report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change published last year in October, there is now a higher prevalence of extreme weather events such as flash floods, rainfall variability and intense tropical cyclones.

Government policy is to act on three major areas to address the problem of flash floods, namely –

- (i) to invest in the appropriate infrastructure so as to minimise the impact of flash floods;
- (ii) to try and be prepared to deal with such events, and
- (iii) to give appropriate support and assistance to the victims of flash floods.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (a) of the question, I wish to highlight that Fond du Sac has, unfortunately, been regularly affected by flooding due to the local topography of the village which has poor drainage capability and the fact that major run-off is generated from sugarcane fields located at higher grounds. In view of the complexity and extensiveness of the problem, it was decided, during the first quarter of 2016, to appoint a consultant in order to identify the best option for long-term remedial measures.

Following procurement procedures, a consultancy contract was awarded to Mega Design Ltd in September 2016 for a total amount of Rs6,385,950. The scope of services included the following –

- the review of existing information and collection of data from site observations, local inhabitants and other relevant sources;
- topographical surveys for determination of affected locations and establishment of catchment project area, and
- to study the project area, compile and make an inventory of the existing drainage and associated infrastructure, among others.

The study started on 21 September 2016, revised preliminary design report was submitted on 03 March 2017 and was finalised in June 2017 following consultations effected with major stakeholders.

A consultation meeting with concerned landowners was held on 03 October 2017 to explain the importance of the project and the need to acquire land for implementing the works. The detailed design report was submitted in December 2017 and I am tabling, Madam Speaker, a copy thereof.

As regards part (b) of the question, Madam Speaker, I am informed that there were 92 plots of land which needed to be acquired over a total area of around 21 *arpents* for the construction of drains at Fond du Sac. As we are aware, the land acquisition process is a fairly lengthy exercise. It involves the survey of land, the definition of land acquisition limits after consultation with various stakeholders, namely the National Development Unit, the consultant himself, the Planning Division of the Ministry of Housing and Lands, the District Council concerned and the Water Resources Unit to sort out issues and constraints prior to finalisation of the drain alignment, access to landlocked sites, and the width of drains and the reserves.

In the case of Fond du Sac, the main hurdles were the identification of the landowners and fairly lengthy searches had to be carried out, after which a thorough survey was started in May 2017 and completed in December 2018. The survey plan and notices under section 8 of the Land Acquisition Act was prepared and finalised and approved on 21 February 2019. The transcription with respect to 86 plots of land is being completed with urgency and those lands will normally be vested with the National Development Unit of the Prime Minister's Office this month.

Regarding the remaining six plots, the addresses of the owners have been traced this month and notices under section 6 have been issued this very month. For these plots, section 8 for Compulsory Land Acquisition will be issued by the end of April after the legal time frame of 14 days under section 6 of the Land Acquisition Act. The six plots will then be transcribed after 21 days as provided by law, that is, just after mid-May. Madam Speaker, I am tabling the list of landowners and the details of the plots of land.

With regard to part (c) of the question, I am informed that the consultant, Mega Design Ltd, had since December 2018 already submitted draft bidding documents for the appointment of a contractor to execute works at Fond du Sac. Those works included, among others –

- the construction of a 2-metre high flood wall over a distance of some 700 metres;
- the construction and upgrading of a naturally line cut-off drain 3 metres deep and 18 metres wide over a length of not less than 1.3 kms;
- the construction of masonry line drain over about 300 metres;
- the construction of a detention flood retardation basin of capacity of 83,000 cubic metres upstream of the cut-off drain with a flow regulation structure at its outlet;
- the construction of culverts over the cut-off drain across Forbach Road and Fond du Sac main road;
- upgrading of drain along Fond du Sac main road;
- secondary drains and re-profiling of roads,
- and finally, the relocation of services.

Normal procurement procedures would have required about four months for the appointment of a contractor for the execution of the abovementioned works. However, in

view of the urgency of the situation, Madam Speaker, the decision has been taken to implement the project of construction of flood mitigation measures at Fond du Sac under the emergency procurement procedure. Indeed, section 21 of the Public Procurement Act of 2006 provides that a public Body may purchase goods, other services or works from a single supplier without competition in cases of extreme urgency, in particular in a situation in which the country is either seriously threatened by or is actually confronted with a disaster or catastrophe and life may be seriously compromised.

Following approval to undertake the project under emergency procurement, it is expected that a contractor will be appointed by the first week of May and works would start by mid-May 2019. The duration of the works is expected to last for about 18 months, Madam Speaker.

With regard to part (d) of the question, in accordance with the First Schedule of the Social Aid Regulations of 1984, flood victims are paid a daily flood allowance of Rs182 per member of a family per day for a maximum of three days if –

- (i) their premises have been flooded, and
- (ii) their foodstuffs have been damaged.

The payment is released subject to a Police memo certifying that the foodstuff has actually been damaged. The amount of flood allowance paid to the victims of the torrential rain of 09 April 2019 at Fond du Sac, as at yesterday 1600 hrs, stood at Rs63,518, covering 111 households, consisting of 349 individuals.

In addition, Madam Speaker, a financial compensation is being paid to those 111 households affected in Fond du Sac as decided by the Prime Minister's Relief Fund Board. Rs6,000 are being paid to each adult while every child under 18 years will receive Rs3,000 in each household.

The modalities of payment of the compensation are as follows: the affected head of household must register himself or herself at the Police Station of the locality, following which the Police will make a site visit. If the Police is satisfied that there is damage to the belonging of the applicant, then it will issue a memo to the latter and, on receipt of the memo, the applicant will call at the Social Security office of his region with the Police memo to register for the flood allowance. The total compensation payable from the Prime Minister's

Relief Fund to the victims of Fond du Sac as at date will amount to Rs1,779,000. Payment has already started and is currently ongoing, Madam Speaker.

**Mr X. L. Duval:** Madam Speaker, unlike the hon. Minister, I had the occasion to offer my sympathy directly yesterday at Fond du Sac, on site. May I ask the hon. Minister whether it is not incorrect to describe the flooding at Fond du Sac as a flash flood? It is now a recurrent event and I do not think it should be classified as a flash flood but rather more serious than that.

**Mr Sinatambou:** My answer to that question would be in the negative, Madam Speaker. The topography of Fond du Sac is such that any serious, any substantive rainfall is likely to have a result, a negative impact on the region for the simple reason that, as the word itself explains, Fond du Sac is like *une cuvette* and, therefore, we do not need a flash flood for Fond du Sac to be affected. Any substantial amount of rainfall will actually have a negative impact on Fond du Sac although one must say that a flash flood is likely to have a quicker negative impact.

**Mr X. L. Duval:** Madam Speaker, the hon. Minister has just contradicted himself. Thank you. Hon. Gungah, who had the unfortunate experience of being chased out of Fond du Sac, said that the cost of the works will be Rs300 m. Now, remember at the time, it was Rs49 m., it has become six times more expensive. Can the hon. Minister confirm that the estimated cost is what hon. Gungah has said on TV and everywhere, Rs300 m., and why the increase is flash increase?

**Mr Sinatambou:** Well, first of all, I would like to highlight that I do not see any contradiction in what I have said up to now. But coming down to the Rs49 m. to which the hon. Leader of the Opposition is actually referring to, I must say that it is true that there is actually a document, which I have been provided, concerning construction of drains at Fond du Sac, where out of...

*(Interruptions)*

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Leader of the Opposition, please do not be impatient! Allow the hon. Minister to reply, please!

**Mr Sinatambou:** Madam Speaker, the figure of Rs49 m. is just being thrown like this before this House. We must know where it comes from. I have been provided with a

document, yes, of an amount of Rs49 m. where for the construction of drains, Rs27 m. is just for excavation. So, it is obvious to me that such scope of works was certainly, to say the least, very limited.

Now, let alone this scope of works did not only originate from the then Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit and Land Transport and Shipping, but after having come up with a scope of works of Rs49 m., the very same scope of works was cancelled. So, it certainly indicates that it was not the right figure. And to finish on that note ...

*(Interruptions)*

I am not giving way.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr X. L. Duval:** Madam Speaker, can I take a point of order?

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Sinatambou:** I am not giving way.

*(Interruptions)*

**Madam Speaker:** Please, I understand that the hon. Minister does not want to give way. But is that a point of order?

**Mr X. L. Duval:** You have repeatedly asked me to keep my question short. My question here is whether the cost has escalated to Rs300 m., and we are given 10 minutes of *bla bla bla*. You must be fair, I would like you to be fair and restrict them as me.

*(Interruptions)*

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please! What I would ask is that both the Leader of the Opposition be concise in his question and that the hon. Minister also be concise in his reply, please!

**Mr Sinatambou:** How much he gives the lie because the word 'lie' is unparliamentary. But to actually show to you that the *bla bla bla* is not on this side, let me give you, Madam Speaker, the explanation for the Rs49 m.

*(Interruptions)*

**Madam Speaker:** Order!

**Mr Sinatambou:** Let me give you the explanation for the Rs49 m.

*(Interruptions)*

**Madam Speaker:** Order! Allow the Minister to reply, please!

**Mr Sinatambou:** Let me say, Madam Speaker, that following the torrential rains of February 2013, Luxconsult was appointed to survey and prepare designs and scope of work at Fond du Sac, and they proposed a drain project estimated then at Rs303 m...

*(Interruptions)*

**Madam Speaker:** Order!

**Mr Sinatambou:** ...which was then refuted and split into two phases. The first phase would comprise construction of culvert over the length of more than 2,000 metres up to Forbach Road. The second phase would then follow to cover another length of nearly 1,500 metres up on the motorway of Vale. Now, the works order was issued to Best Construct for the first phase for an amount of about Rs49 m. and the figure for now is not Rs300 m. I understand the figure for Rs300 m. includes the acquisition of land. That is correct.

**Mr X. L. Duval:** Madam Speaker, I am not going to play politics when the lives of people are at risk. I wanted to know...

*(Interruptions)*

I wanted to know why Rs300 m. He has replied! Fair enough!

*(Interruptions)*

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please!

**Mr X. L. Duval:** He has replied. Now, let us get on with it because people are listening in Fond du Sac and in Cottage also. Let me tell you, Madam Speaker...

*(Interruptions)*

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please!

**Mr X. L. Duval:** The hon. Prime Minister said there were 77 plots. Now it has gone to 92. Okay, there was confusion. We have 92 plots of land. Notices have been sent. Can I ask

hon. Minister whether any of the owners have challenged the legality in Court or whether now we are going to proceed with acquisition of land and start of work?

**Mr Sinatambou:** May I first start by insisting that Government is not playing politics on the disasters of people. However, I would like to tell the House that the answer to the question put by the hon. Leader of the Opposition is in the negative.

**Mr X. L. Duval:** Madam Speaker, Luxconsult had already done the work, *bla bla bla*, six years ago. Government is nearly five years in office. I would like to ask the hon. Minister why did he take until December 2018, until last month for compulsory acquisition notices to be sent? And he is to know that everywhere in Fond du Sac, etc., people are saying that Metro Express went quickly and this one was not a priority of Government. So, can he tell us why it was not a priority of Government since 2014 to end of 2018 and 2019, four years for this to happen? Why was it not a priority of Government? That is my question.

**Mr Sinatambou:** Let me first say...

*(Interruptions)*

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Jhugroo!

**Mr Sinatambou:** Let me first say...

*(Interruptions)*

They are so used to mediocrity that anything is better for them.

May I first start by stating that, as I said earlier, it is a priority of this Government to deal with flooding, landslides and disaster reduction and management. Now, it is for this reason...

*(Interruptions)*

Yes, next mandate of this Government.

**Madam Speaker:** Let me once again remind everybody that remarks from a sitting position are not allowed!

**Mr Sinatambou:** that when the hon. Leader of the Opposition states that nothing has been done, on this side of this House, we insist that it is, has been and will be a priority of this Government to deal with disaster management and risk reduction. From 2015, after the hon. Leader of the Opposition has been in Government for nearly nine years, we had, this side of

the House had to review the National Disaster Scheme so that the right protocols be triggered before, during and after such disasters.

Secondly, this is why in 2016 - they did nothing during nine years - this Government passed the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act. They did nothing. This Government passed the Land Drainage Authority Act, which actually oversees all the floodings, coordinates all the works concerning the floodings. So, that they have the audacity to come and say that we did nothing, we believe that this is really nonsense. To finish with, Madam Speaker, let me go back to the major processes involved in land acquisition. It is quite clear that it is tedious and lengthy; it is taking the time that it takes. I must also hasten to add that before...

*(Interruptions)*

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Shakeel Mohamed! I just said that from a sitting position, you should not make remarks.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Sinatambou:** *Pa gagne droit fer tapaz.*

I must hasten to add that if one really cares to know the number of measures taken regarding Fond du Sac, one will see that we have cared and that we do care. And finally, to end, Madam Speaker, there was objection before. We have managed now to get away with all the objections to the acquisition of land.

**Mr X. L. Duval:** Madam Speaker, I say it quite sincerely, *mille fois* Bachoo. What they have done, I say it quite sincerely.

*(Interruptions)*

Very, very sincerely, in front of the cameras, I say it.

*(Interruptions)*

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please! Order!

*(Interruptions)*

Can we have some order in the House, please? I cannot even hear what the hon. Leader of the Opposition is saying! Hon. Jhugroo!

**Mr X. L. Duval:** *Taler nu pu pren to cas la.*

Madam Speaker, cosmetic half-baked measures for five years, this is what the Government has done. And, Madam Speaker, I do not understand. Dramatic flooding in 2013. Okay, Mr Bachoo issued, did not issue. This Government starts, let us say, in January 2015. Why did it take two years to appoint Mega Design to do the design?

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Sinatambou:** Everyone knows what procurement procedures are; we all know that. Now, let me say, in the meantime - Now he says '*mille fois* Bachoo'...

*(Interruptions)*

**Madam Speaker:** Now, this is the last time that I am drawing the attention of hon. Members that remarks from a sitting position is not in order and I say it, it is the last time. We have got only 10 minutes left for Question Time. So, allow the hon. Minister to reply and the hon. Leader of the Opposition to ask his questions!

**Mr Sinatambou:** He prefers a Minister who goes on a dam which leaks. I have never heard that. Leaking dams whose cost increased by two billion. He prefers motorways which, before inauguration, actually just collapsed. That is what he likes. That is what we are now going for. They will do anything to get just a few more votes. I pity them. Frankly, that is what they like. But let me say, Madam Speaker, that one should also be aware of the time it has taken for the consultancy, the emergency procedure. We have now completed the process for the acquisition of the land to do the work, but I think one should also know the number of other measures taken in the meantime. One is not aware, for example, that...

**Mr X. L. Duval:** Madam Speaker, time is running out. What are we going to do? Are you going to give some extra time? This is not fair, Madam Speaker!

**Madam Speaker:** I concede that time is running out. I will give eight minutes more, but be brief in your questions and be brief in your answers, please!

**Mr Sinatambou:** He is making out. The hon. Leader...

*(Interruptions)*

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Bhagwan, you are losing time now! You are biting in the time of ...

*(Interruptions)*

Hon. Bhagwan, you will not have time to ask your questions, because you are biting in the time of...

*(Interruptions)*

Now, please!

*(Interruptions)*

Please!

*(Interruptions)*

Now, let me say...

*(Interruptions)*

Hon. Bhagwan, I will have to take action. Order, please!

*(Interruptions)*

Order! But you will not have time!

*(Interruptions)*

Last time, hon. Bhagwan!

*(Interruptions)*

Hon. Bhagwan, I am addressing myself to you, and this is the last time I do so, otherwise I will have to take sanction!

**Mr X. L. Duval:** Madam Speaker, I would like to ask a question about compensation...

*(Interruptions)*

The Speaker asked me to ask my question. What is wrong with the hon. Member?

*(Interruptions)*

**Madam Speaker:** Can I know who has made provocative remarks on this side?

*(Interruptions)*

Hon. Hurreeram, please do not make provocative remarks. I am drawing your attention.

**Mr X. L. Duval:** Madam Speaker, compensation from the Prime Minister's Relief Fund has been paid - peanuts - to the people of Fond du Sac. My first question to the hon.

Minister is: why the people of Cité La Cure, who have got Rs182, have got zero cent from the Prime Minister's Relief Fund? Why Cité La Cure has been discriminated?

*(Interruptions)*

**Madam Speaker:** No! Hon. Leader of the Opposition, here, I have to draw your attention that the question relates...

*(Interruptions)*

Hon. Leader of the Opposition!

*(Interruptions)*

I will have to suspend the sitting if that continues. I am sorry, hon. Leader of the Opposition, you have only four minutes left. Do not bring in extraneous matters. The question relates to Fond du Sac, you cannot talk about Cité La Cure.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr X. L. Duval:** May I ask another question?

**Madam Speaker:** No, the hon. Minister has not finished. Nobody allows him to finish his reply.

**Mr Sinatambou:** Madam Speaker, I would like to explain the process - just briefly - through which one uses in order to get compensation. Now, all victims of floods actually have to go through a process, and that process is very simple. My Ministry carries out the surveys and they then transmit the results thereof and their recommendations to the Prime Minister's Relief Fund. Therefore, any citizen of this country will be treated on the same footing, and I just...

*(Interruptions)*

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Mrs Perraud!

*(Interruptions)*

Hon. Mrs Perraud !

*(Interruptions)*

Hon. Mrs Perraud, I will order you out! Your place will be outside and not inside if you continue to cause interruption in the House.

**Mr Sinatambou:** Madam Speaker, I must say openly to the nation that I consider it to be extremely vicious and improper to try and come before this House and make allegations of this type, because it is simply a fallacy to come and make such allegations.

**Mr X. L. Duval:** I will be nice to the hon. Minister...

*(Interruptions)*

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Mrs Perraud, will you continue? Last time, otherwise your place will not be in the House! I have said your place will be outside.

**Mr X. L. Duval:** Okay, she will not do anything.

*(Interruptions)*

I will invite the hon. Minister tonight to come with me to Fond du Sac to meet the people there, to see that the compensation is highly inadequate, given that they are not allowed to insure their house. No one will insure their house in Fond du Sac; they are counting only on the peanuts from the Government. I will also invite, at the same time, the hon. Minister to accompany me to Cité La Cure where we will see the horrible discrimination that is taking place in this country today...

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Leader of the Opposition...

*(Interruptions)*

Hon. Leader of the Opposition, I give you two more minutes, that's all.

**Mr Sinatambou:** Madam Speaker, I am prepared to go anywhere with the hon. Leader of the Opposition, if ever...

*(Interruptions)*

But I believe that it is totally improper to try and make out that different treatments are being actually given to different people regarding this matter of flood.

Madam Speaker, I believe that this is this type of jargon, this type of comments which are highly disruptive of our nation-building process.

**Mr X. L. Duval:** That is why I say *mille fois Bachoo!*

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Leader of the Opposition, last question!

**Mr X. L. Duval:** Madam Speaker, I want to ask the hon. Minister a factual question. Beginning of the year, there have been flash floods in many Places such as Trou-aux-Biches, Poudre d'Or, etc. As Minister of Environment - he has a very big Ministry, he is a very busy man - following the floods, how many places - a factual question - has he visited? Please give me the dates that he has visited.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Sinatambou:** What does the hon. Member mean? How does he know? Does he follow me? *Eta alé do ta!* I have gone to many...

