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2017

TUESDAY 25 APRIL 2017

MAHEBOURG-BAMBOUS VIRIEUX - OYSTER FARM – PROMOTER

(No. B/334) Mr D. Ramful (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the Oyster Farm of Mahebourg-Bambous Virieux, he will state –

- (a) the name of the promoter/company involved therein, indicating the shareholding of each director;
- (b) if any lease agreement has been signed;
- (c) the extent of sea leased and the rental value thereof, and
- (d) if it has been issued with an Environment Impact Assessment Licence, and
- (e) the estimated thereof on the fishermen thereat.

(Withdrawn)

ST BRANDON ISLANDS/FISHING VESSELS – LICENCES

(No. B/342) Mr J. C. Barbier (Fourth Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the St Brandon Islands and other fishing banks, he will give a list of the fishing vessels authorised to carry out fishing activities thereat, indicating the terms and conditions of the authorization in each case.

Reply: Only Mauritian owned fishing vessels have been issued fishing licences in accordance with Sections 36 to 38 of the Fisheries and Marine Resources Act 2007, to carry out fishing activities at St Brandon and other fishing banks.

Presently twenty two fishing vessels are carrying out such activities on these fishing banks.

I am tabling the list of the fishing vessels which have been authorised to carry out fishing activities as well as the terms and conditions attached thereto.

TUESDAY 09 MAY 2017

AQUACULTURE PROJECTS – LEASES

(No. B/366) Mr E. Jhuboo (Third Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the aquaculture projects, he will state the –

- (a) number of concessions granted therefor, indicating in each case the –
 - (i) extent thereof, and
 - (ii) category thereof, and

- (b) number of leases granted therefor, indicating in each case, the –
(i) duration thereof, and
(ii) yearly rent/fee payable therefor.

The Minister of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives (Mr S. Bholah): Madam Speaker, with your permission, I will reply to this question. I would like to refer the hon. Member to the reply made to Parliamentary Question No. B/47 where the substantive Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping mentioned that in accordance with Government Notice No.106 of 2015, 31 sites have been identified of which 20 are meant for large scale aquaculture activities and 11 sites are meant for small scale aquaculture projects.

Out of the 11 sites which are meant for small scale activities, 10 sites on which Floating Cage Structures have been placed, have been allocated to Fishermen Cooperative Societies throughout the island. Furthermore, to promote aquaculture, letters of 4ehavior4tion have been issued to six promoters to carry out aquaculture projects in six barachois which have been vested in the Ministry of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping. I would like to mention that these barachois are still vested in the Ministry of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping and which has 4ehavior4t the promoters to undertake aquaculture activities against set conditions. If at any time these conditions are not respected, the Ministry may retrieve them. Each 4ehavior4tion for barachois is for a period of between three to five years.

In regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that only those sites which are meant for large scale aquaculture projects require concessions.

Five concessions have been granted to the Ferme Marine de Mahebourg and six are in the process of securing the EIA licence, seven sites are committed and two sites are still available. The extent of sea concessions for aquaculture is regulated under the Fisheries and Marine Resources Act. The size is standard irrespective of the location of the site. Each aquaculture concession is of a radius of up to 300 meters around the GPS coordinates of a site.

Regarding part (b) of the question, I have already mentioned that five concessions (lease) have been granted so far. Each lease extends over 20 years which is renewable for an additional period of 20 years. The annual lease rate amounts to MUR100,000 per site.

As regards part I of the question, aquaculture sites for large scale activities are located outside known fishing grounds to limit impact on fishermen operating in these regions. As such, there are no adverse impacts on the day-to-day operations of the fishermen community.

In addition, the concessionaires need to consult the fishermen community operating in the region prior to the implementation of any aquaculture project to comply with the requirements of the EIA licence. The aim of these consultations is to explain the opportunities that will be available to fishermen eventually and clear out any issue.

As regards part (d) of the question, only large scale aquaculture projects require an EIA licence prior to implementation of the project. The EIA ensures that the aquaculture companies take all necessary precautions to prevent any negative impact on the ecosystem. The activities are monitored by a committee at the level of the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Environment and Sustainable Development and which comprises officers of the Ministry of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping to ensure that the concessionaire is compliant with the conditions

set out in the EIA licence. In addition, seabed samples are taken to monitor the impact of marine fish farming on the ecosystem.

Mr Jhuboo: Thank you, Madam. Concerning the large-scale aquaculture at sea, can we know from the hon. Minister whether before embarking on such an important and strategic project a proper scientific survey, research, study has been commissioned by Government to identify the adverse impact of such an industry on the local ecosystem?

Mr Bholah: Well, as I said earlier, it is the EIA licence that looks after these conditions.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Jhuboo!

Mr Jhuboo: Madam Speaker, Government has decided to grant concessions in the regions of Trou d'Eau Douce, Grand' Baie, Pereybere and Le Morne, basically in all touristic areas. Now, in Reunion Island, they have what we call *la crise requin*, the proliferation of deadly shark attacks due to the presence of an aqua farm in the region of Saint-Paul. Is the Minister, the Ministry, the Government prepared to take such a risk?

Mr Bholah: Well, we are very cautious and we do care for the lives of our countrymen, be it swimmers or whoever, and we will ensure that such things do not happen.

Mr Jhuboo: Madam Speaker, the crisis, *la crise requin à la Réunion* basically led to the collapse of the tourism industry there. Now, will the hon. Minister agree with me that we cannot have aqua farming projects in touristic regions?

Mr Bholah: Well, I take the point of the hon. Member and I will pass on the message to the substantive Minister.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Jhuboo!

