

Tvers 14.05.2019

PRIVATE NOTICE QUESTION

To ask the Honourable Prime Minister, Minister of Home Affairs, External Communication and National Development Unit, Minister of Finance and Economic Development –

Whether, in regard to the Film Rebate Scheme, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Economic Development Board, information as to the total amount refunded to film production companies in 2017, 2018 and since 01 January 2019 to-date and –

- (a) **table the list of the said companies, indicating the film titles and amount refunded for each category of Qualifying Production Expenditure; and**
- (b) **state the films titles having obtained a refund exceeding Rs 50 million and/or greater than 30% of Qualifying Production Expenditure?**

REPLY

Madam Speaker,

In the Government Programme 2015 - 2019 at paragraph 78 it is stated that I quote:

‘The promotion of arts and culture will constitute an important ingredient in nurturing national unity and promoting our tourism industry. Measures will be put in place to promote cultural tourism, religious pilgrimage and film production.’ Unquote

The Film Rebate Scheme is governed by the Economic Development Board (Film Rebate Scheme) Regulations 2018. The objects of the scheme are to:

- (a) Attract reputed international film producers for the shooting or pre-production, production or post-production of a film in Mauritius;
- (b) Open the scope for local film producers and artists;
- (c) Unleash talents; and
- (d) Increase the international visibility of Mauritius.

The scheme provides for a film production company to be reimbursed:

- (a) A sum representing 30% of its qualifying production expenditure; or
- (b) where the production brings or is likely to bring significant economic benefits, a sum representing not less than 30% nor more than 40% of the qualifying production expenditure in respect of a feature film or an episode of drama television programme, in accordance with the percentage recommended by the film rebate committee provided that the film production company meets

such relevant requirements as the committee may determine including-

- a. In the case of a feature film, a qualifying production expenditure of not less than USD 1 million or
- b. In the case of an episode of drama television programme, a qualifying production expenditure of not less than USD 150,000 per episode;
- c. An undertaking to promote Mauritius at the time of the film promotion.

Madam Speaker,

I am further informed that since the introduction of the scheme in 2013, a total of 156 film projects have been approved under the Film Rebate Scheme, out of which 95 projects have been completed. The total Qualifying Production Expenditure, that is, expenditure incurred by film producers in Mauritius in respect of these 95 projects amounts to MUR 3.53 Billion.

Madam Speaker,

Regarding part (a) of the question, I am tabling the list of companies for each category of Qualifying Production

Expenditure, which have been refunded as from 2017 to date.

As regard to part (b) of the question I am informed that one film namely Serenity has obtained a refund exceeding MUR 50 million (Rs 214.3 million has been made to the company). Two films, namely Serenity and Singleholic (Rs 26.1 million) have benefitted of a refund exceeding 30% of Qualifying Production Expenditure respectively at 39% and 34%.

The development of the film industry has both a multiplier and synergy effect on the economy. Moreover, Government has collected around MUR 900 Million in terms of both direct and indirect taxes. In addition, the Film Rebate Scheme has created employment opportunities for more than 2,000 local people in both technical and creative fields. These include local crews and technicians; supporting cast; art and decoration; camera lighting and photography; make up; script writing, assistant direction, production and project; post production and visual effects; and dubbing.

Madam Speaker,

I wish to highlight that there are some 30 countries around the world that provide fiscal incentives to attract foreign film makers. The competition is therefore tough.

Despite such competition, Mauritius is progressing well. In its 2018 annual report, KPMG (India) has given recognition to the competitive advantage offered by the Film Rebate Scheme in Mauritius. Earlier in December 2017, Mauritius won the best film shooting location as part of an award offered by Indywood Film Festival in Hyderabad.

Madam Speaker,

There is no doubt that, apart from the economic benefits being derived, the image of Mauritius, both as a tourism and investment destination is being enhanced through the showcasing of the various films in different parts of the world.

P.K.J.