*(Interruptions)*

**Madam Speaker:** Do you want him to reply? Then, be silent!

**Mr Sinatambou:** I have gone to many, and I believe that it is totally improper...

*(Interruptions)*

How do they know? It is totally improper...

*(Interruptions)*

Do they sleep in my bed?

*(Interruptions)*

I believe it is totally improper for those nonsensical remarks.

*(Interruptions)*

By the way, let me finish. Madam Speaker, since the issue was Fond du Sac, let me finish on what has been done. They are talking a lot about Fond du Sac, Cottage and other regions. When they were in office, what did they do? Nothing! Nothing, and I will come back to the question.

*(Interruptions)*

Shut your mouth!

*(Interruptions)*

*Kott mo per twa, alé do ta! Ki pu per ar twa!*

*(Interruptions)*

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Adrien Duval, this word is not parliamentary. Please, withdraw this word!

**Mr A. Duval:** I withdraw it, Madam.

**Mr Sinatambou:** Since we are talking about Fond du Sac, let me finish, Madam Speaker. First of all, because the work was actually in the process, we have had to start. What do we do in the meantime? There is already a Flood Contingency Plan for Fond du Sac; there is a Community Disaster Response Team which is over there to actually help. There are simulation exercises...

*(Interruptions)*

**Madam Speaker:** Now you start again, hon. Bhagwan!

*(Interruptions)*

Hon. Bhagwan, you cannot say that.

**Mr Sinatambou:** Madam Speaker, he just said I am lying. He cannot say I am lying. I insist that he withdraws it.

*(Interruptions)*

**Madam Speaker:** Time is over!

Hon. Members, the Table has been advised that PQ B/149 in regard to the construction of the new Albion Bridge will be replied by the hon. Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade. PQ B/150 in regard to the toxicity of the industrial Cannabis Sativa L. will be replied by the hon. Minister of Health and Quality of Life. PQ B/154 in regard to the total cost involved for the dismantling of the BAI Group...

*(Interruptions)*

Hon. Leader of the Opposition, when the Speaker is addressing the House, it is most inappropriate for you to have crosstalking talks!

PQ B/154 in regard to the total cost involved for the dismantling of the BAI Group will be replied by the hon. Minister of Financial Services and Good Governance. PQ B/202 in regard to the implementation of the Deep Ocean Water Application Project will be replied by the hon. Prime Minister, time permitting.

Hon. Osman Mahomed!

**SERGE BARDOTIER FOOTBALL PITCH, TRANQUEBAR – CONSTRUCTION  
WORKS – DELAY**

**(No. B/144) Mr Osman Mahomed (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Home Affairs, External Communications and National Development Unit, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Serge Bardotier football pitch, in Tranquebar, he will state the reasons for the delay in the completion of the lighting works and the construction of the changing rooms and stepped terraces thereat by the National Development Unit scheduled for mid-January 2018, indicating the new expected completion dates thereof.

**The Prime Minister:** Madam Speaker, this project was started since 2013 and has been considerably delayed for a number of reasons, mainly for the poor performance of the Contractor. Subsequently, when hon. Mrs Roubina Jadoo-Jaunbocus, the then Parliamentary Private Secretary took office, she personally initiated action to review the project.

In October 2017, the National Development Unit had initiated a bidding exercise for the appointment of a Contractor for lighting works at Serge Bardotier football pitch. The construction of the changing room and graded seats were planned to be executed after the completion of the lighting works.

As the bids received for the lighting works were non responsive, no contract could be awarded.

In January 2018, hon. Oree, Parliamentary Private Secretary of the constituency, requested the City Council of Port Louis to consider the implementation of the three components of the project, namely the lighting works, construction of changing room and graded seats. This proposal was made to ensure that the three components be implemented together.

Following surveys carried out by the Council and submission of cost estimates, financial clearance was granted by the NDU to the City Council of Port Louis in May 2018 for the lighting works, construction of changing room and graded seats.

Madam Speaker, I am informed that the City Council of Port Louis awarded a contract for the lighting works on 24 December 2018 for a total amount of Rs1,891,750 inclusive of VAT. Works are in progress and are expected to be completed by 21 April 2019.

As regards the construction of changing room and graded seats, the City Council of Port Louis has awarded a contract on 11 April 2019 for a total amount of Rs7,974,100 inclusive of VAT. The design and construction works will last over a period of six months.

**Mr Osman Mahomed:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. There was an issue with the bids which were not responsive. Why was it taken from the NDU and the project sent to the Municipal Council of Port Louis, thereby incurring one and a half year delay in the project? What is the rationale in transferring the project from the NDU to the Municipal Council of Port Louis?

**The Prime Minister:** I must try to get the answer, but from what I understand, there was a bidding process that was carried on. There was evaluation of the bids. The exercise had to be cancelled on 20 February 2018, as I am told that the bids were non-responsive. Now, I do not know why. Probably, I would get the details about why they were not responsive.

**Mr Osman Mahomed:** Is it a general practice to transfer projects from the NDU to local authorities? Because all these lead to a lot of delay in the project. Is it because the NDU is concentrating on certain projects?

**The Prime Minister:** Madam Speaker, first of all, it is not a general practice, but it does happen depending on the situation. In this case, the NDU initiated the process. It had to cancel because the bids were non-responsive. Then, I have stated that hon. Oree intervened as PPS and, in order to expedite matters, we thought that it would be better, since they would be carrying on the graded seats and the changing rooms, to include also the lighting so that the process is quicker. That is why, and I hope it is also in the interest of the people in the constituency to have this sporting infrastructure as soon as possible.

**Mr Osman Mahomed:** I note the commencement date. Can we have the completion dates for these projects, for the *vestiaires*, *lampadaires* and changing room?

**The Prime Minister:** Well, I have replied. The contract has been awarded on 24 December for the lighting works, and works are in progress actually and will be completed by 21 April this year.

With regard to the changing room and the graded seats, the contract has been awarded on 11 April 2019, and I understand it will take about six months for completion of these infrastructures.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question, hon. Bhagwan!

**AIRPORTS OF MAURITIUS LTD - CHAIRPERSON - OVERSEAS  
MISSIONS**

(No. B/145) **Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Home Affairs, External Communications and National Development Unit, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Chairperson of Airports of Mauritius Limited, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the number of overseas missions undertaken since December 2018 to date, indicating in each case the -

- (a) purpose thereof, and
- (b) expenditure incurred in terms of *per diem* and other allowances.

**The Prime Minister:** Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Officer in Charge of the Airports of Mauritius Ltd that the Chairperson has not proceeded on any overseas mission for the period December 2018 to date.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Since the hon. Prime Minister has mentioned the Officer in Charge, can we know what is the position with regard to the job of CEO? You have an Officer in Charge. What is the position with regard to the filling of vacancy for the post of CEO?

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Bhagwan, this question is not relevant to the main question. The main question relates to the Chairperson, please.

**Mr Bhagwan:** I have another question; I hope the hon. Prime Minister can reply. Is the hon. Prime Minister aware *qu'il y a un climat de terreur...*

*(Interruptions)*

*Reste tranquille quand mo causer do mo camarade ! Ou Premier ministre ou ?*

*(Interruptions)*

**Madam Speaker:** Please!

**Mr Bhagwan:** *Zamin ou pou vinn ministre ou!*

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Bhagwan, please! Who is making those provocative remarks? Let me just remind hon. Members that provocative remarks do not heighten in any way the dignity of the House!

**Mr Bhagwan:** Yes, Madam Speaker. Can I rephrase my question?

**Madam Speaker:** Yes.

**Mr Bhagwan:** My question is also with regard to the Chairperson. *Il y a un climat de terreur qui prévaut au sein d'Airports of Mauritius. Même le président du syndicat a été suspendu et a dû aller à la Cour suprême.* Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House whether his name is being used, nearly on a daily basis, by his advisor, Mr Ken Arian, *pour semer la terreur au niveau d'Airports of Mauritius?*

**The Prime Minister:** Madam Speaker, first of all, this is not true. But the hon. Member has been in this House for I do not know how many years now; one of the oldest Members. He comes up with a question with regard to overseas mission and now he is talking about, well, what is the atmosphere, the mood that prevails over there. He must come with a specific question. But let me again say that there is no *climat de terreur*. Obviously, the Chairperson assumes his responsibility as Chair and all the officers there also have to assume their responsibility. Whenever anything is being done which is not according to their duties, obviously, it has to be pointed out to them.

**Mr Bhagwan:** One last...

*(Interruptions)*

*Hey, reste tranquille do gopia!*

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Jhugroo, I am once more drawing your attention!

**Mr Bhagwan:** Following the reply given by the hon. Prime Minister, he once replied to the House that clear instruction has been given to part-time Chairperson not to indulge into day-to-day matters of the Corporation where they are at the head. Can the hon. Prime Minister at least make sure that this instruction is being followed?

**Madam Speaker:** But this question does not relate to day-to-day matters! No! Hon. Bhagwan, you know fairly well. The question relates to overseas missions. Next question, hon. Bhagwan!

#### **AIRPORT OF RODRIGUES LTD - CHAIRPERSON - APPOINTMENT**

**(No. B/146) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Home Affairs, External Communications and National Development Unit, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Airport of Rodrigues Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the name of the Chairperson thereof, indicating the –

- (a) date and terms and conditions of appointment thereof and

(b) total monthly amount of fees and other allowances drawn.

**The Prime Minister:** Madam Speaker, Airport of Rodrigues Ltd is responsible for the management and operation of Plaine Corail Airport.

As regards part (a) of the question, Mr Ken Arian is the Chairperson of the Airport of Rodrigues Ltd and he has been appointed on 23 March 2018 when Airport of Rodrigues Ltd became a wholly-owned subsidiary of Airports of Mauritius Ltd.

This restructuring was necessary mainly because the Airport of Rodrigues Ltd on its own is not in a position to raise the necessary funds for the implementation of the New Runway Project at Plaine Corail Airport, at an estimated cost of Rs3.9 billion. Furthermore, Airport of Rodrigues Ltd does not have the technical resources and adequate experience for developing and managing large airport infrastructure projects, which AML has.

As regards part (b) of the question, the Chairperson draws an all-inclusive allowance of Rs52,000 a month.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Can I know from the hon. Prime Minister the composition of the Board of Airport of Rodrigues Ltd, if he has it?

**The Prime Minister:** The composition of the Board of Airport of Rodrigues Ltd. Mr Ken Arian is the Chairperson; Mr Chellapermal, a Director, representative of SIC; Mrs Madhub Maheswaree Naraini, a Director, representative of Ministry of External Communications; Mr Gunpath Meda, Director, representative of Ministry for Rodrigues; Mr Chellen Dewananda, Director, representative of AML and Mr Hee Hong Wye Jacques Davis Po Hoo Tung, Director, representative of MOFED.

**Mr Bhagwan:** I have one last question. Can I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether he has received representation from the Rodrigues Regional Assembly to have more members or at least one on the Board?

**The Prime Minister:** Not that I can recall of but, of course, I can check and furnish this information to the House later.

*(Interruptions)*

Sorry, I have received the answer. No, we have not received this representation.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Does not the hon. Prime Minister consider it urgent, at least, to have a representative of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly?

*(Interruptions)*

*To pas pou vine Ministre meme prochain kou!*

*(Interruptions)*

**Madam Speaker:** I have said several times, why do you have to intervene?

*(Interruptions)*

Hon. Jhugroo!

**Mr Bhagwan:** Can I appeal to the hon. Prime Minister to at least have Members of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly represented on the Board?

**The Prime Minister:** Of course, if need be, we will consider this suggestion.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question, hon. Ameer Meea!

#### **FREEDOM OF INFORMATION BILL - INTRODUCTION**

**(No. B/147) Mr A. Ameer Meea (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Home Affairs, External Communications and National Development Unit, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the proposed introduction of the Freedom of Information Bill, he will state where matters stand.

**The Prime Minister:** Madam Speaker, as I have already stated previously in this House, the draft Freedom of Information Bill, submitted by the Attorney General's Office, is being examined at the level of my Office.

In my statements, I also highlighted the complexity of this exercise, given the numerous and far-reaching implications of this piece of legislation, ranging from constitutional to public interest issues, impact on the working procedures of the public service, preservation of sensitive commercial information, cost implications, amongst others. I also mentioned the need to draw inspirations from the best practices in other jurisdictions so as to avoid any pitfalls or negative unintended consequences. But at the end of the day, the law has to be home-grown and adapted to our local context, taking into account our local realities, including the required resources and its impact on public service delivery. Hence, the need to proceed with great care and caution.

Madam Speaker, this exercise of internal examinations of the Bill is ongoing and, once completed, all stakeholders will most certainly be consulted prior to its introduction into the National Assembly.

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Ameer Meea!

**Mr Ameer Meea:** Madam Speaker, we agree on the complexity and far-reaching implications of the Bill, but at the same time the House will recall that answering a PQ in 2016, the then hon. Prime Minister informed the House that a first working draft Bill has been circulated in-house. So, it has been almost three years now that a first draft Bill has been circulated. Therefore, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister why is it taking that long, three years, and also what is the time frame for it to be finally circulated publicly?

**The Prime Minister:** Well, Madam Speaker, let me, first of all, express my satisfaction that we agree that it is a very complex piece of legislation. Very complex, so much so that in 2000, replying to a question from the Opposition, because we were in Government, MMM/MSM at that time, the then Ag. Prime Minister said, and I quote -

“I can assure the House, Mr Deputy Speaker, that we mean business. Legislation to provide the necessary framework for better access to information will be introduced at the opportune time and, in that context, I have been informed that a Bill had already been prepared and had been submitted to the former Government, but there had been no action taken on that piece of information.”

I do not want to quote other parts of the answer. That was on 31 October 2000. Now, the previous Government in which I was a Member did not come up eventually with a Freedom of Information Bill because, as we say rightly so, it is a very complex issue, it has to be looked at very carefully and especially in the light of what has happened in other countries. I am talking about countries like India, UK and others where even after having passed such a legislation, we have seen the consequences, the implications of that legislation, and there have even been comments made by Prime Ministers with regard to that legislation. We must be very careful. It will take the time it takes, but let us be very cautious about this.

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Ameer Meea!

**Mr Ameer Meea:** Madam Speaker, this issue has been debated in the House for more than 20 years, and I have even checked it in Hansard. Today, there is an urgency. The urgency is because there are State-owned enterprises, which are funded by public funds, where information is not available. Therefore, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister if he will

agree with me that there is an utter need to come quickly with such legislation in the name of transparency and accountability?

**The Prime Minister:** Madam Speaker, I think it has been urgent to bring this kind of legislation for 20 years and, for 20 years, there have been so many Governments. I am happy that we all have been in Government, both MSM/MMM, Labour/PMSD, everybody. And everybody has been addressing this issue. I do not want to take the time of the House to mention, for example, what the former Prime Minister, Dr. Navin Ramgoolam, also stated in this very House. In fact, what happened, it was in the Labour Party's Programme at one time, it was removed because the then Prime Minister stated to this very House that it is so complex that they have preferred to remove it from the Government Programme. Just to show how difficult and how complex this piece of legislation is.

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Ganoo!

**Mr Ganoo:** Madam Speaker, since the answer which the hon. Prime Minister has given to the PQ resembles a lot the answers he has given in the past on questions asked on this subject, may I, therefore, ask him - in view of the fact that we are at the end of the mandate, a few months are left - in all honesty, to give a pledge and a commitment to the nation that before the end of the mandate of this Government, the Freedom of Information Act will be introduced in this House? Because we talk of India, and even a country like Trinidad and Tobago has a freedom of information which is working properly in this country.

**The Prime Minister:** First of all, let me say, Madam Speaker, that in everything that I do, I am as honest as I can be. Secondly, the hon. Member himself has been a Member of past Governments, has also been dealing with this issue himself. I did not want to mention all these, but it is good that I quote what the World Bank Report has highlighted with regard to implementation of freedom of information. I am talking about World Bank Report; I am not talking about our opinion or anybody else. World Bank Report says 'the unintended negative consequences'. The hon. Member is talking about India, I will mention about India. In India, the legislation had led to greater public mistrust of Government and has damaged democracy. The American democracy has become dysfunctional, partly because of excess in transparency; too much openness has undermined the effectiveness and legitimacy of Government. And in UK, Madam Speaker, which is normally a model when we talk about transparency and so on, former Prime Minister Tony Blair, who introduced the Freedom of Information Act in the year 2000, has, himself, admitted that he regrets the Act. He described

the Act as dangerous and utterly undermining of sensible Government. And for his part, the former Prime Minister, David Cameron, stated, and I quote -

“We spend, or the system seems to spend, an age dealing with freedom of information requests which are all about processes and actually what the public or the country wants to know is how much money you are spending, is that money being spent well and what are the results.”

I think this summarises the very difficulty that we have, the complexity of the matter. And as I say, because once we come up with legislation, we have to be very, very cautious about what are the exact consequences of that kind of legislation.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question, hon. Uteem!

### **YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT, GDP & FDI**

**(No. B/148) Mr R. Uteem (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Home Affairs, External Communications and National Development Unit, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the period January 2018 to date, he will state the rate of the following economic indicators –

- (a) youth unemployment;
- (b) Gross Domestic Product growth, and
- (c) Foreign Direct Investments.

**The Prime Minister:** Madam Speaker, the unemployment rate is now at its lowest since 2001, that is, since the past 17 years. Moreover, it has been on a clear declining trend for the past three years. In fact, the unemployment rate fell to 6.9% in 2018, from 7.1% in 2017 and 7.3% in 2016. Due to effective economic policies to spur growth, to create jobs and to improve employability, the number of persons employed in the economy has grown from 559,200 in 2014 to 573,100 in 2018. The increase in employment means that the growth potential of the economy is also expanding.

As regards part (a) of the question, the youth unemployment rate stood at 25.1% in 2018. This includes young people who are enrolled in part-time courses at the Open University, tertiary institutions and other training establishments but who are still looking for a job. Moreover, statistics show that 88% of the unemployed youths do find a job within one

year. It is also pertinent to note that 52% of the unemployed youths find employment in less than five months.

According to these statistics, there is practically no long-term unemployment among our youths. In fact, in almost all countries around the world, the unemployment rate among young people is higher than the overall unemployment rate.

*(Interruptions)*

**Madam Speaker:** He better goes out and leaves his phone out. Ask him to leave his phone when he comes in. Leave his phone outside.

*(Interruptions)*

**The Prime Minister:** Madam Speaker, in regard to part (b) of the question, it must be noted that the growth path of the economy has declined since 2009 with GDP growth reaching as low as 3.4% in 2013. However, for the past three years, including 2018, the growth rates have been higher at 3.8%. Moreover, Statistics Mauritius is forecasting a growth rate of 3.9% in 2019. The IMF is forecasting a growth rate of 3.9% for both 2019 and 2020 and 4% in the medium term. Moody's is of the view that Government's proactive approach via a wide range of projects and measures will support GDP growth of around 4% in 2019 and 2020. It is clear that the growth rate is firmly on a rising trend.

As regards part (c) of the question, FDI inflows for the year 2018 are estimated by the Bank of Mauritius at Rs17.4 billion. It should be highlighted that in 2017, FDI inflows reached the highest level ever recorded, that is, Rs21.2 billion. These figures testify to the growing confidence of foreign investors in our economy.