Mr Ganoo: Madam Speaker, can I ask a supplementary, please?

Madam Speaker: No, next question I have said, hon. Jhuboo!

(*Interruptions*)

Please, sit down! Hon. Ganoo, please, sit down!

(*Interruptions*)

Can you, please, sit down? When I am on my feet, can you, please, sit down?

(*Interruptions*)

Hon. Ganoo, in fact, I have seen you raising your hand. But, I have said...

(*Interruptions*)

I have seen you raising your hand and asking for the floor, but I have said several times that it is for the Speaker to decide whether a question has been sufficiently canvassed or not. I have noted the time that we have started that question. Three questions have been asked already by hon. Jhuboo and I feel that it is fair to other Members of this House whose questions appear on the agenda that their questions also are replied.

(*Interruptions*)

No, I am not arguing on this again!

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Ganoo: But, this is a point of order!

Madam Speaker: Yes, what is the point of order of the hon. Member?

Mr Ganoo: My point of order is, since hon. Jhuboo has started to ask his questions you were writing in your papers and you did not even look at this side of the House. I was raising my hands. Now, he has asked three questions. What prevents you from giving me leave to ask another question?

Madam Speaker: Hon. Ganoo, you also have been a Speaker and you know fairly well what are the rules of the game.

(Interruptions)

Hon. Ganoo...

(Interruptions)

Hon. Ganoo, you cannot question the Chair. This is the basic rule of Parliament and now you are questioning me. I will not allow this!

(Interruptions)

I have said don't question me, hon. Ganoo, please!

(Interruptions)

I have said, I am patient with everybody but once, twice and thrice I can't continue for people to argue with the Chair! This has become a habit now that people question the Chair. And, I will take...

(Interruptions)

Now, I will take this opportunity to make an announcement to this House following what has happened. Let me say that despite my behavior to maintain order in the House so as to ensure the smooth running of business, I note with concern that some hon. Members behave in such a manner that is not conducive to serenity in this august Assembly. My repeated calls to order seem to fall on deaf ears.

My different appeals to hon. Members from both sides of the House to avoid making provocative remarks, more especially during passionate debates, are more often simply ignored. Worst, some elementary rules of parliamentary practices are simply disregarded and not complied with. I would not say with a majority of the Members of the House, but with a minority of hon. Members. For example, very often, these Members do not take their seats when the Chair is on her feet. I just drew attention several times to this. I have to keep on reminding them that when I am on my feet, the House has to be silent.

On the other area where I really find some hon. Members' attitude really incomprehensible, not to say unfair, is the attitude of certain Members on Question Time on which we are now, especially when supplementary questions are being asked. Supplementary questions relate to Standing Order 26(1), that is, to be asked for further elucidation of the information requested and must not introduce a matter not included in the original question. It is for the Speaker to decide on the relevance and the number of supplementary questions which is to be asked. It is at the discretion of the Speaker to decide if the matter has been sufficiently canvassed and this cannot be questioned.

Now, all these are provided in the Standing Orders and I must remind hon. Members that these Standing Orders have been voted by the House and the Chair has an obligation to see that these are enforced. So, my duty is to safeguard the authority of the Chair and to preserve the dignity of the House.

Hon. Members, may I kindly remind you that it is your duty as well to uphold the dignity of the House and, in so doing, to scrupulously observe the rules and procedures provided for in our Standing Orders. I am making and I hope so that I am making an ultimate appeal to the tiny few from both sides of the House to make amends more particularly in view of the fact that the proceedings now are broadcast live and that we are being watched not only by the whole population over here, but that we are being watched internationally.

Hon. Members, any unruly behavior may lead to a loss of public confidence in our institution if we are not careful. So, I rely on all your cooperation.

Thank you.

Next Question, hon. Jhuboo!

TUESDAY 11 JULY 2017

AQUACULTURE FARMS – SETTING UP

The Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries, and Shipping (Mr P. Koonjoo): Madam Speaker, with your permission, I would like to make the following statement regarding the aquaculture projects in Mauritius and the setting up of aquaculture farms in and outside the lagoon. I would like to thank the Fourth Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien for having raised this issue in the House at our sitting of 04 July 2017.

Madam Speaker with regard to Sharks Attacks, referred to by the hon. Member, my Ministry had extensive consultations on this subject amongst others with the

- Indian Ocean Rim Association;
- University of Mauritius;
- Institut de Recherche et Développement, Direction de la Coopération Régionale - (France/Réunion).

They have all been unanimous that there is no correlation between aquaculture and shark attacks.

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Koonjoo: Let me repeat!

Madam Speaker: Please proceed!

Mr Koonjoo: They have all been unanimous that there is no correlation between aquaculture and shark attacks. This statement has been confirmed by a study carried out by *the Institut de Recherche et Développement* at Reunion Island in 2015...

(*Interruptions*)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Shakeel Mohamed! I think that is too much! That is too much because I have been very patient with those interrupting! Please, allow the Minister to proceed with the Statement! Please, hon. Minister do not be distracted by interruptions!

Mr Koonjoo: This statement - Sorry Madam! He is born like that! What can we do?

(*Interruptions*)

This statement has been confirmed by a study carried out by the *Institut de Recherche et Développement* at Reunion Island in 2015 on "*Etude de comportement des requins bouledogue et tigres*".

(*Interruptions*)

Oui, requins bouledogue.

Furthermore, I wish to mention here that there has not been any single shark attack till date around the fish farming site at Mahebourg which exists since 2002.

Madam Speaker, researches and studies carried out....

(*Interruptions*)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Thierry Henry!