It should also be noted that the estimates for these three indicators, namely youth unemployment, GDP growth and FDI for the first quarter of 2019 will be published by end of June this year by Statistics Mauritius and the Bank of Mauritius.

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Uteem!

**Mr Uteem:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Part (a) of the question was very specific to youth unemployment. I have just checked, and in the latest report of Statistics Mauritius published in March, last month, unemployment rate actually is the highest. Almost 50% of unemployed today are aged less than 24. There is also an increase in unemployment rate compared to last year. This is what Statistics Mauritius is saying. So, does he find it normal

that even as at today, there are 17,900 unemployed people of less than 25 years old in this country?

**The Prime Minister:** Well, I have quoted my figures from statistics. If the hon. Member can table his statistics to the House, because I have been quoting from official figures of statistics. I say again, in 2018, the unemployment rate has been on the decrease. The figures that I have, in fact, it is one of the lowest since 17 years; 2018, it is 6.9. I maintain that figure but, of course, I will double check on this. With regard to unemployed youth, I have stated that the rate is 25.1%, and it is not something which is abnormal when we compare. Let us compare to previous years also and let us compare to the years when the hon. Member's Party was in Government. In 2004, the rate was 24.8% and in 2005, 26.1%. So, it is roughly around that figure. But what is important and revealing is not the figure in itself. It is how long does it take for a young person to be able to get employment. This is what is important and this is what I have just said. Most of them are employed within a period of one year. In fact, when we say most of them, it is 88%. But then, I do agree that there are a few cases where some of our youngsters are not able to get an employment within a period of one year, but the majority, bigger majority is able to get an employment.

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Uteem!

**Mr Uteem:** I will table a copy of Statistics Mauritius where it is clearly stated at page 4 –

“The youth unemployment rate increased from 24.9% to 25.2% in the third quarter of 2018 as compared to the corresponding quarter one year earlier.”

It has increased! I am referring to the latest figures published by the Bank of Mauritius, which is public. I do not know what figures he has. They published one on 18 January 2019 – Gross Direct Investment Flows: First Three Quarters of 2017 and 2018. 2017: Rs15.5 billion, 2018: Rs11.5 billion. So, according to the figures that are officially on the website of the Bank of Mauritius, and I will table that as well, there is actually a net decrease in Foreign Direct Investment.

**The Prime Minister:** Madam Speaker, now I have heard clearly what the hon. Member has said with regard to youth unemployment. From one quarter to the other, he said 24.9% to 25.1%; it has increased! My God! 24.9% to 25.1%! Yes, it has increased, but I do not think he should make a big fuss about that. As I say, we have been in Government. He

was not in Government, but his Party was in Government. I do not want to repeat those figures again.

Coming to FDI, yes, from 2017 to 2018, it has decreased from Rs21,242,000,000, which is a record for 2017. Never have we reached such a level of FDI. I would wish that in the coming years we do better, but if we do not do better, I do not think it is dramatic. But I do not want to compare again - we have been in Government in 2005 - what was the level of FDI and also what was the level of FDI previously by other governments.

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Dr. Boolell!

**Dr. Boolell:** Madam Speaker, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister to give the exact figures and not to rely on deceptive statistics? The problem is we have an ageing population and a shrinking workforce and when we look at figures, there is an increase in unemployment rate amongst the youth, and this is the fact, notwithstanding what hon. Uteem has said with respect to the decline in Foreign Direct Investment.

**Madam Speaker:** What is your question, hon. Dr. Boolell?

**The Prime Minister:** Madam Speaker, I do not know whether I have to - if English is not being understood properly, may I ask permission to speak, maybe in Creole, to explain myself? First of all,...

*(Interruptions)*

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Dr. Boolell!

**The Prime Minister:** Let me say, it is a shame, hon. Dr. Boolell, for you to speak about deceptive statistics. You are attacking the institution...

*(Interruptions)*

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Dr. Boolell!

*(Interruptions)*

Hon. Dr. Boolell!

*(Interruptions)*

Hon. Dr. Boolell, this is the last time I am drawing your attention. From a sitting position, you cannot make remarks! You have asked a question, the hon. Prime Minister has the right

to answer, and you have to listen to his reply. Time is already over, but I have allowed you that question, and I allow a last question to hon. Uteem.

**Mr X. L. Duval:** Madam Speaker, I have a question also on this.

**The Prime Minister:** Madam Speaker, first of all, on a point of order...

**Madam Speaker:** Then, I will not be able to give the hon. Leader of the Opposition...

**The Prime Minister:** Madam Speaker, on a point of order. The hon. Member has to withdraw what he just said, that I am manipulating figures. This is imputing very, very serious bad motive on my part that I am manipulating figures.

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Dr. Boolell, please withdraw that word, kindly, so that we may finish with Prime Minister's Question Time. Please!

**Dr. Boolell:** Madam Speaker, I have stated that right from the outset, right from his mandate, Government has been manipulating figures.

**Madam Speaker:** No! I am not interested to know what you said right from the outset. What I am interested to know is whether you are withdrawing that word 'manipulating' or not. Please!

**Dr. Boolell:** If the hon. Prime Minister feels aggrieved, I withdraw.

**Madam Speaker:** You are withdrawing unreservedly.

**Dr. Boolell:** If the hon. Prime Minister feels aggrieved, I withdraw.

**Madam Speaker:** You are withdrawing.

**Dr. Boolell:** I do not want him to be aggrieved.

**The Prime Minister:** Yes, thank you. I was also replying to the question that was asked, and I repeat again, when I look at the figures, Madam Speaker - I have requested all the figures for all the years since 2004 up to date, because the only year when we started having statistics on youth unemployment is as from 2004 - the percentage has been roughly about the same all these years. So, how can he criticise and say that now it is the highest, as if never before it has not been? It is handwritten on this document; I will table the document that has been provided to me by Statistics.

Secondly, the hon. Member talked about FDI, the same question. Again, Madam Speaker, I believe we had a record level of FDI in 2017.

*(Interruptions)*

**The Prime Minister:** Okay! So, in...

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Jhugroo, you know better than the hon. Prime Minister? Hon. Jhugroo, do you want to reply in the place of the hon. Prime Minister?

**The Prime Minister:** Okay, true it is that the level has decreased for 2018, but again, I mean, in previous Government also it has varied, depending on what has happened in a particular year and the other year. But what is important is that we should maintain a certain level that will, in fact, be a boost to economic development.

**Madam Speaker:** Last question!

**Mr X. L. Duval:** Let me ask a question. Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the hon. Prime Minister concerning the forecast growth rate for this year, which Government forecast at 3.9%, MCB, I think 3.8%, others 3.7%. My question is quite specific. In the light of the crisis in the tourism sector, three months of negative growth, can the hon. Prime Minister tell us whether Government is now going to downgrade the growth rate for this year? Because, as you know, tourism is nearly 24% of GDP. So, if there is a crisis in tourism, it is bound, amongst other sectors, to affect the GDP growth rate.

**The Prime Minister:** Madam Speaker, if I say what is Government forecast, the hon. Leader of the Opposition will say, yes, this is biased, because obviously, as Minister of Finance, I want to maybe paint a very nice picture of the situation. Let me then, again, quote the IMF forecast...

*(Interruptions)*

But the hon. Leader of the Opposition is talking about growth!

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Leader of the Opposition, you do not want the hon. Prime Minister to reply! He has the right to reply to your question.

**The Prime Minister:** The hon. Leader of the Opposition is talking about growth generally. So, the IMF is forecasting a growth of 3.9% for both 2019 and 2020, and 4%, Madam Speaker, in the medium-term. I would invite the hon. Leader of the Opposition to have a look - I know he likes inviting. So, I invite him - and we can together have a perusal of that document, Moody's last report.

**ALBION BRIDGE (NEW) - COST**

**(No. B/149) Mr F. Quirin (Fourth Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Home Affairs, External Communications and National Development Unit, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the construction of the new Albion Bridge by the National Development Unit, he will state the –

- (a) name of the contractor;
- (b) total project cost;
- (c) start and completion dates, and
- (d) measures taken to ensure normal vehicular traffic flow thereat, especially, in respect of Morcellements Raffray and Beerjeeraz.

*(Withdrawn)*

**Madam Speaker:** Time is over!

Hon. Members, the Table has been advised that PQ B/184, in regard to Mahebourg Regeneration Project, will be replied by the hon. Minister of Tourism. PQ B/159 has been withdrawn. PQ B/196, in regard to the cleaning of the river at Anse Jonction, Pailles, will be replied by the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands, Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare.

Hon. Rughoobur!

**ÉCOLE HÔTELIÈRE SIR GAËTAN DUVAL – STUDENTS INTAKE, DIRECTOR & VACANCIES**

**(No. B/156) Mr S. Rughoobur (Second Member for Grand’Baie & Poudre d’Or)** asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research whether, in regard to the *École Hôtelière*, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the –

- (a) total intake of students in 2016, 2017 and 2018, respectively;
- (b) name and qualifications of the Director thereof, and
- (c) list of existing vacancies thereat, indicating the impact thereof on the smooth running of courses thereat.

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** Madam Speaker, the *École Hôtelière* Sir Gaëtan Duval dispenses courses in Tourism, Hospitality and Leisure Trades at national certificate, diploma and higher national diploma levels on full-time, part-time and as well as apprenticeship modes.

With regard to part (a) of the question, the enrolment of trainees in the courses run by the hotel school for years 2016, 2017 and 2018 were 2,075, 2,474 and 2,092 respectively.

Further, with the implementation of the National Apprenticeship Programme as announced in Budget 2018/2019 to enhance prospects of youth employability, there were 881 apprentices enrolled at the *École Hôtelière*.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that the centre is presently headed by an acting Training Centre Manager. The vacant post for the Training Centre Manager was advertised in November 2018 and the selection exercise is underway. The Scheme of Service for the post provides for the following qualifications –

- A Cambridge Higher School Certificate or passes in at least two subjects obtained on one certificate at the General Certificate of Education, Advance Level, and
- A Degree in Hotel Management, Tourism, Hospitality, Physicals and Science Engineering, Computer Science or Design.

Regarding part (c) of the question, there are three other funded vacancies at the *École Hôtelière* Sir Gaëtan Duval, namely two Coordinators and one Training Officer in Tourism Management. Necessary arrangements have been made by the MITD for the smooth running of the activities at the centre. Two Training Officers have been assigned the duties of coordinators to ensure that there is no impediment in the operations of the Centre. As for the Training Officer, recruitment is under process. Scheme of Service for the coordinators is presently being reviewed. The Centre also has recourse to several part-time resource persons from the hospitality and tourism industry for specialised modules.

**Mr Rughoobur:** Madam Speaker, I had a similar PQ in 2017. At the level of the pass rate for full time students in May 2017, it was more or less 50%. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether during these two years, there has been any improvement at the level of this pass rate.

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** Madam Speaker, the pass rate is more than 80% with a high possibility of employability. In fact, if we go down and look at all the various fields of study, some of them reach 100% as well. But if I can limit myself to a number of the courses, at the level of the National Certificate Level 3, it is around 93.4%, for the National Certificate level 4 – 88.9%, the Diploma and High National Diploma, the pass rate ranges from 88.9% to 93.4%.

**Mr Rughoobur:** Madam Speaker, we today talking about this Tourism 3.0, may I know from the hon. Minister whether she contemplates, along with this Hotel School to ensure that the courses, curriculum of the Hotel School, the courses that are being offered are more technology driven?

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** Madam Speaker, in fact the MITD normally prepares and designs its courses along with the industry people. I am told that it has reviewed 47 out of the 72 curricular and this includes 14 curricular for the Hospitality and Tourism Sector in the fields of Food Production, Front Office, House Keeping and a number of others.

Moreover, the MITD is working in partnership with the IT Education Services of Singapore and the *Académie de La Réunion* for implementation of capacity building programmes to review its curricular.

I must also add that in the same area Polytechnics Mauritius are also offering courses and this is being done in line with the trends in the sector with the help of HTMI from Switzerland. I must also mention that technology is being included in all the courses. In fact, in the New International Higher Diploma in Hospitality Management awarded by the Peace and Education Limited, a module on digital marketing has been incorporated. In all hospitality courses, the trainees are trained on specialised hotel management software. In the Travel and Tourism Diploma, Front Office students are trained in the use of specialised software like the Amadians and technology is being included in all the courses.

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Jhuboo!

**Mr Jhuboo:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. The *Comité de Gestion* of the Ecole Hôtelière Sir Gaetan Duval, the decision making body of the institution has not sit since almost a year now, when the former Chairman, Mr Jean Marc Lagesse, resigned. So, how can such an institution operate without regular meetings?

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** Madam Speaker, I must mention that as far as the Management Committee is concerned, in spite of the fact that the Chairman has given his

resignation, we have tried to remain in contact with the hotel sector and continuously people from the different groups, even from AHRIM and other individual hotels do come and deal with the Hotel School regularly.

**Mr Rughoobur:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I have a last supplementary. Well, the Ministry of Tourism has issued a Strategy Document 2018-2031. May I know from the hon. Minister whether the school is ensuring the Director that would be appointed shortly is fully in line with this Strategy Document, which is important for the sector?

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** Madam Speaker, I have gone through the Strategic Paper from the Ministry of Tourism and, in fact, we are working in collaboration, we have regular meetings. The new Director who will be appointed will, obviously, be briefed on all these policies.

**Madam Speaker:** I suspend the sitting for one and a half hours.

*At 12.59 p.m., the sitting was suspended.*

*On resuming at 2.32 p.m. with Madam Speaker in the Chair.*

#### **EXPATRIATES – WORK & OCCUPATION PERMITS**

**(No. B/157) Mr S. Rughoobur (Second Member for Grand’Baie & Poudre d’Or)** asked the Minister of Tourism whether, in regard to the hotel industry, he will state the total number of expatriates employed therein in 2017, 2018 and since January 2019 to date, respectively, indicating the –

- (a) number thereof holding occupation permits, and
- (b) measures taken by his Ministry to ensure a transfer of knowledge and expertise therefrom to the locals.

**Mr Gayan:** Madam Speaker, before I reply to this PQ, please allow me to express to the French people our deep sadness over the damage caused by the fire which engulfed the Notre Dame Cathedral, an 850 year old medieval edifice in the heart of Paris, which is also the place in the world most visited by tourists. We also wish to reassure the French Government and the French people our complete solidarity during these difficult times, but we are also comforted by the determination of the French Government to restore Notre Dame to its majesty as it was originally. This is, in fact, Madam Speaker, a shining symbol of the resilience of global tourism.

Madam Speaker, to come to the PQ, expatriates employed in the hotel industry are issued with a work permit by the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training, or an occupation permit as professional by the Economic Development Board.

I am informed by the EDB and the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training that as at 12 April 2019, the number of expatriates employed in the tourism sector was 1,220, out of which 496 are working in the hotel sector.

The total number of work and occupation permits issued with regard to the tourism industry for the period referred to is as follows –

- (i) 2017 – 810 out of which 198 occupation permits were for the hotel sector;
- (ii) 2018 – 712 out of which 170 occupation permits were for the hotel sector, and
- (iii) as at 12 April 2019 - 128 out of which 42 occupation permits are for the hotel sector.

It is to be noted, Madam Speaker, that the duration for which occupation permits are issued vary from short term ones, valid for a period not exceeding 9 months and up to 3 years.

As regards part (b) of the question, a scarcity list of areas with skill shortages has been established for the consideration of requests for occupation permits in the hotel sector. I wish to point out, Madam Speaker, that back in July 2015, the list of occupations with skill shortages had been reduced from 21 to 12 with a view to restricting employment of expatriates and encourage recruitment of local citizens in senior positions. This has been further reduced to 11 with effect from January 2016.

For cases of occupation permits, my Ministry usually recommends that a local counterpart be trained for the effective transfer of skills and knowledge and for Mauritians to be given the opportunity to take over the positions held by expatriates. The figures actually show a decreasing trend in the number of permits issued both for occupation permits and work permits.

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Rughoobur!

**Mr Rughoobur:** Madam Speaker, I know that in the last part of his reply, the hon. Minister referred to the progress. This is what was stated in my PQ in 2017 on the same subject and I quote –

“The renewal of occupation permits for professional not falling within the skill scarcity areas are approved for a limited period subject to training of local counterparts”

May I know from the hon. Minister whether there are concrete statistics or a mechanism in place to make a follow-up on the progress achieved at least?

**Mr Gayan:** Madam Speaker, in fact, we do not have statistics for that purpose available but we have consultations with the industry regularly in order to identify the best ways to enable our local employees to be upgraded and to be able to fill the jobs presently occupied by expatriates.

**Mr Rughoobur:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. May I know from the hon. Minister, following the question I had on hotel school this morning, whether there is a problem of mismatch between what is currently being offered - HR being generated by hotel schools and the demand at senior position levels in hotels?

**Mr Gayan:** Madam Speaker, in fact, it must be acknowledged that at senior positions in the hotel industry there is, in fact, a mismatch between demand and supply. When we look at the curricular of the hotel schools in Mauritius, apart from the *École Hôtelière*, it would appear that the training is more focussed for academic purposes rather than at operational level. But in the tourism sector, for somebody to be able to occupy a senior position, he must have been exposed to all the levels of employment in the hotel industry, right from the kitchen level up to management. This is why sometimes you find it difficult to recruit the right Mauritian for the top positions in the hotel industry and this is why some expatriates happen to become inevitable for the good running of the hotels.

**Mr Rughoobur:** A last supplementary, Madam Speaker. The fact that there is this problem of mismatch and we have a shortage, as rightly pointed out by the hon. Minister, may I know whether there is at the level of the Ministry a retention strategy at lower level to prevent brain drain?

**Mr Gayan:** Madam Speaker, the tourism industry is a global industry and people with the skills and knowledge and experience are in demand all over the world. But we are trying, at the level of L'AREIM and the hotels to try to retain the best brains in Mauritius not only for our own purposes but also to be able to train other Mauritians to reach that level. But Mauritius is a free country, even if we have very trained Mauritians and they want to go and work overseas, there is nothing we can do about it. The industry is global and they are free to

move anywhere they want, but as far as possible, we try to retain as many Mauritians as possible.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question, hon. Rughoobur!

**MTPA – CHINESE MARKET – DESTINATION PROMOTION**

**(No. B/158) Mr S. Rughoobur (Second Member for Grand’Baie & Poudre d’Or)** asked the Minister of Tourism whether, in regard to the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the quantum of funds spent in the current financial year to attract Chinese tourists to mainland Mauritius and Rodrigues.

**Mr Gayan:** Madam Speaker, I have been informed by the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority that an amount of Rs39 m. has been earmarked for destination promotion in the Chinese market in the current financial year, out of which Rs22.09 m. has been spent so far on key marketing activities, including social media campaigns, media trips, the development of the MTPA Chinese website and road shows in China.

Madam Speaker, I wish to highlight that over the years, funds allocated to destination promotion in the Chinese market have decreased gradually due to the following factors –

- (i) The withdrawal of China Southern Airlines from Mauritius in November 2015, following a policy decision of the then former Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Tourism for the MTPA to stop providing marketing support to the airline. This resulted in a drop in airlift to the destination by 25,000 seats per year. Consequently, tourist arrivals from China dropped by 11.4% from 89,584 in 2015 to 79,374 in 2016. Had the marketing support not be withdrawn to China Southern Airlines, the target of 100,000 Chinese tourists would have long been attained taking into account that the Chinese carrier brought some 22,788 tourists to our destination during its period of operation.
- (ii) Air Asia ceased its operations on Mauritius in March 2017 leading to a loss of some 4,900 Chinese passengers carried by the airline during period November 2016 to March 2017.
- (iii) The withdrawal of Air Mauritius flights from Beijing since October 2017 caused a reduction of around 8% in tourist arrivals from China, from 79,374 in 2016 to 72,951 in 2017.

- (iv) The rationalisation policy of Air Mauritius in April 2018 on the Chinese route due to economic reasons, resulting in the stoppage of flights to Guangzhou, Chengdu and Wuhan, led to a further drop in Chinese tourist arrivals by 9.9%, from 72,951 in 2017 to 65,736 in 2018.

On the basis of existing airlift capacity of the Chinese route, this year the forecast is that tourist arrivals from China would further drop to around 47,593.

Madam Speaker, I consider that Mauritius must not lose interest in the potential of China, which is the fastest growing outbound tourism market in the world.

However, I must state that –

- (i) the strategy crafted for the Chinese market by the previous Government mainly targeted the low end tourists who were very price sensitive when, in fact, Mauritius should have been positioned as an upmarket destination;
- (ii) the flight schedule rationalisation of Air Mauritius, which is the sole operator on the China route, has adversely affected the reputation of the destination and the trade has lost trust in selling Mauritius to the advantage of other direct competitors like Sri Lanka and the Maldives.

Madam Speaker, Government is conscious that we cannot afford to ignore China.

My Ministry and the MTPA have been having consultations with all stakeholders, including our national carrier, hoteliers and Destination Management Companies, to work out a roadmap for China with clear milestones to revamp that market.

In this context, not later than Wednesday last, with a view to developing a more realistic and pragmatic approach to the Chinese market, a high-level workshop with the participation of the MTPA, including its Public Relations representative based in China, top management of Air Mauritius and captains of the hotel industry, was held under the Chair of Mr Arnaud Martin, who is a Board member of the MTPA and a Consultant to Air Mauritius, to brainstorm on the challenges and to devise a coherent strategy to continue to tap the Chinese market.

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Minister, are you nearly finishing, please? Because the question is very brief and concise and I think it would be better if you have additional information either to circulate or to come with a statement later.

**Mr Gayan:** I have just one last sentence.

Madam Speaker, air connectivity is central to this strategy.

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Rughoobur!

**Mr Rughoobur:** Yes, thank you, Madam Speaker. What are the strategic drives in your strategic plan devised by the Ministry's accessibility? The plans speak about attracting Chinese national carrier. May I know from the hon. Minister whether there has been any incentive, initiative undertaken at this level?

**Mr Gayan:** Madam Speaker, since the time when China Southern stopped operating to Mauritius, I have, myself, when I took over as Tourism Minister, been trying to talk to the Chinese carriers, and I am also talking to Chinese Authorities to see if they can help us to get a Chinese carrier to Mauritius. We have approached, with help of the MTPA and also Air Mauritius, some of the carriers, but I must say that they are asking for conditions like subsidies and also fifth freedom traffic to Africa. So, we are looking into the matter.

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Rughoobur!

**Mr Rughoobur:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. One is the issue of quantity and the other issue is one of the spending. Now, the recent report of PwC in tourism in South Africa mentions about this drastic fall from \$1,364 to \$1,300 spending per head in 2016. May I know during the recent years, since 2017, 2018, what has been the trend?

**Mr Gayan:** Madam Speaker, the figures mentioned by the hon. Member relate to 2016. At present, that is, for 2018, the total tourism earnings for Mauritius increased from 60 billion in 2017 to 64 billion in 2018, representing an increase of 6%, and the average amount spent by the Chinese tourists is in MUR 55,000, which is the equivalent to USD 1,833.

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Jhuboo!

**Mr Jhuboo:** It was stated the following: "*Le ministre Gayan est 'd  cu' par le march   chinois et critique Air Mauritius. Anil Gayan n'a pas cach   sa frustration lors d'un atelier de travail consacr   au march   chinois*". So, my question to the hon. Minister is: what is concretely being envisaged at the level of Air Mauritius to reverse the current trend?

**Mr Gayan:** Madam Speaker, I am not in a position to answer for Air Mauritius, but what I can inform the House is that from 01 March to 31 March, there were nine flights less on China. From April 01 to April 14 - and this is the information I have obtained from MTPA - already for the first days of April, there are four flights less on the China route. So, this inevitably impacts on tourist arrivals.

**Mr X. L. Duval:** Can I ask the hon. Minister whether it is a question of lack of air seats which he intimated at the beginning of his reply or is it lack of tourists which he intimated at the end of his reply, that is, Air Mauritius no longer wants to fly there because as the CEO has said is not in the business of flying empty planes? So, which one is it? Is it both now, lack of air seats and also lack of clients for the seats? I am a little bit confused.

**Mr Gayan:** But I also take note, Madam Speaker that the CEO of Air Mauritius has in a Press interview yesterday said he is planning to put daily flights to China. So, I don't know, I am not in a position to reply for Air Mauritius, but my concern is that as a country we cannot afford to lose interest in a huge market, in a super power for tourism which China is, and this is why I say what I have said.

**Mr X. L. Duval:** Can I ask the hon. Minister whether he is planning, therefore, to assist Air Mauritius?

**Mr Gayan:** I am sorry?

**Mr X. L. Duval:** Are you going to assist financially Air Mauritius to fly to China?

**Mr Gayan:** Well, after the workshop, Madam Speaker, last Wednesday, this idea came up and, of course, we are going to look at the whole strategy and we will have consultations at the level of Government to see what we can do in that regard.

#### **TOURISM SECTOR – GROWTH RATE**

**(No. B/159) Mr S. Rughoobur (Second Member for Grand'Baie & Poudre d'Or)** asked the Minister of Tourism whether, in regard to the tourism sector, he will state the growth rate thereof over the past five years, indicating the factors accounting therefor.

*(Withdrawn)*

**Madam Speaker:** Next question, Osman Mahomed!

#### **PLAINE SOPHIE - WIND FARM PROJECT**

**(No. B/160) Mr Osman Mahomed (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the proposed Wind Farm Project at Plaine Sophie, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Electricity Board, information as to –

- (a) the estimated investment and share of renewable energy as a percentage of the total electricity production;

- (b) why same was not commissioned on 12 October 2018 as agreed;
- (c) if the contract has been terminated and the accompanying Development Security of US \$ 3M cashed by the CEB and, if not, why not, and
- (d) the total amount of liquidated damages cashed in relation thereto as at to date.

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** Madam Speaker, with regard to part (a), I am informed by the Central Electricity Board that, at the time of the bidding exercise in 2011, the estimated investment, as submitted by the promoter, was Rs435,241,145 m. and US\$ 49,898,865 million. This is equivalent to roughly Rs2 billion, based on exchange rates at that time of bidding.

The annual energy generation is estimated to be around 50 GWh, representing 2% of the total electricity generation.

With regard to part (b), I am informed by the CEB that by a letter dated 11 October 2018, the promoter requested another extension of time to 12 August 2019.

In view of the situation, CEB, on 30 October 2018, replied that it informed the promoter that it was claiming delay damages of Rs75,000 daily as from 13 October 2018.

By the same letter, the promoter was requested to submit “meaningful and real progress of work” (I quote) - of the project to ensure, I quote again, “completion of work”.

On 21 November 2018, the promoter informed CEB that 42% of the site works had been completed and that most of the turbine components had already been manufactured. The promoter again made a request for an amendment of the ESPA to provide for a revised commercial operation date of 12 August 2019.

The Central Electricity Board is presently carrying out a due diligence exercise on the information provided by the promoter.

On 11 February 2019, the CEB informed the promoter that without waiving the rights of CEB under the ESPA, it had agreed to grant to the Consortium an extension of 45 days to consider such representations as the promoter may wish to make and that it will continue to claim the delay damages during that period.

With regard to the encashment of the Development Security, I am informed that in November 2018, the CEB issued a letter to Barclays Bank for the appropriation of Rs1,425,000 delay damages from part of the Development Security at the Bank. On 23

November 2018, the promoter issued a fresh Development Security document, this time from Standard Bank.

I am informed by the CEB that the two banks, having expressed doubts on the validity of these documents, the matter was referred to the Police for enquiry.

In these circumstances, the CEB accepted payment of delay damages by way of cheques.

On 28 November 2018, the promoter submitted a valid Development Security of US\$ 3 million, to be encashed at any time by CEB. The Development Security is in three parts –

- (i) USD 780,000 from HSBC, valid up to 28 February 2020;
- (ii) USD 2,064,000, and
- (iii) USD 156,000 from MauBank valid up to 30 November 2019.

With regard to part (d), I am informed by the CEB that the total amount paid as at date is Rs8,349,924.66, including interest for delayed payment.

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Osman Mahomed!

**Mr Osman Mahomed:** Thank you. Can I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister whether as a consequence of the uncovering of these two doubtful bank guarantees, the Legal Advisers of CEB have recommended that the contract be terminated for breach of trust on behalf of the seller towards CEB?

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** I have not read the legal advice, but I do understand that the Legal Adviser stated that it was at the end of the day a matter for CEB to determine whether to terminate or not on a commercial basis of commercial criteria.

**Mr Osman Mahomed:** Well, in Parliament, in reply to PQ B/310 of hon. Bashir Jahangeer - a very good question - on 08 May 2018, the hon. Deputy Prime Minister stated clearly that CEB had agreed to a final and last extension of the commercial operation date up to 12 October 2018, following which the contract will be terminated. So, can I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, in view of the troubling circumstances, doubtful bank guarantees and long delay in the project, whether the time has not come for CEB to once and for all terminate this energy purchase and supply agreement?

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** Various points of views are, of course, expressed. Let us see the situation. This is a contract which was awarded, which was an agreement which

was reached in 2010. There were severe delays in the progress of that contract; there is now a situation where certainly CEB would be entitled, perhaps on legal advice, to terminate, but, on the other hand, when we consider the representations made by the promoter to the effect that, at least, half of the project is completed, CEB must effect due diligence in order to make sure that all this is true, and then, they continue to discuss with the promoter. I do not think CEB wishes to straightaway just terminate a contract without making sure that it is first legally entitled to do so and, secondly, that it is in the best commercial interest of CEB.

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Uteem!

**Mr Uteem:** The hon. Deputy Prime Minister is a Senior Counsel. He has mentioned in his reply that doubt has been expressed on the validity of the guarantee certificate issued by two banks. Now, doesn't he think that this is serious enough for CEB to terminate the contract rather than to condone illegal activity of contractors?

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** Well, my legal opinion counts for very little in this matter, so does yours for that matter.

The point is that we have to trust our legal adviser. Of course, it is a serious matter if there is a defect in the validity, first of the bank documents. The Police is enquiring. I am the last person to be able to express any opinion in this matter and certainly I have no prejudiced opinion. Let us wait for CEB to continue what it has done, and then, we will see what CEB decides.

**Madam Speaker:** Last question, hon. Osman Mahomed!

**Mr Osman Mahomed:** I have with me a letter from Standard Bank, clearly stating that the document has been forged, and I am going to table it. In light of this very serious matter, can I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister to revisit its position, because we are dealing with a very murky situation here?

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** I am aware of this letter. This letter has been referred to the Police for enquiry. When you say to revisit, I have no position to revisit, it is CEB which can revisit a situation. CEB has adopted the attitude that it has, because it wants to take the maximum precautions. Its other parties are one Indian firm and a Mauritian firm forming a Consortium. Let us trust the wisdom of the collective wisdom of the Board on this matter.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question, hon. Osman Mahomed!

**FOREIGN OPERATORS - INTERNATIONAL CALLS - TERMINATION RATE**

**(No. B/161) Mr Osman Mahomed (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central)** asked the Minister of Technology, Communication and Innovation whether, in regard to international calls, he will state if Government has fixed a termination charge/rate in case of default by the operators and, if so, indicate if same is being complied with and, if not, indicate the actions taken to ensure compliance therewith.

**Mr Sawmynaden:** Madam Speaker, following the liberalisation of telecommunications in 2003, new operators appeared on the market offering different services, including international long distance calls.

In view of stabilising the market segment of international long distance calls which witnessed a flurry of international call packages, Government introduced a minimum termination rate.

Madam Speaker, the minimum termination rate is the rate payable by foreign operators to local operators for using their network for delivering international calls to local destination. Accordingly, the minimum termination rate for incoming international call was prescribed through the respective telecommunication directives issued by the ICT Authority as follows –

- 13.3 US Cents per minute as from 01 February 2006;
- 8.5 US Cents as from 01 September 2008, and
- 12.5 US Cents per minute as from 01 October 2010.

The MTR applies to all holders of valid ILD licences which are actively terminating incoming international calls in Mauritius, as authorised under the scope of their respective licences.

However, with the liberalisation of the telecommunication sector combined with the growing competition in the sector as well as the introduction of new technologies, the termination rate applied by the operators has fallen drastically over the years in Mauritius. Some operators have confirmed in a case at Court that they were not complying to MTR fixed through the telecom directive issued by the ICT Authority.

My Ministry tasked the ICT Authority to hold consultations with the ILD operators on the matter and to make appropriate recommendation to address the issue of non-compliance. After wide consultation with relevant stakeholders, the ICT Authority submitted its report to my Ministry detailing its analysis and recommendations on the subject matter. The

recommendations have been examined and it has been found that this is a multi-dimensional and complex issue related to other regulatory aspects as well in the telecommunication sector. On the aspects that need to be addressed to deal with the issue of non-compliance to MTR is the revision of the amount of contribution being made by the operators concerning the Universal Service Fund.

The ICT Authority has recommended that MTR be abolished and concurrently the USF contribution formula be revised. Any revision of the USF contribution formula is being considered with much caution because of the consequence on the activities of the operators, more specifically on the employment of people in the sector.

My Ministry is presently working on the policy option to address both the termination rate and the USF contribution issues.

**Mr Osman Mahomed:** Thank you. Is Data Communications Limited one of these default operators in this sector, and, if so, now that it is bankrupt, does it still owe money to the Universal Service Fund and other charges to Government?

**Mr Sawmynaden:** Actually, there are a total of seven operators, three out of five are contributing to USF; DLC Mauritius Limited and T@media.com Limited are not contributing; two former early operators, that is, Data Communications Limited and Eg Alice Limited are in receivership; two former ILD operators, Hotlink Company Limited and City Corp Limited have not renewed their ILD licenses and all of them owe money to the USF Funds and all cases are in Court.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question, hon. Bhagwan!

#### **URBAN TERMINALS PROJECTS - IMPLEMENTATION**

**(No. B/162) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade whether, in regard to the Urban Terminals to be implemented at Curepipe, Place Margéot in Rose Hill and at Victoria and Gare du Nord in Port Louis, he will state where matters stand as to the implementation thereof.

**Mr Bodha:** Madam Speaker, I wish to inform the House that only the Victoria Urban Terminal and the Immigration Square Urban Terminal projects are being implemented by my Ministry. As regards the other Urban Terminals, the projects are being implemented by the

respective Municipal Councils under the aegis of the Ministry of Local Government and Outer Islands.

The status regarding the Victoria Urban Terminal and the Immigration's Square Urban Terminal is as follows –

- Victoria Terminal

My Ministry is in the process of finalising the lease agreement with the selected promoter. A development site is being freed from all incumbrances to allow the commencement of the works. This involves the relocation of hawkers operating at Decaen Frère; construction of a bus holding area at Les Salines; temporary arrangements for alighting and boarding of passengers during the construction phase. A fast track Committee has been set up under the Chair of the supervising Officer of my Ministry to facilitate the obtention of necessary clearances and permits and to monitor the progress of works. Construction works on the site are expected to start by the month of May.

- Immigration Urban Terminal

And as regards to the Immigration Urban Terminal, as I have already replied in an earlier PQ, following a Request for Proposal exercise, Yihai International Investment Management Limited has been selected to implement the project and a letter of notification has been issued to the promoter in this respect. Since part of the development site holds within the buffer zone of the Aapravasi Ghat, the design of the project requires UNESCO clearances prior to the implementation. Accordingly, the design submitted by the promoter has been forwarded to the UNESCO for approval and I am informed that a working session was held in Paris on Friday last, 12 April, with representatives of UNESCO and the consultant of the promoter and a representative of the Ministry of Housing and Lands to that effect. The outcome of the meeting is being awaited. As soon as the UNESCO clearance is obtained, the Ministry of Housing and Lands will finalise the lease agreement with the promoter. Works are expected to start immediately after the signature of the lease agreement.

Madam Speaker, as regards to the Place Margeot Terminal, I am informed by the Municipal Council of Beau Bassin-Rose Hill that the Request for Proposal was launched for a third time on 12 February 2019 following which one application has been received and an Evaluation Committee is currently examining the application to determine its responsiveness to the RFP requirements and the evaluation exercise will come to an end at the end of this month.

I am informed that the first exercise failed due to non-responsiveness of the applications received. As for the second exercise, no applications were received.

As regards to the Curepipe Urban Terminal, I am informed that the Request for Proposal document is being finalised.

**Mr Bhagwan:** I will come to Place Margeot Urban Terminal which directly concerns me. It is clear now that the Minister is stating that the Metro Express will be ready by the end of this year. So, what will happen? What is being planned to cater for the general public? I do not see any urban terminal coming. I hope the Minister is not dreaming to have an urban terminal like New York or something else, here, in Rose Hill. So, can the Minister inform the House...

*(Interruptions)*

As it is, people will get down in the mud. Everywhere it is *chantiers*. So, unless you are dreaming, at least, you can inform the people what would happen by the end of this year when your first train is supposed to come.

**Mr Bodha:** I explained in the PNQ which was put by the hon. Leader of the Opposition that the station is one thing and the terminal is something else. The rail station falls under the contract of Larsen and Toubro at each and every station. So, the train station at Place Margeot will be ready by September. The Urban Terminal is a wider re-engineered version of the bus station as it is today and, as we know, bus stations in Mauritius, for the last 50 years, have known no development. And the Urban Terminal will have the bus terminal, the train terminal, the shopping mall, offices and a number of other components. So, the train terminal is going to be ready by Larsen and Toubro by September.

**Mr Bhagwan:** We all know what has been happening since January with flooding at Rose Hill. I will ask the Minister whether he has had a site visit very recently at Place Margeot and seen for himself the state of drains and the area. I am personally not satisfied, and not me alone, other professionals also, of the quality of work which is being done, not

only in Rose Hill. We all have eyes, we can compare that our local contractors are doing a very good job. So, can the Minister inform the House whether the new situation of flooding in Rose Hill has been taken care of by the contractor and what follow-up he, himself, is doing with regard to the follow-up with the contractor? Because with the Metro Express, there is only talk, talk and talk, but no action. So, we have seen the result from Metro Express. Can the Minister, at least, reassure the population that this problem of flooding in Rose Hill at the opening of this terminal would not be the same as it is?

**Mr Bodha:** Madam Speaker, I can understand the concern of the hon. Member. As regards to the flooding at Sir Virgil Naz, the PPS...

*(Interruptions)*

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Bhagwan! I gave you ample time to ask your question!