(*Interruptions*)

Yes, but you are listening! To whom are you talking? Yes, hon. Minister!

Mr Koonjoo: Madam Speaker, researches and studies carried out by the University of Mauritius showed that the remaining of fish feed disintegrate into smaller particles which eventually are eaten by marine organisms. Moreover, according to these studies, it was noted that fish farming does not affect our corals. Indeed, it was observed that those particles help coral species in their growing process near the cages or even in the cages.

I would also like to highlight that all 20 sites prescribed for aquaculture in Mauritius have been identified following an ecological survey and have been chosen according to their poor biodiversity and lack of coral cover. As to date, no adverse impact has been observed in the vicinity of those sites. Madam Speaker, the industrial aquaculture farming will be beneficial to the small fish farmers.

In fact, many persons living in the region of Mahebourg are working for aquaculture projects and earn a living therefrom. My Ministry is at the same time sensitising the fishermen towards their duty to protect the ocean and the need for sustainable fishing.

In order to sustainably and effectively manage the usage of our maritime space and zone, Government is adopting an integrated planning and management approach in establishing a co-ordinated Marine Spatial Plan.

I wish to state that there will be no industrial aquaculture project in Le Morne as stated by the hon. Member.

Madam Speaker, with a view to dissipating the concerns of people, my Ministry will work out with stakeholders and organise sensitisation campaigns on these projects.

Madam Speaker, I thank you for your attention.

TUESDAY 24 OCTOBER 2017

MAHEBOURG-BAMBOUS VIRIEUX - OYSTER FARM - SEA LEASED

(No. B/586) Mr D. Ramful (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the Oyster Farm of Mahebourg-Bambous Virieux, he will state –

- (a) the name of the promoter/company involved therein, indicating the shareholding of each director;
- (b) if any deed concession has been signed;
- (c) the extent of sea leased and rental value thereof;
- (d) if it has been issued with an Environment Impact Assessment Licence, and
- (e) the estimated impact thereof on the fishermen thereat.

FISHING COMPANIES - PERMITS – REVENUES

(No. B/621) Mr E. Jhuboo (Third Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the fishing industry, he will state the –

- (a) total revenues generated from the licensing or permits issued to foreign and local fishing companies since January 2015 to date, and

- (b) actions taken to preserve the fish stocks and enhance control in our fishing zone, indicating –
 - (i) the measures taken to address the shortage of 4,000 tons of tuna on the local market, and
 - (ii) where matters stand regarding the negotiation by the European Union to increase our export quota for fish thereto.

Reply: With regard to part (a) of the question, the total revenue generated from the licences issued to foreign and local fishing companies since January 2015 to 20 October 2017 amounts to around Rs138 m.

With regard to part (b) of the question, actions to preserve the fish stocks and enhance control include –

- (a) implementation of a licensing system for all foreign and local vessels operating in our EEZ which are subject to strict conditions with regard to areas of operation, catch reporting, licence fees, authorised species and period of validity;
- (b) implementation of a Bank Fishery Management Plan comprising such measures as catch quota system allocated to companies/vessels which is reviewed at the start of each fishing season that is September to May. The plan also includes a limit on the number of vessels operating on the banks;
- (c) for the tuna fishery, statistical data are collected from all local and foreign licensed vessels. The data are processed, analysed and transmitted to Indian Ocean Tuna Commission where these data along with those received from other States are used to evolve conservation and management measures;
- (d) implementation of all IOTC resolutions relating to conservation and management of the tuna stocks;
- (e) a Port State Control Unit has been set up to monitor all fishing vessels operating in our EEZ through advance notification, verification of vessel documents and inspection of catches;
- (f) a Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) has been put in place for the monitoring of licensed fishing vessels in our EEZ;
- (g) at National level, Surveillance of the EEZ is carried out by the National Coast Guard;
- (h) participation in the Regional Surveillance Project of the “*Commission de l’Ocean Indien*”, and
- (i) implementation of measures earmarked in the National Plan of action to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

Regarding part (b) (i) of the question, I wish to inform the House that the local tuna cannery is facing difficulties in sourcing raw materials in view of the catch limits as agreed at the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission in 2016, with regard to yellow fin tuna which is in the Red Zone. Due to the catch limit imposed, vessels carried out a race to maximise their catch within a short period. This resulted in the quota being reached well before the end of this year. This situation could not be foreseen by the private sector and consequently it is forecasted that a shortage of raw materials may occur. To address this problem, Mauritius has made a request to the EU for a normal derogation of 4000 tonnes from the Rules of Origin as provided under the Interim Economic Partnership Agreement.

In a letter dated 16 October 2017, the EU indicated that the Mauritius' request may be positively considered as an exceptional case. At the request of EU an application in due form with additional justification signed by the hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade has been submitted to the EU on 23 October 2017.

With regard to part (b) (ii) of the question, I am informed that, at the last meeting of the Joint-Economic Partnership Agreement held in Madagascar on 02-03 October 2017, between EU and the Eastern Southern African Interim-Economic Partnership signatories, an Agreement in principle

was reached between the two sides to pursue negotiations on a more comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement.

In the context of these negotiations, Mauritius will urge that the quota on automatic derogation for tuna should be substantially increased from the current level of 8,000 tonnes. The proposal to increase the quantum of automatic derogation has been made several times in the EPA Committee. However, this can only be achieved in the context of the negotiation on the comprehensive EPA.

TUESDAY 14 NOVEMBER 2017

MAHEBOURG-BAMBOUS VIRIEUX - OYSTER FARM – SEA LEASED

(No. B/750) **Mr D. Ramful (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien)** asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the Oyster Farm of Mahebourg-Bambous Virieux, he will state –

- (a) the name of the promoter/company involved therein, indicating the shareholding of each Director;
- (b) if any deed concession has been signed;
- (c) the extent of sea leased and rental value thereof;
- (d) if it has been issued with an Environment Impact Assessment licence and,
- (e) the estimated impact thereof on the fishermen thereat.

Mr Koonjoo: Thank you, Madam Speaker. With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that the name of the company is Mascareignas Oyster (Mauritius) Ltd.

(*Interruptions*)

Macarena! Mascareignas mo pe dire!

(*Interruptions*)

Non, to camarade sa, pa mwa sa !

Madam Speaker: Non. Hon. Minister, please address the Chair and do not cross talk when you are replying!

(*Interruptions*)

Hon. Minister, please reply!

Mr Koonjoo: Yes, thank you, Madam Speaker. It has two shareholders who are also the promoters.

As regards the shareholding of each Director, this is a private company, Madam Speaker, involved in commercial activities and it would not be in order to divulge such information.

Regarding part (b) of the question, I am informed that the Mascareignas Oyster (Mauritius) Ltd. Had, in accordance with Section 8B of the Fisheries and Marine Resources Act, applied to the Prime Minister's Office for a concession at sea of oyster farming in one of the prescribed zones as

per the Fisheries and Marine Resources (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2015. The Deed of Concession has not yet been signed.

Madam Speaker, in regard to part (c) of the question, the site is located at Nord Est Annanas Bank and is of an extent of approximately 28 hectares. The concession fee is Rs100,000 per year, exclusive of any tax or duty which is applicable and any charge, as may be determined by the Government, shall be increased annually in accordance with the Consumer Price Index. It is to be pointed out that the same amount and conditions apply to any concession.

With regard to part (d) of the question, I am informed that the company has obtained its EIA licence on 06 June 2017.

As for part (e) of the question, I am informed that the oyster farm at Mahebourg will not affect the marine ecosystem in view of the fact that the oysters will not be fed with artificial feed. However, the promoter shall take the necessary steps to facilitate the movement of fishing boats near the oyster farm. As such, demarcation buoys with the appropriate lights shall be placed around the zone after the finalisation of the Deed of Concession. *C'est tout, merci.*

(*Interruptions*)

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Ramful!

Mr Ramful: The hon. Minister has finished, but I have not finished with my question. I have done some research at the level of the Registrar of Companies and, with regard to the shareholdings and Directors, there is one Mr Keshaye Beeda who is the promoter and shareholder of that company. Can the hon. Minister confirm if Mr Keshaye Beeda is related to him?

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Koonjoo: Mr Keshaye Beeda is one partner of the company. Yes, he is related to me because he is the son of my brother-in-law. Okay, any problem?

(*Interruptions*)

He is related to you also!

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Ramful: Apart from...

(*Interruptions*)

Apart from Mr Keshaye Beeda, can the hon. Minister inform the House how many poor and needy fishermen from the locality of Bambous Virieux and Mahebourg have been allowed or have been given facilities to participate in aquaculture farming so far?

Mr Koonjoo: Aquaculture in this oyster company...

Madam Speaker: No...

(*Interruptions*)

No, the question is general! Ask the question specifically...

Mr Koonjoo: This has nothing to do with the question....

Madam Speaker:...with regard to the main question, then he will be able to answer! Hon. Ramful!

Mr Ramful: Has the hon. Minister received complaints from fishermen with regard to that particular project?

Madam Speaker: That's it!

Mr Koonjoo: The project is not yet on, Madam Speaker. I said just now that it has not been finalised yet. The promoter has asked for some time.

(*Interruptions*)

No. There is no complaint as such. Thank you.

Mr Ramful: Is the hon. Minister aware that even though the Deed of Concession has not yet been signed, the promoters have already started work in the lagoon of Mahebourg, placing nets? Is the hon. Minister aware of this?

(*Interruptions*)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Koonjoo: So far, the promoter has not yet signed the concession. So, he cannot start working, and if he has not started working, how can he employ people?

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Jhuboo!

Mr Jhuboo: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I came across a document, it is an invitation for Expressions of Interest in Rodrigues for aquaculture projects. Madam Speaker, one of the conditions that is required for those who apply for a lease, is that the applicant should have at least 5 years' experience in the field of aquaculture. Now, my question to the hon. Minister is whether Mascareignas fishing has 5 years of experience in the field, and if we apply the same condition as we apply in Rodrigues?

Mr Koonjoo: Aquaculture in Rodrigues has nothing to do with this question of...

(*Interruptions*)

It is not an aquaculture as such! It is upgrading of the oysters, and oysters, it is every...

(*Interruptions*)

Madam Speaker: But the question has nothing to do with Rodrigues.

Mr Koonjoo: It has nothing to do with this question.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Adrien Duval!

Mr A. Duval: Thank you, Madam Speaker. This is a massive area that has been given to Mascareignas Ltd., 28 hectares, if I understood correctly. It is huge! I am sure there are very few barachois, of leasehold of that extent. Can the hon. Minister enlighten the House as to the investment that has been undertaken to be made by Mascareignas Ltd in order to obtain this leasehold?

Madam Speaker: You do not have the information!

Mr Koonjoo: I am not aware of that, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: You do not have! Last question, hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: The Minister has just informed us that one of the shareholders of that company is a very close relative to him. Can he inform the House and the nation whether at any point in time he has had any dealing with files, in presiding the meetings or in recommending actions as far as this company is concerned and whether he can inform the House that he has declared any interest with his Permanent Secretary or his officials while this file was being handled at his Ministry?