**Mr Bodha:** The Parliamentary Private Secretary, Mr Aliphon, and we have been working with the Local Government together with CWA, WMA to have a drainage system there and the Works Order has already been issued, works have already started. It is costing, I think, about Rs24m. and it will take about nine months.

So, the works are starting there for La Rue Naz. As regards the complaints made by the hon. Member concerning the quality of works, I have been there myself and I have seen to it that we have a finished product. These are temporary works up and until the whole system is established between Place Margeot and the roundabout of Beau Bassin. I have all the time made suggestions, I have seen to it that Larsen and Toubro and all the companies are working. They provide all the mitigating measures because it is a very complex site. I would like to say that, for example, on Vandermeersch, the new road network will be new, the CWA network is new, CEB network is new, cabled; MT network is new and these were networks which lasted 50 years, Madam Speaker. So, in the wake of the Metro, we are re-engineering all the utilities.

*(Interruptions)*

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Mrs Selvon!

**Mrs Selvon:** Merci, Madame la présidente.

*(Interruptions)*

**Madam Speaker:** Can you, please, listen to hon. Mrs Selvon?

**Mrs Selvon:** L'honorable ministre peut-il confirmer combien de marchands ambulants seront relogés dans les gares du métro ?

**Mr Bodha:** Il faut parler des gares. A Victoria, il y a 1000 et à Immigration, il y a 600.

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Uteem!

**Mr Uteem:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. With regard to the Urban Terminal in Port Louis, the hon. Minister just mentioned that he is awaiting clearance from UNESCO. Does he have an idea as to when the project will start and how long it will last?

**Mr Bodha:** Well, as regards the final design, everything is ready. The works can be started any time. We need the clearance of UNESCO. There was a presentation on Friday last in Paris and we are waiting for the outcome because we have explained to them that we have a Master Plan with a number of projects around and we are looking forward. There was an officer of Housing and Lands who went there, Mrs Santa, to present the project. So, we are waiting for the recommendations. I have no idea about how long, but we hope that it is going to take a few months.

**Madam Speaker:** I will allow the hon. Member one last question but, please, be brief.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Can the hon. Minister inform the House what is the latest position concerning the 7 star leisure park to replace the...

*(Interruptions)*

I have not yet finished!

**Mr Bodha:** Well, for the recreation park in Ebène, the final design was presented to Cabinet 15 days back and tenders have been launched.

*(Interruptions)*

Tenders have already been launched for the works. The budget is Rs100 m.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question, hon. Jahangeer!

#### **CEB - GIS SUBSTATIONS - TENDER**

**(No. B/163) Mr B. Jahangeer (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether,

in regard to the proposed construction of six GIS Substations, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Electricity Board, information as to where matters stand as to the launching of the tender therefor.

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Central Electricity Board that it launched a prequalification exercise for the supply, installation, testing and commissioning of six 66 kV GIS Substations on 05 December 2017.

Twenty-two proposals were received at the level of the Central Procurement Board; the Board approved a list of six pre-qualified bidders i.e. –

- (i) Elecnor S.A of Spain;
- (ii) Consolidated Power Projects (Pty) Ltd of South Africa;
- (iii) JV Siemens SAS and Transinvest Construction Ltd;
- (iv) Grid Solutions SAS – France;
- (v) National Contracting Co. Ltd – Saudi Arabia, and
- (vi) ABB India Ltd.

I am informed by the Central Electricity Board that on 07 August 2018, it invited bids from the six applicants which had been approved by the CPB.

On 17 January 2019, the Central Procurement Board informed the Central Electricity Board that four bids had been received and none of them had been found to be responsive.

On 22 January 2019, the Central Electricity Board informed all bidders that none of the bids met the bid requirements and that the bidding exercise was cancelled.

I am informed that one aggrieved bidder, namely JV Siemens SAS and Transinvest Construction Ltd has applied to the Supreme Court for an Interim Order in the nature of an injunction restraining and prohibiting the CEB and the CPB from re-launching a new tender for the project, pending the determination of the application of the main case. The case has been fixed for 22 April 2019.

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Jahangeer!

**Mr Jahangeer:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. May I know from the DPM what is the budget earmarked for such project and if it will be financed by CEB?

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** I am trying to look for the information if I have it. I am not too sure that I have it because it does not really arise out of the question, Madam Speaker. If I have been asked that question, I would have had it. Perhaps I am going to get the information now. I understand it is Rs3 billion.

**Madam Speaker:** The hon. Member has a supplementary question?

**Mr Jahangeer:** Yes. Given the fact that the Metro Express, the link Rose Hill to Port Louis was supposed to be powered around 9 to 10 MW from one of the substation, namely Ebène, now that it is delayed, can the Deputy Prime Minister inform us what impact it will have on the Metro Express?

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** I am very doubtful about that figure of 9 to 10 MW for the Metro from Rose Hill to Port Louis. It appears to me to be rather strange but I am not a technician. I am sure that CEB will have to find alternative solutions should there, as the hon. Member suggests, in fact, be an impact on the operations of the Metro which we know will be powered by electricity. Apparently, yes, of course, the figure of 9 to 10 MW is for all the routes of the Metro, the whole Metro. One station is about 1 MW only. So I am sure that CEB's engineer will work it out.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question, hon. Jahangeer!

#### GRADE 8 STUDENTS - TEXTBOOKS

(No. B/164) **Mr B. Jahangeer (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac)** asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research whether, in regard to the supply of books to Grade 8 students for the year 2019, she will state the name of the supplier thereof.

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** Madam Speaker, in line with the New Curriculum Framework for the lower secondary elaborated in 2017, new textbooks have been developed by the Mauritius Institute of Education and the Mahatma Gandhi Institute covering all the core and non-core subjects.

The responsibility for the printing and publishing of the Grade 8 textbooks for 2019 has been entrusted to the *Editions de L'Océan Indien Ltée*.

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Jahangeer!

**Mr Jahangeer:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. An average family in Mauritius with two children or three children to school spends an average of Rs7,000 to Rs10,000 per year

because for the same subject, you have revised edition every year. So, may I know from the hon. Minister what is this revised edition? Is it a new formula in geometry, a new angle in geometry, a new nuclear physics particle or is it simply a sentence that they add in the book so that people has to buy the book every year?

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** Madam Speaker, when we talk about the National Curriculum framework, we are talking about the new curriculum with respect to the reform in the education system. So, the books that have been prepared this year in 2018/2019 are books that are new and based on the new curriculum. So, these are not new editions, but totally a new set of books that have been prepared by the MIE and the MGI.

**Madam Speaker:** Yes, hon. Jahangeer!

**Mr Jahangeer:** Will it be possible for the hon. Minister to ensure that books bought for certain subjects for this year can be used by the younger brothers and sisters of the same family for a minimum of five years?

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** I totally agree with the hon. Member. In fact, the new books that have been prepared would be used over a number of years now.

**Madam Speaker:** The Table has been advised that PQ B/149, which was addressed to the hon. Prime Minister but transferred to the hon. Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport, has been withdrawn.

Next question, hon. Jahangeer!

#### **CAMP DIABLE - SOCIAL HOUSING UNITS**

**(No. B/165) Mr B. Jahangeer (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac)** asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the proposed construction of social housing units at Camp Diable, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Housing Development Company Ltd., information as to where matters stand.

**Mr Jhugroo:** Madam Speaker, I am informed by the NHDC Ltd that as at date, 76 housing units have been constructed and allocated at Camp Diable. Moreover, six *arpents* of land have been earmarked at Camp Diable for implementation of future housing projects.

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Uteem!

**Mr Uteem:** Can I know from the hon. Minister, when he talks about allocation of these 76 houses, is the criteria of allocation, the place of residence of the applicant?

**Mr Jhugroo:** Madam Speaker, with regard to procedures and criteria for allocation of NHDC housing units, I have already tabled in the past following several PQs, and I will ask the hon. Member to go and consult. In fact, all these are taken care of.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question, hon. Jahangeer!

### **LA VIGIE – SLAUGHTER HOUSE**

**(No. B/166) Mr B. Jahangeer (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac)** asked the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to the proposed construction of a slaughterhouse at La Vigie, he will state where matters stand.

**Mr Seeruttun:** Madam Speaker, I am informed that an Expression of Interest and two bidding exercises have been carried out in respect of the construction of a new slaughterhouse at Wooton.

The first bid exercise was launched on 28 March 2016 and eight bids were received.

Following evaluation of the bids, the award of the contract was recommended to the successful bidder. However, following a challenge at the Independent Review Panel, the latter decided that a second evaluation be carried out.

The Second Bid Evaluation Committee recommended that the contract be awarded to the same bidder who was successful following the first bid evaluation. However, the State Law Office advised that it would not be in order for the Ministry to proceed with the award of the tender as the bid validity period had lapsed.

To avoid undue delay in the project implementation, the Ministry decided to go for a Design and Build Turnkey Project and for a tender to be launched through the Open Advertised Bidding Method.

The bidding documents have been vetted by the Central Procurement Board (CPB) and the tender was launched on 23 April 2018. The closing date was fixed on 17 July 2018.

The CPB has, on 13 September 2018, informed that after evaluation of the technical proposals, no bidder was qualified for financial evaluation, as they were technically non-responsive. Consequently, the evaluation exercise could not proceed further. The CPB,

therefore, requested the Ministry to inform the bidders. All bidders were informed accordingly.

The Ministry has now launched a consultancy services for the provision of management, design and supervision of a new slaughterhouse for cattle, pigs and ovine on 25 February 2019. The closing date was 03 April 2019. However, given that potential bidders requested for more information, the date for submission of the bid had been postponed to 17 April 2019.

The project value is estimated to be Rs250 m. and for this Financial Year 2018/2019, an amount of Rs75 m. has been earmarked.

**Madam Speaker:** Hon Ameer Meea!

**Mr Ameer Meea:** Madam Speaker, in relation to this project, I have several apprehensions on the viability on such product in such a region. Would the hon. Minister agree with me that all the stakeholders are found mostly in the capital and in the north of the region? Firstly, the harbour itself is found in Port Louis and we have seen with the Foot and Mouth disease what happened when cattle came in and it was contained in the harbour area itself. Now, we are talking about building a slaughterhouse inland for Mauritius and all the major markets are in Port Louis or in the North. So, I would ask the hon. Minister if he agrees with me, and if this will be taken into consideration as well?

**Mr Seeruttun:** Madam Speaker, as you are aware, land availability is not something which is very easily available for the Ministry and the Wooton area has been designated to be the place to set up this slaughterhouse. Had

we had any space available in the harbour region, that would have been probably the most suitable place but, unfortunately, the best place that we could found was at Wooton and this is why this has been the chosen.

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Ameer Meea, next question!

### **AGALEGA - PROJECTS**

**(No. B/167) Mr A. Ameer Meea (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East)** asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands, Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare whether, in regard to the Agalega Island, she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Outer

Islands Development Council Ltd., information as to where matters stand as to the ongoing projects being implemented thereat.

**The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands, Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare (Mrs F. Jeewa-Daureeawoo):** Madam Speaker, there are different types of projects that are being implemented in Agalega. The main one concerns the construction of an air strip of 3 kms in length and 45 metres in width, an approach jetty of 199 metres long and a berthing jetty of 255 metres and support infrastructure.

According to information obtained, the mobilisation of manpower, equipment and materials by the contractor Afcons Infrastructure Ltd started in September 2018 and is still ongoing. Works are expected to start by May 2019 and will be completed in two years' time. The works are being carried out, as I have said, by Afcons Infrastructure Ltd and are supervised by RITES Ltd, the Global Consultant. In addition, there are a few other projects of lesser scope, *inter alia*, a fish landing station, a dispensary and an office block.

On account of the remoteness of Agalega, the constraints of the procurement procedures and the likelihood of an exorbitant bid price should an open advertise bidding exercise be opted for and should that exercise be successful, consideration is being given to the advisability of entrusting these projects to Afcons Infrastructure Ltd.

Finally, there is also the project for the construction of 50 housing units by the National Housing Development Company Ltd. I have been informed that the NHDC is in the process of enlisting the services of a consultant who will then work on the project description, detailed design and supervision of works. The contract is expected to be finalised before the end of July 2019.

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Ameer Meea!

**Mr Ameer Meea:** Yes, Madam Speaker. In relation to those ongoing projects and answering to a PQ dated 23 October 2018, a PQ asked by myself, the hon. Vice-Prime Minister informed the House, and I quote –

“As far as I know, this project will be exempted from the requirements of an EIA licence. As per hon. Minister Etienne Sinatambou, they will have to submit an EIA Report.”

Therefore, can I ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, if this EIA report that was supposed to be submitted since October last year, that is, almost six months now, has been submitted and if, yes, if she can table a copy of this report?

**Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo:** Well, I understand that an environment management plan has been prepared by RITES to take care of the mitigation measures. So, if need be, I will table it in the House.

**Mr Ameer Meea:** Madam Speaker, there is an urgent need because my next question is in relation to the sewage system in Agalega. There is no sewage system, it goes in septic tank and this is thrown away in the forest, far away from the village and there is a risk of contamination of boreholes and the more so that now there are 400 additional Indian workers on the island, the risk is increasing. I have been in contact - as the rare representative of Constituency No. 3, Agalega forms part of it - with them since this morning. They told me there is a great risk on this issue. Therefore, can I relay this to the hon. Vice-Prime Minister to look into this urgent matter?

**Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo:** Madam Speaker, I fully agree with the hon. Member. This is being looked at. I must say that this project is of great magnitude and it requires a lot of preparation. As I have said, the project is being carried out on an island about 1,000 kms away from Mauritius. So, there are some preparation works. As you can see, ground works have already started and this is an indication that we are taking the projects very seriously.

With regard to the status of the sewage project, I am informed by the Outer Islands Development Corporation that the Wastewater Management Authority has initially prepared a draft term of reference for the consultancy services for household waste disposal. So, this is being looked at. However, in view of the ongoing projects and future developments, the sewage collection and disposal aspects had to be looked at in a holistic manner.

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Bhagwan!

**Mr Bhagwan:** Madam Speaker, can we know from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister what is being done by the contractor, even through Government, to bring on board the inhabitants of Agalega with regard to PR exercise informing them of what is happening, even with distribution of pamphlets and so on, and even works - if possible to have work with the contractor? What is being done in that line?

**Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo:** Well, there is a – not only by the contractor, I do know that the Resident Manager is having regular talks with the inhabitants to inform them of the whole project, of what is happening.

With regard to the workers, there are presently 350 Indian workers on the site and 80 more workers will be travelling to Agalega during the next trip of Trochetia. Employees of Outer Islands Development Corporation (OIDC) are fully involved in the embarkation and disembarkation exercise in respect of the said project. When the project of construction will start, we will make sure that Agaleans are fully involved in the project.

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Abbas Mamode!

**Mr Abbas Mamode:** Can the hon. Minister inform the House, concerning the ongoing project, whether Agaleans are being moved away from the place they are residing right now or whether they will have to move away when the major work will start?

**Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo:** No, Madam Speaker, they will stay where they are. The project is not near to the houses of the inhabitants. They will not be moved from their residence.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question, hon. Ameer Meea!

**Mr Ameer Meea:** A last question on Agalega.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question! We have spent eight minutes on this question.

#### **CEB – AUDITED ACCOUNTS 2016-2018**

**(No. B/168) Mr A. Ameer Meea (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the Central Electricity Board, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the reasons why the Audited Accounts thereof for the years 2016, 2017 and 2018 have not been laid on the Table of the Assembly.

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Central Electricity Board (CEB) that following amendments to the Statutory Bodies (Accounts and Audit) Act, providing for a change in the financial year to end of 30 June instead of 31 December, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development instructed statutory bodies to prepare accounts for 18 months with effect from 01 January 2016.

I am informed by CEB that they prepared financial statements for the period January 2016 to June 2017 and submitted them to the National Audit Office (NAO) on 12 October 2017. This was followed by an exchange of correspondence between CEB and the NAO in respect of clarifications required by the NAO. The Director of Audit submitted its report on 25 October 2018.

I am informed by the CEB that the accounts together with the annual report are being printed and will be tabled next month.

As regards the Accounts for 2017/2018, CEB has submitted them to the National Audit Office on 22 October 2018.

The auditing exercise started on 21 February 2019. The accounts will be tabled together with the Annual Report as soon as the audit report is issued.

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Ameer Meea!

**Mr Ameer Meea:** Madam Speaker, this is another good reason why we should have a Freedom of Information Bill. The last audited financial year was 30 June 2017, so, it's nearly two years since the year-end of CEB. As the hon. Minister mentioned, the Audit Bureau has given its Audit Report, Audit Certificate since October 2018. We are taking seven months to print an account which has already been signed and make it public. So, will the hon. Deputy Prime Minister see to it that this is done urgently, because it's not normal for a public company to take two years to lay its accounts on the Table of the National Assembly, which is such an important organisation.

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** Well, of course, we must always ensure that stricter time limits are respected. I have myself spoken to the Chief Financial Officer to impart my sense of dissatisfaction with that delay, but he has explained to me certain things.

First of all, I believe the hon. Member himself is an Accountant. Once the accounts are ready, then you need to prepare the annual report and that takes time, because you need to consult so many persons involved in the process and finally go to different committees and the Board, and this is why it has taken all this time. Now, those are the explanations we have received from the Chief Financial Officer; I have no reason to disbelieve him. He has assured me, even up to a few minutes ago, that he is exercising due diligence to expedite matters.

Now, we come to other matters. You talked of a year and half, two years. When the new Board took over in 2015, the accounts of 2012 had not been done. Well, they had to

work on 2012 first. The accounts of 2013 had not been finalised and so the accounts of 2014. So, when the Board took over in 2015, they had to impress on the Finance Department and on Management - the old Management, I am not talking of this Management. They had to tell them, get ready with your accounts. Do you know that 2012 was finally prepared and completed on 01 September 2015? So now, they are speeding up and now they are going to complete all the operations and they have finished for 2012 and 2015. The hon. Member will appreciate that for a large body such as this one, we need to be very careful.

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Ameer Meea!

**Mr Ameer Meea:** Madam Speaker, clearly there is a big problem in the CEB. Be it last Government, be it this Government, nothing has changed. It is taking more than two years to lay Audited Accounts. I would like to differ with what the hon. Deputy Prime Minister just mentioned, that they had to get the Audit Report, Audit Certificate to start preparing the annual report. Where on earth that you need Audit Report, Audit Certificate to prepare Annual Report? Annual Report can be prepared just after year-end, because it is you who give the figures to the Auditors.

**Madam Speaker:** So, what is your question?

**Mr Ameer Meea:** So, my question to the hon. Deputy Prime Minister is that it is high time to look after CEB's Accounting Department and that things should be changed.

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** Well, I said I believe the hon. Member to be an Accountant. I still maintain that belief, but I am just a Lawyer, I have always known that you cannot publish an annual report based on figures which have not been audited. I mean, this is a large organisation; these are not small companies with small Accountants. We have got to be serious.

Now, with regard to delay, yes, I have told the hon. Member, I have expressed my dissatisfaction. I entirely agree on this, but I have given the circumstances and the explanations of the Chief Financial Officer and I have no reason to doubt the veracity of his explanations. They have had three years to catch up and that is why the delays are ongoing.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question, hon. Ameer Meea!