Mr Koonjoo: I do not have the information, Madam Speaker, but I can tell the House...

(*Interruptions*)

Madam Speaker: Order! Order, please!

(*Interruptions*)

Order!

Mr Koonjoo: If the hon. Member has the information, give it ...

(*Interruptions*)

No!

Madam Speaker: Hon. Minister, no crosstalking! Order! Order, please! Hon. Bhagwan! Order, please! Alright, the hon. Minister does not have the information.

(*Interruptions*)

Hon. Koonjoo!

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Koonjoo: *Ramassee to laguelle ein!*

Madam Speaker: Hon. Koonjoo!

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Koonjoo: *To Ramasse to laguelle!*

(*Interruptions*)

Madam Speaker: Order, please!

(*Interruptions*)

Hon. Bhagwan, please!

(*Interruptions*)

Hon. Koonjoo, please!

(*Interruptions*)

Right! We pass on to the next question!

(Interruptions)

Next question, hon. Ms Sewocksingh!

ST. BRANDON ISLAND - LEASE

(No. B/784) Mr J. C. Barbier (Fourth Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether he will state if St Brandon Island has been leased out and, if so, indicate the –

- (a) name of the leaseholder;
- (b) terms and conditions of the lease, and
- (c) date of coming into operation of the said lease and reasons for the renewal thereof, if any.

(Withdrawn)

FISHERMAN REGISTRATION CARD – ISSUE

(No. B/785) Mr J. C. Barbier (Fourth Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the Fisherman Registration Card, he will state the number thereof which have been issued and retrieved, respectively, since January 2015 to date.

(Withdrawn)

TUESDAY 21 NOVEMBER 2017

WEST COAST - AQUACULTURE PROJECTS

(No. B/827) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the west coast of the island, he will state the number of aquaculture projects implemented or to be implemented thereat, indicating –

- (a) the name of the promoters and of the respective experiences thereof in the sector, indicating if foreign nationals are co-shareholders thereof;
- (b) if he is in presence of complaints from the AHRIM, tourist operators, fishermen and inhabitants thereat in relation to the implementation thereof, and
- (c) if a study has been carried out to determine the impact thereof on the tourism sector.

(Withdrawn)

TUESDAY 28 NOVEMBER 2017

AQUACULTURE - GROWFISH INTERNATIONAL (MAURITIUS) LTD – EIA LICENCE

(No. B/877) **Mr E. Jhuboo (Third Member for Savanne & Black River)** asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to aquaculture, he will state if –

- (a) Growfish Ltd. has been issued with an Environment Impact Assessment licence to carry out same and, if so, indicate the terms and conditions attached thereto, and
- (b) the AHRIM and other Non-Governmental Organisations have expressed to his Ministry their serious concerns in relation to the implementation thereof and, if so, indicate if consideration will be given thereto.

Mr Koonjoo: Madam Speaker, in regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity, and Environment and Sustainable Development that an EIA licence was issued to Growfish International (Mauritius) Ltd on 06 October 2017 in accordance with Part IV of the Environment Protection Act 2002. There are 24 conditions attached to the licence, and these can be consulted online from the website of the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development.

As regards part (b) of the question, I have to inform the House that AHRIM has orally requested my Ministry to arrange for a meeting with Growfish International (Mauritius) Ltd to obtain more information on its aquaculture project with a view to enabling them to submit their views on the EIA report.

On 17 July 2015, a meeting was held at my Ministry with representatives of AHRIM, Growfish International (Mauritius) Ltd and Board of Investment. Following clarifications sought by the representatives of AHRIM, the representatives of Growfish International (Mauritius) Ltd confirmed that it was not going ahead with the development of the site at Le Morne. It will develop only at sites Bambous 1 and Bambous 2. The sites chosen by Growfish International (Mauritius) Ltd at Bambous are in depths of more than 400 metres and are located at 1.8 kms from the coast, outside the lagoon. There is no tourism related activity in this specific part of the ocean and the region which is situated outside the lagoon, as I have said.

I am also informed that after the issue of the EIA licence on 06 October 2017, AHRIM and the Sea Users Association have submitted an appeal before the Environment and Land Use Appeal Tribunal. As the issue is subject to an appeal before the Environment and Land Use Appeal Tribunal, it would not be appropriate for me to provide detailed information on this matter.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Jhuboo!

Mr Jhuboo: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, on one hand, we have the tourism industry that generates Rs68 billion and employs over 100,000 jobs and, on the other hand, Growfish, which is going to employ 500 people only, and we do not know what is the turnover that it is going to generate. So, my question to the hon. Minister is whether we can take such a risk and embark on such a project without a proper assessment, without a proper scientific survey on aquaculture and its unintended consequences on our economy and ecology.

Mr Koonjoo: Madam Speaker, this question of aquaculture is becoming very, very popular all around the world. I came back from South Africa on Saturday and there also and everywhere in the world people are talking about aquaculture, and this is important. I understand the preoccupation of the hon. Member, but we know that, in this sector, the Government has created a Ministry for Aquaculture, especially - Blue economy - and I believe that this is the future. We have taken the decision to make the ocean economy a ...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Please, do not interrupt the Minister!

Mr Koonjoo: ... pillar of the economy, and we mean it. My good Friend, I am sure, would agree with me that at this time - and in the future also, especially - many countries are suffering from famine and food security is becoming a very, very important problem for the whole world. Everywhere people are talking about aquaculture, and it is giving results. I will tell you one thing. For the information of my Friend, they will start with five tons and, in five years, they will come to about 45 tons of fish, and it is good for the people. People will earn money. They will have jobs and ultimately many people will also get rid of the question of food security.