#### **METRO EXPRESS PROJECT - IMPLEMENTATION**

**(No. B/169) Mr A. Ameer Meea (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East)** asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport, Minister of

Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade whether, in regard to the Metro Express Project, he will state where matters stand as to the implementation thereof, indicating the –

- (a) percentage of works completed;
- (b) expenditure incurred, and
- (c) number of jobs created.

**Mr Bodha:** Madam Speaker, the construction of the Metro Express project started in September 2017. Since then, the project has progressed steadily as planned and we are on track and on time. Many activities are ongoing and have been progressing satisfactorily such as the site investigations and the surveys, utilities identifications and diversions, design and construction of the sub-structures and the super structures, namely the piles, the piers and the girdles. Of course, we have also addressed the issue of heavy duty drainage.

The Design and Build Contractor, Larsen & Toubro, is working simultaneously on more than 32 sites for Phase I, from Rose Hill to Port Louis on this national project. We will agree that this is a very complex infrastructure project. I think the biggest ever undertaken in Mauritius. It comprises several layers of activities, such as the infrastructure delivery, operation readiness, capacity building and assurance; all progressing rapidly to ensure operations in September 2019 for Phase I.

Madam Speaker, I am informed that the train simulator will arrive in May this year for the training of the train Captains who are currently being recruited by the Metro Express Limited. The nerve centre of the whole network, the Operations Control Centre at Richelieu will be ready before integrated testing of the light rail vehicles with the tracks, signals and other systems. The trains will start arriving in July for our launch of the service in September.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that as at the end of March 2019, for Phase I, from Rose Hill to Port Louis, which comprises of 12.6KM and seven stations, 70% of the works have already been completed. And for the overall project, from Curepipe to Port Louis, which is of 26KM and 19 stations, the work progress is 42%.

Moreover, I am informed that utilities identification works for Phase II, from Curepipe to Rose Hill are underway. I announced last week, in a Press conference, Madam Speaker, that aligned with the vision of our Prime Minister, the Metro Express Project will

cover the stretch from Rose Hill to Quatre Bornes Station in advance by 2020 to enable commuters from Quatre Bornes to be connected to the network. This will be a new landmark in our station.

Madam Speaker, as regards part (b) of the question, the Metro Express project is being financed through a grant of USD 275m. and a line of credit of USD 260m. from the Government of India. I am informed that as at February 2019, the equivalent of Rs6,649,000,771 have been paid to the Design and Build Contractor Larsen & Toubro in relation to works carried out. Payment for March is being processed as per contractual obligations and all payments to the contractor are made after due validation and certification of the works by RITES, the supervising consultant and overseen by the Singapore Cooperation Enterprise.

Madam Speaker, as regards to part (c) of the question, the construction of the light rail transit system in Mauritius, as I said, is a very complex endeavour requiring a wide range of specialist expertise. Larsen & Toubro is a renowned contractor that has successfully designed and delivered modern railway systems across the world and RITES is the supervising contractor to ensure that delivery is done as regards to project objectives. Singapore Cooperation Enterprise has prepared the reference design of the system and is advising on the technical aspects of the project management.

Metro Express Limited is leading the overall implementation of the project and will operate the LRT system with expert support of the Singapore Mass Rapid Transit system to achieve readiness for the operations.

Madam Speaker, I am informed that as at 11 April 2019, direct jobs generated by Larsen & Toubro is as follows –

- overall workforce - 1,698
- Mauritians working on the different sites - 246

Moreover, 32 staffs are currently employed by MEL to oversee the project delivery and prepare for the operations. To be ready for operation and maintenance in 2019, Metro Express is in the process of recruiting up to 200 persons. These include Chief Operating and Service, maintenance, managers, trainers, executives, engineers, technicians, supervisors, trained captains, customer service stewards, safety managers, ticket inspectors and controllers and various vacancies are currently being filled and have been advertised in the papers.

Madam Speaker, as in other countries, this project is the engine of economic growth and the catalyst for urban regeneration of the five cities. And it is expected that a number of indirect jobs, through business opportunities, to be generated, especially around the stations, will be created as a result of the implementation of the project.

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Ameer Meea!

**Mr Ameer Meea:** Madam Speaker, we have taken cognizance of the existence of a natural cave in the region of Chebel and Gros Cailloux underneath the region there. And to this effect, I would ask the hon. Minister: why is it that the EIA, the Environment Impact Assessment, is being kept secret? What is it in it that we are hiding? What is in the EIA? Why is it not made public?

**Mr Bodha:** I have many times answered this question, Madam Speaker. In fact, some hon. Members on the other side of the House have a copy of the EIA.

*(Interruptions)*

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Bhagwan!

**Mr Bodha:** We have said, Madam Speaker, as regards to the environment that the RFTs were prepared by Singapore Cooperation Enterprise. Then, we had Larsen & Toubro and Afcons both prepared the Environment Management Plan when they did the bid, and this was again supervised by the Singapore Cooperation Enterprise. But we decided in Cabinet to do an EIA report, which we did. The elements of the EIA Report have been compared with the Management Plan, have been incorporated in it.

As regards to the laying on the document on the Table of the National Assembly, I have laid the Environment Management Plan here, but the Board of the Metro Express Limited, they, under legal advice, they thought, in their wisdom, that this document should not be laid on the Table of the National Assembly.

**Madam Speaker:** Yes, hon. Ameer Meea!

**Mr Ameer Meea:** Yes, Madam Speaker. Answering a PQ by myself on 16 October 2018 and in relation to part (c) – number of jobs created, the hon. Minister stated to the House that SCE, in order to assess the impacts of Metro Express on the bus system, has been preparing a report. I will quote exactly –

“The report is being finalised and, in fact, will go to Cabinet and that report, that document will help us to have all the discussions with the national bus companies.”

So, therefore, can I ask the hon. Minister if this important document has been finalised? Because it has been eight months now and can he again lay a copy on the Table of the National Assembly.

**Mr Bodha:** We have the document by SCE to assess the impact of the Metro on the bus industry. So, we are working with the Ministry of Finance to see all the measures to bring along so that there is the perfect integration of both systems, of the most modes of transport and we have always given the guarantee that as regards to the workers, we see to it that there are no job losses with the advent of the Metro and we are working with the SCE document. Now, this document together goes another document which we have been working on about the feeder routes, about the new routes, that we are going to create to have one integrated system.

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Ramano!

**Mr Ramano:** Madame la présidente, dans sa réponse, l'honorable ministre a indiqué que les travaux en ce qui concerne les *utilities* pour la Phase II *are underway*. Est-ce que je peux savoir de l'honorable ministre quand le début des travaux est programmé sur la route St Jean dans la ville de Quatre Bornes ? Est-ce qu'on envisage de déplacer les tuyaux de *sewerage* qui ont été placés il y a quelques années de cela ?

**Mr Bodha:** I have always said, Madam Speaker, that the Metro goes with the reengineering and inserting a new system of the utilities. Because often the utilities they are 30, 40, 50 years old. So, we have to do the mapping, the shifting and the reinstatement.

As regards the specific question, that is, between St Jean and Quatre Bornes, we are now doing the mapping, but the priority for the works now up to end of 2020 in regard to Quatre Bornes is the extension of the line from Rose-Hill to Quatre Bornes, that is, along the Victoria Avenue.

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Bhagwan!

**Mr Bhagwan:** Madame la présidente, est-ce que je peux demander au ministre s'il y a une incompréhension totale des habitants de Beau Bassin au sujet du rondpoint de Beau Bassin ? Pour tout le monde qui y habite, ceux qui y vont et certains très rarement, tous les cinq ans. Alors, est-ce que le ministre peut, à travers cette question, informer la population de Beau Bassin, ceux qui utilisent, parce que déjà c'est un *hot spot*. J'habite à Rose Hill et je suis content mais pourquoi à Rose Hill sur le rond-point on a fait un *high rise thing* et à Beau Bassin un *hot spot* comme c'est aujourd'hui, rien n'est prévu ? Comment expliquer à la

population ? Même les chauffeurs de taxi, ceux qui vont à l'église, au collège BPS et Philippe Rivalland, est-ce qu'il n'y a pas une nécessité de revoir techniquement la possibilité de construire un truc pour que le train passe ?

**Mr Bodha:** That intersection, Madam Speaker, is going to be signalised. We are working on it, we are remodelling it. In fact, we are at the stage where we are now thinking of the sequencing between the trains so that we can have the time difference between each train when it crosses that particular spot. This is, I think, a very important issue. The Korea Expressway Corporation is working on it, the SCE is working on it and Metro Express is working on it. As soon as we have - which is going to be very soon - all the information as regards the diversion during the works and the final diversion, then we will have a huge campaign to tell everybody how this is going to be done.

As regards the question of my colleague, hon. Ramano, in fact, what is going to be happening in Quatre Bornes is that we are not touching the utility system as it is now, we are just replacing it. The old one will be disconnected and you will have a totally new system.

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Uteem, next question!

#### **AFFERMAGE MANAGEMENT CONTRACT – IFC REPORT**

**(No. B/170) Mr R. Uteem (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the proposed Affermage Management Contract for the Operation and Maintenance of the Potable Water Supply and Distribution System, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to where matters stand.

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** Madam Speaker, in my reply to the PNQs of 17 April 2018 and 23 June 2018, I informed the House that the International Financial Corporation had submitted its report on 23 March 2018.

In my reply to PQ B/684 on 24 July 2018, I informed the House that the report had been referred to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development for consideration of its financial implications.

Though there has been a convergence of opinions for over two decades on the necessity to review and modernise the management of the water supply and distribution system, recently there have been numerous views, some very constructive, from stakeholders.

I have had discussions with the hon. Prime Minister and we have agreed to suspend the exercise, to allow for more time to consider all the observations made and if necessary, to organise wider consultations.

**Mr Uteem:** I am glad to hear that the decision has been suspended. May I know from the hon. Deputy Prime Minister whether he is prepared to table a copy of the report of the IFC which he has stated, since 2018, is being considered by his Ministry?

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** Is it the transaction report? I am not too sure to which report the hon. Member is referring?

**Mr Uteem:** In your PQ.

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** Well, let me just say, I will consider his question as drafted and I shall let the House know in due course.

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Ganoo!

**Mr Ganoo:** Can the hon. Deputy Prime Minister inform the House what has been the level of Government contribution so far in this project?

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** I believe that is the question which has been asked by the hon. gentleman in his PQ which is coming later on. We shall be able to discuss all the financial implications if the hon. Member allow me so that I do not mix up issues.

*(Interruptions)*

But I will give all the information; I can guarantee the hon. Member.

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Dr. Boolell!

**Dr. Boolell:** Will the hon. Deputy Prime Minister state if all discussions with IFC have come to an end in the light of decision taken by the hon. Prime Minister to set aside the project of affermage?

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** The term set aside is erroneous, the term is suspected. That is the contractual term between IFC, so, better stay with this term. We are still discussing some matters. I will have to make a report to Cabinet after consultation with the Prime Minister.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question, hon. Uteem!

## ROAD ACCIDENTS - TOURISTS - CONVICTIONS

(No. B/171) **Mr R. Uteem (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central)** asked the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor, Minister of Defence, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to road accidents in which vehicles driven by tourists are involved, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, for each of the years 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 and since January 2019 to date, information as to the number thereof, indicating the number of –

- (a) fatal accidents;
- (b) arrests effected;
- (c) prosecutions lodged, and
- (d) convictions secured in relation thereto.

**The Prime Minister:** Madam Speaker, I am replying to this question. As regards part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that since January 2015 to date, there have been ninety-six cases of road accidents involving vehicles driven by tourists, out of which ten cases of fatal road accidents have been reported. These are as follows –

- (i) year 2015: 2 cases;
- (ii) 2016: 2 cases;
- (iii) 2017: 3 cases;
- (iv) 2018: Nil, and
- (v) 2019: 3 cases.

Regarding part (b) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that ten persons were arrested as follows –

- (i) 2015: 2 persons;
- (ii) 2016: 2 persons;
- (iii) 2017: 3 persons;
- (iv) 2018: Nil, and
- (v) 2019: 3 persons.

Madam Speaker, in regard to part (c) of the question, I am informed that from the 96 cases, 13 prosecutions have been lodged, including 3 in relation to the fatal road accidents.

With regard to part (d) of the question, I am again informed that convictions have been secured in respect of 10 cases including two cases of fatal road accidents.

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Uteem!

**Mr Uteem:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Is the hon. Prime Minister aware that in January this year, a Russian tourist, following a road accident a case of involuntary homicide was lodged against that Russian because there was a fatal accident and a boy of 9-year old was involved. So, is the hon. Prime Minister aware that despite the gravity of the situation, of this accident, one month later, the charges were dropped and this Russian gentleman was only fined Rs3,000 because the charges that was brought against him was driving without due care and attention.

So, I would ask the hon. Prime Minister if he is not aware of this, if he can take up the matter with the Commissioner of Police and find out why in this case after one month the Police decided to drop the charge of involuntary homicide and replace it by driving without due care and attention?

**The Prime Minister:** Well, I am aware of this case, Madam Speaker. I, in fact, tried to gather some information from the Commissioner of Police and I will just state the facts. First of all, there have been thorough investigations with regard to this fatal road accident and the conclusion of the Police was - what was recommended is that Mr D. was to be prosecuted for involuntary homicide by imprudence contrary to such section of the law. But when the matter was referred to the DPP, the DPP was of the view that this case should be lodged before the District Court, prosecuting the accused for driving without due care and attention rather than involuntary homicide as has been previously advised and recommended by the Police.

**Madam Speaker:** Yes, hon. Uteem!

**Mr Uteem:** Is the hon. Prime Minister whether when a tourist driver drives in Mauritius, this tourist is required to have an international licence or to show capability of being able to drive on the left side of the road or can he just drive along the road?

**The Prime Minister:** I am informed that as the law stands today and as the regulations are in application, if a person has a valid driving licence in the country or in the place of residence where he comes from, that is valid here. There is just a formality where he gets, I suppose, a document, but that is valid.

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Osman Mahomed!

**Mr Osman Mahomed:** Thank you. In regard to the particular case raised by hon. Uteem, that young boy, that particular accident, the tourist arrived on the evening before and on the next day he was already on the road, although he was a first timer in Mauritius. Since the hon. Prime Minister mentioned about the law, can we not consider putting a time frame for the tourist to get acquainted with our road system before engaging on the road?

**The Prime Minister:** I would want to know how we can get the person to be acquainted; to be acquainted, you need to drive, Madam Speaker. So, either you will be allowed to drive on public roads or otherwise maybe that person would have to undergo a test...

*(Interruptions)*

No, but how do you get acquainted? I want to know from the hon. Member how we do get acquainted. It must only be by driving.

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Baloomoody!

**Mr Baloomoody:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. The hon. Prime Minister just mentioned that there have been 10 fatal accidents for the period mentioned. May I know, out of these 10 fatal accidents, how many tourists have been convicted for involuntary homicide by imprudence?

**The Prime Minister:** I have said that there have been 13 prosecutions that have been lodged. I am informed that convictions have been secured in respect of 10, including two cases of fatal road accidents. Probably, I need to have a look at the list. There was sentencing of one tourist in 2017 and one tourist in 2019. So, two.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question, hon. Uteem!

### **ZEP SCHOOLS - MEALS**

**(No. B/172) Mr R. Uteem (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central)** asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research whether, in regard to the distribution of meals in the *Zone Education Prioritaire* Schools, she will state, since June 2017 to date, the –

(a) costs thereof;

- (b) name of the contractors therefor, indicating the schools concerned and procurement method used for the selection thereof, and
- (c) composition of the meals distributed.

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** Madam Speaker, I wish to inform the House that all the 5,876 pupils attending the ZEP schools are being provided with a meal in the context of the supplementary school feeding programme. This meal has been constantly improved over the years, after consultation with the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life.

With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that an amount of Rs83,220,137 has been disbursed since June 2017 to date for the supply of meals in the ZEP Schools.

Madam Speaker, as regards part (b) of the question, the procurement exercise for the provision of meals is done at the zone level, through competitive bidding on the basis of specifications which have been cleared with the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life specifically regarding nutritional and sanitary requirements. Tenders in respect of the ZEP schools are thus allocated at the level of the Educational Zones. I am tabling a list of the contractors who have been supplying meals in the 27 ZEP schools during their academic years 2017, 2018 and 2019.

Madam Speaker, as for part (c) of the question, following consultations with the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life, my Ministry has, since April 2017, been providing enhanced meal comprising bread with vegetarian filling, a fruit and water at a cost of Rs60 per pupil per day. The menu has been worked out taking into account the nutritional value of the meal, the need to avoid the use of deep frying and frequent use of processed food, the health and security aspects among others.

**Madam Speaker:** Yes, hon. Uteem!

**Mr Uteem:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Answering to a PQ on 13 June 2017, the hon. Minister mentioned that hot meals programmes will be implemented on a pilot basis in four ZEP schools, one in each zone. May I know from the hon. Minister whether there has been any outcome, any evaluation done on this pilot project, and whether this pilot project is going to be extended to other ZEP schools?

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** Madam Speaker, two of the ZEP schools that I mentioned are ready, and right now, tenders have been launched and the evaluation of bids are being done.

**Madam Speaker:** Yes, hon. Uteem!

**Mr Uteem:** I had the chance of raising this issue at Adjournment Time last year. Is hon. Minister aware that there is a lot of waste every day, every week in ZEP schools, because the children going to ZEP schools are not used to eating the type of food that is on the menu, in particular they are not used to eating soya and there is a waste? So, I had asked this question last year. I am asking the hon. Minister if she could talk to the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life to find out whether there can be non-vegetarian diet or so included in the meal provided to the students of ZEP Schools?

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** Madam Speaker, I must inform the House that we did have complaints in 2017 and certain actions were taken and some of the caterers' contracts have been terminated, but as for 2018 and 2019, we haven't received any complaints as yet. However, talking about the meals, the menus that are provided, we have resorted to the vegetarian menu because of cases of poisoning that resulted earlier, but we are still trying to upgrade and enhance the meals provided, and we will be discussing with the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life to see which menus we can add.

**Mr Uteem:** I am very surprised to hear from the hon. Minister that no complaint has been received because I can tell you there are two ZEP in my Constituency and both are complaining about the quality of food. So, I will tell them to write to you directly. So, may I know from the hon. Minister whether there is any unit in her Ministry that carries out inspection to find out whether the quality of food that is provided meets the required standards?

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** We have at the level of the Ministry a Project Manager for the ZEP schools and they do carry out visits regularly to ensure that the meals provided are adequate.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question, hon. Quirin!

#### **EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT SCHEME - AMOUNT SPENT**

**(No. B/173) Mr F. Quirin (Fourth Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment whether, in regard to

the Educational Support Scheme, he will give a breakdown of the total amount spent as at to date from funds earmarked therefor for financial year 2018-2019, indicating the –

- (a) eligibility criteria therefor, and
- (b) number of beneficiaries thereof, region-wise.

**Mr Wong Yen Cheong:** Madam Speaker, for the Financial Year 2018/2019, an amount of Rs129,677,648 has been spent on Educational Support Scheme. As at date, it is expected that by June 2019, another amount of Rs32.2 m. will be spent which will make a total of Rs161.9 m. The breakdown of the total amount spent as at 12 April 2019 is as follows

–

- child allowance Rs85,801,960
- school premium Rs50,000
- free examination fees Rs118,488
- school materials Rs40 m.
- Crèche Scheme Rs757,200
- support to community-based education Rs3 m.

Madam Speaker, as regards part (a) and (b) of the question, with your permission, I am tabling the information as there are seven pages of explanation in it. Thank you.

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Quirin!

**Mr Quirin:** Merci, Madame la présidente. L'honorable ministre peut-t-il nous indiquer, par rapport à l'année financière 2017/2018, s'il y a eu une augmentation du nombre de bénéficiaires, quand on compare 2017/2018, 2018/2019, si le nombre a augmenté ?

**Mr Wong Yen Cheong:** Madam Speaker, I do not have the exact figures with me, but I can say, concerning the beneficiaries of SRM, it is very dynamic, as the people are coming in and out all the time. Thank you.

**Mr Quirin:** Madame la présidente, l'honorable ministre peut-il nous dire si son ministère a l'intention de venir en aide aux étudiants qui ont perdu, récemment dans les inondations, tous leurs effets scolaires, tous leurs matériels scolaires et indépendamment, bien sûr, s'ils sont sur le registre social ou pas?

**Mr Wong Yen Cheong:** *Madam Speaker*, nous nous penchons sur la question et j'en ai déjà parlé après les inondations. Certains sont venus, *SRM* ou pas *SRM*. Les *SRM* auront aucun souci, ils auront le matériel scolaire qui est remboursé ; ceux qui ne sont pas *SRM*, ils sont en train de faire la demande et nous étudions la question.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question, hon. Quirin!

#### **MUNICIPAL COUNCIL OF CUREPIPE – TOWN HALL – RENOVATION**

**(No. B/174) Mr F. Quirin (Fourth Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands, Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare whether, in regard to the renovation of the Town Hall of the Municipal Council of Curepipe, she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Curepipe, information as to where matters stand.

**The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands, Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare (Mrs F. Jeewa-Daureeawoo):** Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Municipal Council of Curepipe that for the project, renovation of the Town Hall of Curepipe the contract has been awarded to RBRB Construction Ltd on 28 February 2019 for an amount of Rs140,889,388.80.

Works have started on 19 March 2019 and are expected to be completed by the end of 2020.

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Quirin, any supplementary?

**Mr Quirin:** Donc, vu l'état de délabrement de ce bâtiment, Madame la présidente, l'honorable ministre peut-il nous confirmer, avant que ne commence les rénovations, s'il y a eu un audit par un professionnel sur l'état des lieux du bâtiment et si on pense pouvoir quand même sauver une partie de ce bâtiment, et s'il y a eu un rapport qui a été fait par ce professionnel ?

**Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo:** Madam Speaker, I am sure there has been a survey made by the consultant and contractor. As per the scope of works, I have been given to understand that certain parts of the building will be safe.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question, hon. Quirin!

**JEUX DES JEUNES ELITES – ATHLETES**

(No. B/175) **Mr F. Quirin (Fourth Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the *Jeux des Jeunes Elites*, scheduled for 15 to 17 April 2019, he will state –

- (a) the number of athletes selected for the finals, gender-wise and discipline-wise, and
- (b) where the athletes will be accommodated during the competition, indicating the budget allocated therefor.

**Mr Toussaint:** Madam Speaker, the '*Jeux des Jeunes Elites*' is a new concept introduced last year by my Ministry, as an education movement for the young athletes of the Republic of Mauritius. The idea behind the '*Jeux des Jeunes Elites*' is to organise an event to educate and engage our young athletes and deliver an experience on the field of play. This forms part of my Ministry's strategy to inculcate a culture of sport, physical activity and self-reliance among our youth. For this year, the '*Jeux des Jeunes Elites*' is being organised from 15 to 17 April, on a residential basis. The competition will comprise also of youth activities and competitions, besides sports disciplines.

Madam Speaker, in regard part (a) of the question for the '*Jeux des Jeunes Elites*' which would be held from 15 to 17 April 2019, I am informed that 920 athletes have been selected from different regions for the finals following preliminaries organised around the island, including Rodrigues, which involved 3,600 athletes. I am tabling the details thereof gender-wise and discipline-wise of athletes retained for the finals.

As regards part (b) of the question, I wish to inform that a budget of Rs1.5 m. has been allocated for the accommodation of the athletes and accompanying officials. I am tabling the details regarding the different places of accommodation, retained after a tender exercise which had been carried out.

Madam Speaker, the opening of the Games took place yesterday afternoon and I am sure that this event, like the others organised by my Ministry, will be a success. Thank you.

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Quirin!

**Mr Quirin:** Merci, Madame la présidente. L'honorable ministre peut-il nous dire quel est le budget total pour l'organisation de ces jeux ?

**Mr Toussaint:** Malheureusement, je n'ai pas cette information avec moi, parce que dans la question on avait demandé le budget d'*accommodation*, mais je peux *table afterwards*.

**Mr Quirin:** Madame la présidente, les boxeurs réunionnais ont eu des problèmes lors de leur embarcation vers Maurice le 12 avril et ils ont dû rentrer chez eux et revenir le lendemain pour embarquer vers Maurice. Donc, comment se fait-il que des dispositions n'ont pas été prises pour s'assurer que ces jeunes sportifs soient à Maurice à temps et dans les meilleures conditions de façon à pouvoir prendre part à cette compétition ?

**Mr Toussaint:** Madame la présidente, si je comprends bien ce sont les boxeurs rodriguais et non réunionnais.

*(Interruptions)*

J'ai entendu réunionnais. Ce n'est pas grave. Donc, ce sont des boxeurs de Rodrigues.

**Mr Quirin:** C'est Rodrigues, pardon.

**Mr Toussaint:** Okay ! En ce qu'il s'agit de la délégation rodriguaise, c'est la commission au niveau de Rodrigues qui fait tous les arrangements. Je ne suis pas au courant de quel problème il y a pu avoir, mais je vais m'enquérir avec la commissaire des sports.

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Leopold!

**Mr Leopold:** Thank you, Madam. Can I ask the hon. Minister how many Rodriguan athletes are involved in such games?

**Mr Toussaint:** Madame la présidente, pour toutes les disciplines, pour les responsables de délégation, il y a le personnel médical. Nous avons en tout 177 personnes *involved* dans les jeux de Rodrigues et au niveau des athlètes nous avons 142 athlètes de Rodrigues.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question!

**MAISON DE RETRAITE MERE AUGUSTINE - ROSE BELLE - FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

**(No. B/176) Mrs A. Perraud (First Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue)** asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity, and Environment and Sustainable Development whether, in regard to the *Maison de Retraite Mère Augustine* at

Rose Belle, he will state the actions being taken, if any, to assist the institution and residents thereof.

**Mr Sinatambou:** Madam Speaker, among other things, my Ministry provides financial assistance under different schemes to the 27 charitable institutions licensed under the Residential Care Home Act operating in Mauritius, including *Maison de Retraite Mère Augustine* located at Rose Belle.

The assistance relates to monthly capitation grants, monthly inmates allowances for the personal use of the inmates, monthly wages for attendance, monthly grants for the maintenance of buildings, yearly financial assistance for domestic appliances and funeral grants as and when required.

For the financial year ending December 2018, my Ministry has disbursed in favour of *Maison de Retraite Mère Augustine* –

- Rs2,117,117 in terms of capitation grant,
- Rs286,785 for inmates allowance,
- Rs483,791 in respect of wages for attendants,
- Rs32,940 in terms of grant for maintenance of buildings, and
- Rs39,536 in terms of funeral grant.

Madam Speaker, a coordinated approach with regard to the disbursement of funds to NGOs has been introduced by Government in the Budget 2018-2019 whereby the provision of financial assistance to charitable institutions as from January 2019 is being met by the National CSR Foundation, which is now the central body to receive and allocate public funds to charitable institutions and NGOs. Nevertheless, my Ministry continues to exercise general supervision and control over the charitable institutions and monitor compliance as per the Residential Care Home Act of 2013 and the Residential Care Home Regulations of 2005.

I am informed that the National CSR Foundation has effect for the period January to March 2019, the following payments of fund for assistance to *Maison de Retraite Mère Augustine* –

- Rs850,458 in terms of capitation grant,
- Rs2,632 for inmates allowance,
- Rs242,052 in respect of wages for attendants, and
- Rs11,200 in terms of grant for maintenance of buildings.

Over and above the financial assistance given to charitable institutions, the officers of the Welfare and the Elderly Persons' Protection Unit of my Ministry effect regular visits, at least three visits every month to the 27 charitable institutions around the island to ensure that the inmates are being looked after and are well-treated.

Any discrepancy and shortcoming detected are taken up with the responsible officers of the charitable institutions.

Monitoring and follow-up are conducted by the Welfare and Elderly Persons' Protection Unit of my Ministry.

For the financial year ending March 2019, a total of 27 visits have been effected by the Welfare and Elderly Persons Protection Unit of my Ministry to *Maison de Retraite Mère Augustine*.

Furthermore, the Medical Unit of my Ministry effects weekly visits to charitable institutions, including *Maison de Retraite Mère Augustine* in order to ensure the good health of its inmates. For the financial year ending March 2019, I am informed that a total of 144 visits of doctors and nurses have been effected at the *Maison de Retraite Mère Augustine* by the Medical Unit. In addition to the services of physiotherapists and occupational therapists from the Medical Unit are also provided on a weekly basis.

For the financial year ending March 2019, a total of 72 visits have been effected by the physiotherapists and occupational therapists inclusive. Finally, in cases of emergency, additional medical visits are also effected.

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Mrs Perraud!

**Mrs Perraud:** Madame la présidente, est-ce que le ministre pourrait informer la Chambre si lui ou les officiers de son ministère sont au courant qu'il y a une menace de fermeture sur cette maison de retraite, la maison de Retraite Mère Augustine? Que les résidents ont été transférés de Rose Belle au couvent de Belle Rose.

**Mr Sinatambou:** My information is not that there is a risk of closure as such; my information is that the *Maison de Retraite* is envisaging renovation works which cost money and the problem is not closing down by Government or by the Ministry, it is finding the right funds to actually conduct those renovation works.

**Mrs Perraud:** Nous avons une population vieillissante. Est-ce que le ministère pourrait - j'ai écouté toutes les actions que vous avez prises mais est-ce que le ministère

pourrait faire un effort additionnel pour justement que cette maison de retraite, Mère Augustine, ne ferme pas ses portes ?

**Mr Sinatambou:** Well, I will certainly do my level best. The only thing I can say to the House is that already the Budget of my Ministry is nearing Rs25 billion and it is the first budget of the country and exceeds the second budget by nearly 50%. So, we are doing our level best and we will continue but there is a limit to how much money we can bring in.

*(Interruptions)*

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Mrs Perraud!

**Mrs Perraud:** On the same question?

**Madam Speaker:** Yes.

**Mrs Perraud:** Est-ce que le ministre pourrait nous dire s'il a déjà lui-même personnellement rencontré les religieuses du Bon et Perpétuel Secours en ce qu'il s'agit des difficultés qu'elles rencontrent par rapport à ce problème de rénovation?

**Mr Sinatambou:** In fact, I met, I forgot her name exactly, I think it is Sister Marilyn. I have met one of the principal sisters of *Maison de Retraite Mère Augustine*.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question, hon. Mrs Perraud!

#### **RICHE TERRE - CESSPITS - PUMPING**

**(No. B/177) Mrs A. Perraud (First Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Wastewater Management Authority, information as to if it is in presence of complaints regarding the overflow of absorption pits in the region of Riche Terre, Route Saint Georges, and, if so, indicate if remedial actions have been taken in relation thereto.

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Wastewater Management Authority that it has received no complaint, specifically on Route Saint Georges. It has, however, received requests from inhabitants of Cité Roma, Riche Terre for pumping of their cesspits after the heavy rainfall of 09 April 2019.

The Wastewater Management Authority normally provides such service only in sewerred areas and it has pumped the cesspits from 10 to 13 April in order to assist the inhabitants and to avoid any sanitary risks.

**Mrs Perraud:** Effectivement, après les dernières grosses pluies, donc les camions sont venus mais les fosses septiques se remplissent rapidement et le *waste water carrier* doit venir chaque mois. Et par camion les habitats payent Rs1,200. Donc, vu que la connexion au réseau de tout-à-l'égout peine à venir dans cette région, Riche Terre, Cité Roma et les alentours, comment est-ce que le gouvernement pourrait aider les habitants de Riche Terre ?

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** The long-term solution must be Phase III of the Baie du Tombeau Sewerage Project. This is a long-term solution and this will include the regions of Le Hochet, Terre Rouge, Bois Pignolet, Bois Marchand and Riche Terre, including Cité Roma and that will serve 5,900 buildings. Therefore, it is a huge project. It is already there but as you can imagine, this entails all the procedures that are necessary for such huge projects. The Baie du Tombeau Sewerage Project is an on-going project.

**Mrs Perraud:** Ce n'est pas la première fois que je soulève cette question ici au parlement. J'avais eu la dernière fois presque la même réponse. Est-ce que je pourrais vous demander si les procédures ont déjà débutés ou si vous avez un calendrier par rapport à la connexion au système de tout-à-l'égout ?

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** Non, nous n'avons pas de calendrier. Le projet continue et il faut attendre premièrement le *funding* parce que nous parlons d'un projet de milliard de roupies. Ce n'est pas aussi aisé que cela.

**Madam Speaker:** Time is over! The Table has been advised that the following PQs have been withdrawn: PQ B/178, B/179, B/180, B/191, B/192 and B/193.

#### **FOREIGN LABOUR FORCE - MIGRATION POLICY**

(No. B/178) **Mr E. Jhuboo (Third Member for Savanne & Black River)** asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training whether, in regard to the foreign labour force working in the construction, hospitality and textile industries, he will state if Government proposes to come up with a Migration Policy in relation thereto.

*(Withdrawn)*

#### **TOUR OPERATORS & PLEASURE CRAFTS OPERATORS - LICENCES - QUOTA**

(No. B/179) **Mr E. Jhuboo (Third Member for Savanne & Black River)** asked the Minister of Tourism whether, in regard to the issue of licences to tour operators and pleasure crafts operators, he will state the reasons for the imposition of a quota therefor.

*(Withdrawn)*

## WEST COAST - VEHICULAR TRAFFIC

(No. B/180) **Mr E. Jhuboo (Third Member for Savanne & Black River)** asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade whether, in regard to the west coast, he will state the measures being envisaged to ease vehicular traffic thereat following the traffic problems caused as a result of the closure of the Medine Sugar Factory and the redirection of cane to Omnicane.

*(Withdrawn)*

### MOTION

#### SUSPENSION OF S. O. 10(2)

**The Prime Minister:** Madam Speaker, I move that all the business on today's Order Paper be exempted from the provisions of paragraph (2) of Standing Order 10.

**The Deputy Prime Minister rose and seconded.**

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Madam Speaker:** Can I ask the Deputy Speaker to take the Chair, please?

*At this stage, the Deputy Speaker took the Chair.*

(4.28 p.m.)

### STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

#### MOODY'S REPORT - MAURITIUS - RATING

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to make the following statement.

Last Tuesday, the rating agency Moody's has published its Report in which it attributed to Mauritius a Baa1 rating with a stable outlook.

The rating enhances Mauritius attractiveness as an investment destination. It also renders it cheaper and easier for Government to raise funds when needed.

Mauritius has the second highest sovereign rating from Moody's in Africa, after Botswana.

According to the Report, the credit profile of Mauritius is supported by its diversified, upper middle income economy, proactive development policies and its stable political environment.

The Report further highlights the fact that the economy has demonstrated resilience to external shocks and Government has a strong record in sound economic management.

According to Moody's, the policies of Government will result in a GDP growth of 4 per cent in 2019 and 2020.

Moody's also notes that inflation has been under control and the unemployment rate has declined to 6.9 per cent.

Moody's has also drawn attention to the fact that high debt levels and interest burden can exercise undue pressure on the rating. However, it states that our debt maturity structure and composition are favourable and sustainable, in particular, because –

- (i) Government debt is mostly domestic as 83% of total debt;
- (ii) the external part of the debt is small and on highly concessional terms, and
- (iii) refinancing risks are low in view of Government's ability to issue longer-term domestic bonds.

Thank you.

### **ESAAMLG MUTUAL EVALUATION REPORT**

**The Minister of Financial Services and Good Governance (Mr D. Sesungkur):**

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission I wish to make two statements to the House.

First, I would like to make a statement on the application made by Mauritius for the technical compliance of the re-rating of 12 Financial Action Task Force (FATF) Recommendations, following the publication of the ESAAMLG Mutual Evaluation Report of Mauritius in September last as well as on the outcome of the first Follow-up Report submitted to the ESAAMLG Secretariat with regard to actions being initiated to demonstrate progress towards recommended actions contained in the Mutual Evaluation Report.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as the House is aware, prior to the publication of the Mutual Evaluation Report, Mauritius had already brought numerous amendments to the Anti-Money Laundering/Combating the Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT) framework in the Finance (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2008. Furthermore, a new set of Regulations, namely the

Financial Intelligence and Anti- Money Laundering Regulations 2018, was promulgated to be effective as from 01 October 2018, to address FATF requirements regarding Customer Due Diligence, Politically Exposed Persons, Correspondent Banking, Money or Value Transfer Services, New Technologies, Wire Transfers, Reliance on Third Parties, and Internal Control, Foreign Branches and Subsidiaries.

In the light of these changes in the legislative framework, Mauritius submitted to the ESAAMLG Secretariat, its first application for technical compliance re-rating on 12 Recommendations, namely-

- Recommendation 9 on Financial Institution Secrecy Laws;
- Recommendation 10 on Customer Due Diligence;
- Recommendation 12 on Politically Exposed Persons;
- Recommendation 13 on Correspondent Banking;
- Recommendation 15 on New Technologies;
- Recommendation 16 on Wire Transfers;
- Recommendation 17 on Reliance On Third Parties;
- Recommendation 22 on Customer Due Diligence in the Designated Financial Services and Businesses (DNFBPs);
- Recommendation 14 on Money or Value Transfer Services;
- Recommendation 18 on Internal Controls, Foreign Branches and Subsidiaries;
- Recommendation 27 on Powers of Supervisors, and
- Recommendation 32 on Cash Couriers.

The application for technical compliance re-ratings of Mauritius was considered first by the ESAAMLG Secretariat, then by the ESAAMLG Reviewers followed by the Evaluation and Compliance Group (ECG) and finally by the Task Force during the 37th ESAAMLG Task Force of Senior Officials Meeting, which was held from 07 – 12 April 2019 in Arusha, Tanzania.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am pleased to inform the House that 10 of these recommendations have been successfully upgraded from Non-Compliant or Partially

Compliant to Largely Compliant or Compliant and one of them from Non-Compliant to Partially Compliant.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to further inform the House that whilst the ESAAMLG Secretariat has sought clarifications regarding our submission for re-rating of Recommendation 10 on Customer Due Diligence, which is considered as one of the Big 6 Recommendations, the FATF ruled out in our favour. Accordingly, we have been upgraded from Non-Compliant to Largely Compliant.

Most of the technical compliance ratings that we have been upgraded to, will indeed give more comfort to investors and other stakeholders in both the banking and the non-banking sectors as robust AML/CFT preventive measures, reinforcing the integrity of Mauritius as an international financial services centre.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, during the Task Force meeting, Mauritius was congratulated by the ESAAMLG Secretariat on the significant progress made in addressing the technical compliance shortcomings and they have encouraged Mauritius to continue the good work. Moreover, Mauritius was supported by the FATF, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America and all the ESAAMLG Member States. The FATF further congratulated Mauritius on its achievements in a so short span of time.