Madam Speaker: I think you have answered the question, hon. Minister. Next question, hon. Jhuboo! You have another question?

Mr Jhuboo: Yes, thank you, Madam Speaker. It concerns Bambous I and Bambous II, the site that was identified for the installation of the cages. In his EIA, Growfish Ltd acknowledges the issue regarding the proliferation of sharks and one of its mitigating measures is to install stronger nets around the aqua-culture farm. So, my question to the hon. Minister concerns the security of our fellow citizens around the region of Flic en Flac and how is he going to protect the security of our citizens?

Mr Koonjoo: There is a rumour in Mauritius, especially since the PMSD...

(Interruptions)

Yes, the day you left the Government, the next day there was the problem of sharks in the country!

(Interruptions)

You better check it.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Armance, please! Order, please!

(Interruptions)

No, please don't engage in any conversation, hon. Minister! Hon. Minister, please don't engage in any conversation with any other Member! Please give your reply to the question!

(Interruptions)

Mr Koonjoo: Bigger shark he has ever seen! I don't know whether he has seen you two hunting ...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Please, don't interrupt the Minister I have said! Hon. Henry, don't interrupt the Minister please. Hon. Mrs Perraud!

Mr Koonjoo: There is no proof in Mauritius as far as I know that there has been any attack of sharks in the lagoon, especially in the lagoon.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Koonjoo, you have finished?

Mr Koonjoo: Not yet.

Madam Speaker: Please don't take much time, reply specifically to the question which has been asked.

(Interruptions)

Mr Koonjoo: *Requin moustache p rode moustache dans parlement ici !*

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Don't make remarks!

Mr Koonjoo: Yes, Madam Speaker. This is only a rumour and we are taking all the precautions because we mean business and we don't want any person, especially the people working in the tourism sector to be afraid of sharks. We never had after independence a single attack of shark in Mauritius.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Adrien Duval!

Mr A. Duval: Thank you, Madam Speaker. In light of what the hon. Minister has said, the rumour, is he aware - because it is in his answer - that only one month ago in Grand Gaube, next to the aquaculture of Grand Gaube in the lagoon, about 100 metres from two hotels there were caught two sharks of two different breeds reputed to attack humans.

In Reunion, for example, Madam Speaker, the Pont shark and the Tiger shark are the top killers and these sharks of over 2 metres in length were caught on the said night on buoys with hooks, next around the ...

Madam Speaker: Hon. Adrien Duval, don't provide information. Ask the question to the hon. Minister!

Mr A. Duval: Is the hon. Minister aware of this incident? Is he aware that this is becoming a recurrent factor and is he prepared to do a study, as hon. Jhuboo suggested, and review his policy about giving permits of fish farming inside the lagoon, especially close to hotels?

Madam Speaker: Don't be too lengthy in your question!

Mr Koonjoo: I will ask my friend from the other side of the House to come with a substantive question and I will give all the details about the 2 persons, especially in Grand Gaube *cette fois-ci*. Please do understand that I have got all the information.

(Interruptions)

The hon. Member should come with a substantive question and I will give the answer.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Ramful!

Mr Ramful: Madam Speaker, there have been recently a lot of questions with regard to those aquaculture projects. Now, before the obtention of an EIA licence, I am given to understand that the applicant needs to produce an Ecological Impact Assessment Report. Given all these questions that have been raised, would the hon. Minister be prepared to make public or table before the Assembly, the Ecological Impact Assessment Report in all these cases where aqua-culture licences have been given, including this one?

Mr Koonjoo: Yes, there is no problem in that, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Last question on this issue, hon. Ganoo!

Mr Ganoo: Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether there has been a complaint by different associations with regard to the location near to these cages as this site is a preferred site for divers and snorkers?

Mr Koonjoo: I didn't follow the last part of the question, Madam Speaker. **Madam Speaker:** Do you want the hon. Member to repeat this question briefly?

Mr Ganoo: I am repeating my question. I would like to know whether there has been a complaint by various associations to the effect that the area which has been chosen to place these cages, is a place which is preferred by swimmers, divers and snorkers.

Mr Koonjoo: Yes, Madam Speaker, there were some protests in Le Morne for the Growfish Company. Le Morne and Bambous were chosen as two places. Ultimately when there was a meeting in my Ministry with the persons concerned, the Growfish Company agreed to shift from Le Morne; there would not be any further development in Le Morne, but all will shift to Bambous 1 and Bambous 2.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Jhuboo!

BAIN DES DAMES - FISHING PORT PROJECT

(No. B/878) Mr E. Jhuboo (Third Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the proposed fishing port project of LHF Marine Development Ltd. at Bain des Dames, he will state where matters stand as to the implementation thereof, indicating the –

- (a) expected starting date of operation of the –
 - (i) fish processing factory, and
 - (ii) seafood market thereat, and
- (b) terms and conditions of the land lease allocated thereto.

Mr Koonjoo: Madam Speaker, the Luhaifeng (LHF) Marine Development Ltd submitted to the Ministry of Fisheries on 30 July 2013, an application for a fishery project comprising -

- a. The construction of a modern fishing port;
- b. Cold chain logistics;
- c. Fish processing facilities, and
- d. Operation of a tuna fishing fleet of 5 to 10 purse-seiners.

The then Ministry of Fisheries issued a Letter of Intent on 01 August 2014 for the fishing fleet and the processing plant. On 14 September 2015 the Board of Investment (BOI) issued a letter of comfort to the promoter for the construction of the fishing port. One of the conditions is that the approval of the Mauritius Ports Authority (MPA) should be sought for the 4.5 hectares of land at Fort William.

In regard to parts (a) and (b) of the question, I am informed by the MPA that it has earmarked on 14 September 2015 a plot of land of the extent of 4.5 hectares at Fort William for the fishing port and other ancillary facilities.

At the request of the Promoter, the earmarked period was extended twice to enable LHF Marine Development Ltd to comply with the pre-requisite conditions of MPA's offer, including the submission of a detailed project proposal.

After a follow-up meeting held with the Promoter on 18 April 2017, LHF Marine Development Ltd has, on 24 April 2017, applied for a further extension of the earmarked period by another period of six months, so as to submit the requested information/clarifications. The earmarked period was finally extended up to 13 September 2017.

As the promoter failed to submit the requested information, the earmarked period was not extended beyond 13 September 2017, and the offer lapsed away.

Madam Speaker, on 19 April 2017, the promoter has submitted to my Ministry a request for the registration of six fishing vessels, as initially I said. My Ministry is awaiting for the survey report from the China Classification Society prior to registration of these vessels. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Jhuboo!

Mr Jhuboo: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Can the hon. Minister confirm to the House that the land vested to LHF, the lease has been cancelled?

Mr Koonjoo: I cannot say exactly whether the lease has been cancelled, but the offer has fallen down. They were not serious. They have not asked for more extension of the period. They were given four times' extension, but they never responded. Unfortunately, the delay was lapsed.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Jhuboo!

Mr Jhuboo: Madam Speaker, Government has applied to the European Union for an exemption of 4,000 tonnes of tuna from the European Union because we do not have enough tuna in our economic zone to supply our own factories. On the other hand, we are granting now 6 fishing licences to LHF. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether a proper assessment of our fish reserves has been conducted before granting any permit.

Mr Koonjoo: I think it is better to come with a substantive question, I will reply. But I can tell the hon. Member that for this 4,000 tonnes of tuna, there is derogation and, so far, I have learnt that it is on the good way. Let's hope that we will be at the derogation. As for the question of tuna has decreased in the ocean, this is totally untrue.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: Is the hon. Minister aware or has his attention been drawn by his senior staff that some of the Directors of the LHF Marine Development Ltd. have been and are still under the scrutiny of ICAC for corruption cases, and the Police as well?

Mr Koonjoo: ICAC? I have not learnt about that, Madam Speaker. I am sorry.

Mr Bhagwan: Will the hon. Minister enquire and inform the House accordingly?

Mr Koonjoo: I say it loud that I will enquire, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Adrien Duval!

Mr A. Duval: Madam Speaker, it is very concerning what the hon. Minister is saying. He seems to be very out of touch with the reality. He is saying that there is...

Madam Speaker: Do not make comments!

Mr A. Duval: This is a question! The hon. Minister said that the tuna population is not being depleted. It is completely untrue, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: No. Look, hon. Adrien Duval, this has nothing to do with the main question, but I authorised the question because the hon. Minister wanted to answer!

(Interruptions)

Right! So, it has nothing to do with the main question. I would request you to come with a question which arises from the main question.

Mr A. Duval: Similar to what hon. Jhuboo has asked, has a study been made or has the hon. Minister taken cognizance of international studies that are being made on a daily basis by all the world organisations, alerting Governments of the dire situation of fish population? In light of these studies, public information, does he not think that there needs to be a change in policy in order to protect the fish population in the Indian Ocean, especially in our economic zone?

Madam Speaker: No. Hon. Adrien Duval, I am really sorry, this has nothing to do with the main question. Hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: If I heard the hon. Minister clear, this project will not go ahead at Bain des Dames, but I understand that works have already started. So, may we know what will happen to that land which has been vested to the promoter where they have already started certain works, where fishermen have been banned to enter certain zones near that site?

Mr Koonjoo: This, I have already answered, Madam Speaker! If the hon. Member has got a new question, I am going to answer.

Madam Speaker: You do not have the information now!

Mr Koonjoo: No.

Madam Speaker: Okay. Next question, hon. Jhuboo!

MAURITIUS SHIPPING CORPORATION - LEGAL ADVISERS

(No. B/886) **Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the Mauritius Shipping Corporation, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the names of the present legal advisers thereof, indicating the dates on which the services thereof were retained.

Reply: I am informed by the Acting Managing Director, Mauritius Shipping Corporation Ltd that in February 2015, the Board had taken the decision that Attorneys and Counsels to be appointed on a case to case basis.

I am also informed that since 2016, the Mauritius Shipping Corporation Ltd has been involved in four different legal cases and different Counsels and Attorneys were appointed.

In the fourth and last case, the services of Mr P. C. and Mr R. G. were retained. The Mauritius Shipping Corporation Limited won the case and leave was granted by the Supreme Court. They have already been paid for this specific assignment.

The Mauritius Shipping Corporation Limited has retained the services of Mr J. G. (QC) from the United Kingdom on 22 November 2017 for the case to be lodged at the Privy Council.

POINTE AUX SABLES - PUBLIC BEACH - CLEANING

(No. B/895) **Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West)** asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity, and Environment and Sustainable Development whether, in regard to the public beach at Debarcadère, in Pointe aux Sables, he will state the actions taken for the cleaning and for the removal of the dangerous structures found thereat.

Reply (Ministry of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping): I am informed by the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Environment and Sustainable Development that the cleaning of the Pointe aux Sables (*Debarcadère*) beach is being done by its Field Services Unit. One refuse collector and one general worker are deployed permanently on site to carry out general cleaning.