The progress report of Mauritius will now be subject to review by the FATF Global Community for quality and consistency and will be published on the websites of the ESAAMLG and the FATF once the process is completed, which is expected by early May 2019.

As regards our first Follow-up Report submitted in early February, the ESAAMLG Secretariat has acknowledged that Mauritius has made progress in addressing the recommended actions contained in the Mutual Evaluation Report. The Secretariat has, *inter alia*, recommended that we address other recommendations which require priority actions and expeditiously continue with the process of implementing the provisions of the existing laws and, where required, to enact other appropriate legislations.

In this respect, I wish to further inform the House that Mauritius has applied for the technical compliance re-rating of other FATF Recommendations, which will be considered at the ESAAMLG Meeting in September 2019.

I thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

**GLOBAL BUSINESS SECTOR - CAPITAL GAINS - INDIA - TAXATION**

I now move to the second statement. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, at adjournment time at the sitting of Tuesday 02 April, the hon. First Member for Port Louis South and Port Louis Central raised a few of the problems currently faced by the Global Business Sector.

At the end of his intervention, I stated that not only are we aware of the issues but we have studied the statistics and have studied the different requirements and the other compliance issues raised.

I further undertook to come to the House with a statement to clarify the matters raised by the hon. Member. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, having obtained your permission, I now propose to do so.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in regard to the taxing by India of 100% of capital gains realised by a Mauritius entity, a Mauritius fund whenever it disposes its shares in India, in fact, as per Article 13 of the amended DTAA between India and Mauritius, it is clearly stipulated in its subsection 3A that gains from the disposal of shares acquired prior to 01 April 2017 will be exempted of capital gains tax, irrespective of the date of disposal.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to statistics published in India, the statistics which the hon. Member referred to in his statement are those published by the Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion (DIPP) of the Government of India (now known as the Department of Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade) which refers to a sum of 6.0 billion dollar for the period starting 01 April 2018 to 31 December 2018 for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Equity only.

DIPP only captures FDI Equity flows. Additionally, our figures for FDI flows into India do not corroborate with that published by DIPP as we come to a figure of 9.4 billion dollar for the period referred to, which is significantly higher than the figure provided by the Indian authorities.

In fact, Mauritius is more widely used as a platform for Foreign Portfolio Investment (FPI). Generally, FPI is 3 times higher than FDI flows. It is a fact that Mauritius has been a main route for FPI flows much more than the FDI flows. According to our figures, FPI flows into India for the period 01 January 2018 to 31 December 2018 was approximately USD51.4 billion.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, our figures show that the value of direct investments in India through Global Business companies has remained more or less stable at USD117.6 billion as at June 2018.

The recent review carried out by the International Monetary Fund in the context of the Article IV consultation, has confirmed that activity in the global business sector has remained broadly resilient while reforms to the sector are underway. The IMF analysis clearly demonstrated that the growth in Mauritius will be driven by robust performance in the financial sector.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when comparing ourselves to Singapore, we must bear in mind that the financial sector in Singapore is 30 times bigger than Mauritius. This is because, the financial centre in Singapore was established much before our own, almost four decades ago. Despite the significant size of the financial sector in Singapore and the sophistication of its products and services, Mauritius, however, remains the second largest provider of investment in India, after Singapore.

Over the years, Mauritius has contributed significantly in respect of investment flows to India. Since April 2000 up to December 2018, the Mauritius IFC has contributed around 32% of the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Equity inflows into India. My Ministry is well aware of the strategic importance of the Indian market for the future growth of our international financial centre and we are working hard to be in the leading position.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in regard to the question of the image problem faced by Mauritius, Government has brought wide ranging reforms across the sector to resolutely pursue our ambition of becoming a world class international financial centre of repute. Our financial services sector will only grow if we are able to maintain our reputation and credibility at international level.

It is in this context, therefore, we embarked on two major reform processes to address the issues of BEPS and AML-CFT. These reforms ought to have been done longtime before.

The Deemed Foreign Tax Credit which was initially applicable only to offshore companies was removed and the Partial Exemption regime has been introduced. I am pleased to say that this new fiscal regime was presented to the OECD in September 2018 and was subsequently deemed as non-harmful in December 2018.

Furthermore, in 2018, following the adverse Mutual Evaluation Report issued by the Eastern and Southern Africa Anti Money Laundering Group (ESAAMLG), my Ministry had

to catch up on the work which should have been started or been completed some 10 years ago as regards measures on AML-CFT and all the initiatives undertaken for re-rating of the ESAAMLG Mutual Evaluation Report. As part of our initiatives to ensure that Mauritius is a clean jurisdiction, a National Committee for the Monitoring of AML/CFT issues has also been established. As I have mentioned in my earlier statement, Mauritius has been re-rated as compliant and largely compliant in most areas where we have requested for a re-rating exercise.

These acknowledgements have further enhanced the image and reputation of the Mauritius IFC.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the European Union is a significant global trade block and a major partner of Mauritius. As a small country, very often, we cannot influence international market policies and have to align ourselves to those of our trading partners. In this same wavelength, Government has agreed to make a few additional refinements to the Partial Exemption System following observations made by the Code of Conduct Group (COCG) of the European Union. We are confident that once these refinements are made, Mauritius will restore its reputation as a compliant jurisdiction for the EU.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are leaving no stone unturned to build and protect our brand image.

It is worth mentioning that since June 2018, Mauritius has well performed on several global indices. Our performance regionally and globally is a testimony that the Mauritius IFC has been successful in building its brand.

Mauritius was ranked –

- First in Africa and 20<sup>th</sup> globally in the Ease of Doing Business Index;
- First in Sub-Saharan countries and 49<sup>th</sup> globally in the Global Competitiveness Index;
- First in Africa and 39<sup>th</sup> globally for Best Country for Business by Forbes;
- First in Africa for Mo Ibrahim Index of African Governance;
- First in Africa and 8<sup>th</sup> for the Economic Freedom of the World;
- First in African Transformation Index; and recently the rating given by Moody's.

I would now wish to mention a few projects which have been implemented recently by my Ministry for the development of the financial services sector –

1. My Ministry has commended the need to devise a new vision for the financial services sector and in this context, the Blueprint Report was prepared by McKinsey and successfully launched in 2018. The objective of the Report was to envision the financial sector for the next 10 years.
2. With a view to implementing the recommendations contained in the Blueprint, a Delivery Unit has been set up. The Government is putting adequate financial and other resources to drive future growth and development of our financial services sector.
3. With a view to improving the image and reputation of the Mauritius IFC, we have enlisted the services of a Public Relation Firm, namely Burson Cohne and Wolfe.
4. FSC has also embarked on a vast program to improve overall capacity and services at all levels. It is in this context that it has recently launched a red carpet service available to known customers to fast track their application.
5. Mauritius wants to build a competitive edge in the field of fintech and blockchain, which add on new products and services to our international financial centre. In this context, the Government has set up a Fintech Committee to develop this sector and come up with the necessary legal framework.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, after the establishment of the regional IMF (AFRITAC) Training Centre in Mauritius, I am also delighted to announce that last month, in March 2019, the OECD has set up its Regional Centre of Excellence in Mauritius. The fact that OECD has chosen Mauritius for their regional office is a testimony of trust and will surely enhance our international credibility as a Financial Centre.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, visibility is good but, without credibility, visibility alone cannot yield productivity. Trust and confidence is of extreme importance. This is the reason why Government has brought vast reforms to build trust and confidence in the Mauritius IFC.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have a relatively large Global Business Sector with aggregated assets valued at USD 686 billion which is approximately 50 times the size of our

GDP. Contribution of the Global Business sector to the GDP of Mauritius is estimated at 5.7% in 2018/2019 and has produced a year-on-year growth of 4.0%.

Mauritius has always had a primary role in channeling capital and foreign direct investment to major economies during the past 25 years. Over ten of thousands of investors have chosen Mauritius IFC to conduct their business. Over the years, we have built up a strong reputation as an International Financial Centre.

Not later than last week, I received a delegation from the Afrexim Bank which has decided to set up their headquarters for the Fund for Export Development in Africa [FEDA], in Mauritius. The CEO stated that they have chosen Mauritius because it is a fast growing country and that the financial centre presents immense opportunity for development.

Despite some headwinds, our IFC is building on hard rocks. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, our financial services sector is here to stay for a long, long time and has glorious days ahead.

I thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Thank you. Hon. Minister, I should have given you the floor before. I apologise for giving you the floor now. You have the floor and you can make your statement.

### **MAURITAS - INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION**

**The Minister of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection (Mr A. Gungah):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I wish to make the following statement to the House on the International Recognition of the Mauritius Accreditation Service, more commonly known as MAURITAS, a Department which operates under the aegis of my Ministry.

The House may wish to note that the main function of MAURITAS, our national accreditation body, is to provide a national unified service for the accreditation of conformity assessment bodies, that is, laboratories, certification and inspection bodies.

Another important function of MAURITAS is to establish agreements on mutual recognition with other national, regional and international accreditation bodies and to obtain and maintain international acceptance of the competence of organisations accredited by it.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to inform the House that MAURITAS has been admitted as a signatory member to the following Mutual/Multilateral Recognition Arrangements (MRAs) –

- the African Accreditation Cooperation on 28 September 2018;
- the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation on 04 October 2018;
- the International Accreditation Forum on 17 October 2018, and
- the Southern African Development Community Cooperation in Accreditation on 14 March 2019.

The business community in Mauritius is, thus, benefitting from the signatory status of MAURITAS to the abovementioned Mutual Recognition Arrangements and Multilateral Recognition Arrangements through the accredited laboratories and certification bodies as follows –

- increased trade exchanges opportunities;
- open market access, and
- competitiveness edge for the Mauritian products.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the signatory status of MAURITAS by these International Bodies is a milestone achievement for the institution and is in line with the vision of the Government and its strategy for enhancing the competitiveness of our manufacturing sector.

Thank you.

## WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

### MAHEBOURG REGENERATION PROJECT – IMPLEMENTATION

**(No.B/184) Mr M. Hurreeram (First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien)**

asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether, in regard to the Mahebourg Regeneration Project, he will state where matters stand as to the implementation thereof indicating the measures taken since the public consultation exercise held in July 2018.

**Reply (Minister of Tourism):** As announced in the Budget Speech 2018/19, Government's vision is to transform Mahebourg into a "*Village Touristique*" by optimising its historical heritage and potential. This measure is being jointly implemented by my Ministry and the Ministry of Arts and Culture.

A consultative exercise was held with all stakeholders of the tourism industry as well as the inhabitants of Mahebourg on 13 July 2018 at SSS Emmanuel Anquetil to obtain views and proposals for the upgrading of Mahebourg. My Ministry came up with a series of quick-win projects that would contribute in developing Mahebourg into a tourist village and that are in line with the Tourism Strategic Plan 2018-2021. These are –

- upliftment of the Cavendish Bridge;
- embellishment of motorway and roundabouts leading to Mahebourg;
- upgrading of signage panels leading to Mahebourg and installation of information panels in Mandarin in Mahebourg;
- regular cleaning along the banks of Rivière La Chaux;
- installation of additional free Wi-Fi hotspots around the village;
- embellishment of area around monument at *Pointe des Régates*, and
- development of a map of Mahebourg and installation of these maps at strategic locations in Mahebourg.

A follow-up meeting was chaired by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Tourism on 08 November 2018 with all interested parties, who were requested to submit additional project proposals and the respective cost estimates by the end of November 2018. Unfortunately, the majority of those present failed to submit their proposals despite several reminders sent and follow-ups done.

I also chaired a meeting on 21 February 2019, to discuss with the different stakeholders on the *Mahebourg Village Touristique* project being given that it was intended to be a public-private initiative. A final opportunity was provided to all the stakeholders present to submit their proposals, along with cost estimates for the “*Mahebourg Village Touristique*” project by 15 March 2019. However, due to low level of responsiveness, the deadline was extended to 28 March 2019. Some proposals have been received from a number of stakeholders and these are being examined at the level of my Ministry.

On 21 March 2019, I chaired a meeting with the representatives of the Police for the placement of CCTV cameras at strategic points to upgrade security in Mahebourg.

As at date, the status of implementation of the quick-win projects identified are as follows –

- (i) I have been informed that the Tourism Authority has initiated a procurement exercise for the renovation of the walking pathways along Cavendish Bridge following finalisation of the design and specifications thereof by the Road Development Authority. The electric poles as well as lighting along the Cavendish Bridge and for the side garden, are also being procured by the Tourism Authority;
- (ii) the maintenance and upgrading of Tourism Signage in Mahebourg as well as installation of information panels at historical sites in Mandarin has been completed in January 2019;
- (iii) regular cleaning along the banks of *Rivière La Chaux* is being undertaken by the Tourism Authority;
- (iv) the National Heritage Fund has already appointed a Project Coordinator for the restoration of the *Abreuvoir* and the *Lavoir* at Mahebourg. The team is presently working on the scope of works and drawings for conservation works;
- (v) embellishment of motorway and roundabouts leading to Mahebourg are carried out by the Road Development Authority, and
- (vi) the Mauritius Telecom has installed free Wi-Fi hotspots at 15 sites in the Mahebourg area under the Mauritius Wi-Fi project.

### IMPORT SUBSTITUTION INDUSTRY

(No. B/191) **Mr D. Ramful (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien)** asked the Minister of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection whether, in regard to the import substitution industry, he will give a list of the sectors where such policy will be developed, as announced in the Budget Speech 2018-2019, in order to address the trade and current account deficits.

*(Withdrawn)*

### CONSUMER PRICE INDEX - INCREASE

(No. B/192) **Mr D. Ramful (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien)** asked the Minister of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection whether, in regard to the increase in the Consumer Price Index, he will state if consideration will be given for the advisability of –

- (a) reviewing the Consumer Protection Act to provide for more effective supervision on the retail prices affixed and margin of profit made by importers and retail traders, and
- (b) appointing an Ombudsperson for Consumer Protection to receive and investigate complaints from the consumers.

*(Withdrawn)*

### GRADE 10 STUDENTS – ADMISSION CRITERIA

(No. B/193) **Mr D. Ramful (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien)** asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research whether, in regard to the admission of Grade 10 students to the academies in 2021, she will state the criteria laid down therefor.

*(Withdrawn)*

### CONSTITUENCY NO. 14 - NHDC HOUSES - CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/197) **Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River)** asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, to the regard to the housing projects in Constituency No. 14, Savanne and Black River, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Housing Development Company Ltd., information as to the number of housing units –

- (a) built and delivered since 2015 to date, and
- (b) to be delivered by December 2019.

**Reply:** I am informed by the NHDC Ltd that as at date, 1,070 housing units have been constructed and delivered in the area of Savanne, Black River and surroundings.

Moreover, 237 housing units are presently under construction in the same area, namely Bassin (102) and Gros Cailloux (135). It is expected that these housing units will be completed and allocated by the end of this year.

In addition, three sites, namely at Cascavelle, Palma and Bassin have been identified for the construction of some 815 housing units. The project is currently at design stage and the contract for works is expected to be awarded by August 2019.

With respect to future social housing projects, three sites have been identified of an extent of 21 *arpents*, namely at Beaux Songes, Surinam and Souillac.

### **SUPREME COURT BUILDING – COMPLETION DATE**

(No. B/200) Mr A. Duval (First Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Attorney-General, Minister of Justice, Human Rights and Institutional Reforms whether, in regard to the proposed construction of a new Supreme Court Building in Port Louis, he will state the –

- (a) time frame set for the completion thereof;
- (b) surface area of the proposed building, and
- (c) courts that will be relocated therein.

**Reply:** As regards part (a), I am informed that the Supreme Court Building is scheduled for completion in December 2019.

As regards part (b), I am informed that as per the contract, the surface area of the proposed building is 25,012.2 m<sup>2</sup>.

As regards part (c) of the question, as to which Courts will be relocated in the new building, this will be a matter for the decision of the Judiciary.

### **LAW PRACTITIONERS ACT - REVIEW - HIGH LEVEL COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS**

(No. B/201) Mr A. Duval (First Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Attorney-General, Minister of Justice, Human Rights and Institutional Reforms whether, in regard to the High Level Committee set up to review the Law Practitioners Act and other enactments of the legal profession, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the work thereof.

**Reply:** I refer the hon. Member to the reply I have made to the Private Notice Question at the sitting of 07 December 2018.

In line with the Government's pledge to bring meaningful change to the life of our citizens, on 11 January 2019, Cabinet agreed to the appointment of a High Level Committee of Experts under the chairmanship of Lord Phillips to review the Law Practitioners Act and other relevant enactments concerning the legal profession in Mauritius such as the Mauritius Bar Association Act, the Mauritius Law Society Act, the Notaries Act and any enactments related thereto.

It is apposite to highlight that the object of the Committee is to propose amendments and make recommendations with regard to –

- (a) the legal framework pertaining to –
  - (i) the running of courses and the conduct of examinations;
  - (ii) the recognition of foreign qualifications, and
  - (iii) other conditions for admission to practice law in Mauritius;
- (b) the legal framework pertaining to –
  - (i) the institution and conduct of disciplinary proceedings against law practitioners;
  - (ii) the efficient and effective functioning of the Mauritius Bar Association, the Mauritius Law Society and the Chamber for Notaries, and
- (c) other related enactments *in pari materiae* and other matters incidental or related thereto.

The Committee is comprised of the Right Honourable the Lord Philips of Worth Matravers, K.G, P.C, as Chairperson, Honourable K.D. Gunesh-Balaghee, Puisne Judge of the Supreme Court, Mr R. Chetty, S.C, Mr A. Robert S.A., and Mr Jean Michel Caboche-Adam, Notary Public.

The Committee has through Press communiqués invited representations in writing to be addressed to the Secretary of the Committee by 15 April 2019 at latest. The Committee has also, in its communiqué, highlighted that if a person making representations wishes that his representations are to be treated as confidential, this should be clearly indicated when submitting the recommendations so that they may be treated as such. The communiqué was published in local newspapers (*Le Défi* on 19, 21 and 23 February 2019 and *Le Mauricien* on 20, 22 and 23 February 2019).

I am informed that representations in writing have been received from members of public. I am further informed that the Mauritius Bar Association has requested for an extension to submit its representations by the end of April 2019 and that the Law Society and the Law Reform Commission informed verbally and by mail respectively that they are working on the said representations, which will be communicated in due course. As regards students of the CVLE, some have phoned the Secretary to the High Level Committee to inform him that they intend to submit representations in due course.

I am also informed that the Law Reform Commission has agreed to the request of the High Level Committee to submit its views on the Terms of Reference of the High Level Committee. At its meeting of 15 April 2019, the Law Reform Commission discussed the matter and submitted its views, in writing, to the High Level Committee.

I will leave it to the discretion of the High Level Committee to decide whether or not it will entertain any representations for extension of time for submissions. The House will appreciate, therefore, that Government has set up this Committee as an independent body of experts and Government will, in no manner whatsoever, interfere with its independence.

The House will appreciate that the Committee will have to study the representations made before it and that given that Terms of Reference of the High Level Committee deal with a subject matter which is serious in nature, the Committee will be given adequate time to come up with recommendations.