On 22 September 2017, a fire broke out and burned a container belonging to the “Association des Pêcheurs de Pointe aux Sables”. All the equipment and nets kept inside were completely burnt down.

On 24 September 2017, the officer of the Fisheries Protection Service of my Ministry responsible for the Pointe aux Sables Fisheries Post, has requested the President of the “*Association des Pêcheurs de Pointe aux Sables*” to remove the container.

On the same day, “*Police de l’Environnement*” served a notice to the President of the “*Association des Pêcheurs de Pointe aux Sables*” and requested him to remove the container within 30 days.

My Ministry is following up with the President of the “*Association des Pêcheurs de Pointe aux Sables*” to ensure that action is taken to remove the burnt container.

2018

TUESDAY 27 MARCH 2018

AQUACULTURE - SHARKS PROLIFERATION – SURVEY

(No. B/31) **Mr E. Jhuboo (Third Member for Savanne & Black River)** asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the aquaculture projects and a scientific survey on shark proliferation carried out by one Mr J. K. for Government, he will state if the final report thereof has been submitted and, if so, indicate –
(a) the recommendations thereof, and
(b) if same will be rendered public.

Mr Koonjoo: Madam Speaker, I am informed that a study to evaluate the impact of aquaculture on the proliferation of sharks in the Mauritius waters was commissioned by the then Board of Investment following the continued claims by stakeholders that the development of aquaculture would lead to an increase in the risk of shark attacks in our lagoon.

The expertise of a world renowned shark expert was enlisted for this purpose. The study was carried out in collaboration with the technical officers of my Ministry and the University of Mauritius and was based on evidence and fieldwork. I am further informed that the findings of this study have been submitted to the Economic Development Board.

Madam Speaker, as hon. Members of the House are aware, an appeal has been lodged before the Environment and Land Use Appeal Tribunal on the EIA licence granted to the promoter for aquaculture.

Making the report of the study public at this stage may be perceived as pre-empting the outcome of the case before the Tribunal. Consequently, it would not be appropriate for me to disclose the contents.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Jhuboo!

Mr Jhuboo: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Both l'AHRIM and the BOI have conveyed reports on aquaculture and both reports come to the conclusion that aquaculture projects cannot be implemented in touristic areas. So, will the hon. Minister agree with me that the future aquaculture projects will be developed on remote areas, outside touristic zones?

Mr Koonjoo: Madam Speaker, I just said that the case is in the Court and we want the Court to give the judgement and then we can act on that.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Adrien Duval!

Mr A. Duval: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Last time, I, myself, asked a question to hon. Minister Koonjoo about the presence of sharks with regard to the aquaculture nets that are being put, especially in Grand Gaube and since then hon. Minister Gayan came for a visit and he took it very lightly and said that next time he would book an appointment with the sharks since he saw none of them. And a week after, they caught a two-meter tiger shark! A week after, exactly where hon. Gayan was! Then when questioned, he just...

Madam Speaker: No, the hon. Member must ask his question because I have given him leeway to make his question intelligible! So, he must ask his question!

Mr A. Duval: In view of the fact, according to hon. Gayan himself, shark fishing is illegal according to Conventions, what is the Government proposing now to stop these huge sharks - proliferation of dangerous sharks in the lagoon especially in Grand Gaube around hotels? What are they doing to remedy that since clearly it is illegal to fish and they are offering no other solutions?

Madam Speaker: Yes!

Mr Koonjoo: Madam Speaker, I just said we are waiting for the outcome of the Court and it is well-known that - I will come with a statement in the House later on concerning the whole thing. That's it.

Madam Speaker: Last question, hon. Jhuboo!

Mr Jhuboo: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, the site identified by Government for aquaculture project is situated in Bambous 1 and Bambous 2. For those who are familiar with these places, they are also called *les falaises d'Albion*. Now, in an article dated 24 February 2018, the hon. Minister of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection stated that Government is going ahead with a petroleum hub in the region of Albion. So, my question to the hon. Minister is: could he enlighten the House as to whether he finds it appropriate to have aquaculture farming next to or in the middle of a petroleum hub?

Mr Koonjoo: Madam Speaker, I just said I will come later on with a statement in the Parliament about the whole thing. It is the only country in the world where aquaculture - people are talking about sharks and only in Grand Gaube...

(*Interruptions*)

Yes, Reunion is something different!

(*Interruptions*)

Madam Speaker: Don't reply to...

Mr Koonjoo: I will come with the paper...

(*Interruptions*)

Madam Speaker: Now, allow the hon. Minister to reply peacefully, please!

Mr Koonjoo: I said that!

(*Interruptions*)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Minister!

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Koonjoo: I said that!

Madam Speaker: Hon. Minister!

(*Interruptions*)

Hon. Minister, please you don't have to engage in any conversation with hon. Members of the Opposition!

Mr Koonjoo: Once the case is over, I will come definitely with a strong...

(*Interruptions*)

Madam Speaker: Please! Please, I have already said that you should not disturb the hon. Minister when he is replying.

(*Interruptions*)

Please don't! And don't make remarks from a sitting position, please! Yes, hon. Jhuboo, next question!

POUDRE D'OR - SEA CUCUMBER – CULTURE

(No. B/32) Mr E. Jhuboo (Third Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the proposed culture of sea cucumber by Mauricoast Ltd. on an extent of 46 hectares of Barachois in the region of Poudre d'Or, he will state if the project has started and, if so, indicate the tonnage of sea cucumber produced thereat as at to date.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Minister!

Mr Koonjoo: Madam Speaker, in September 2015, my Ministry authorised Mauricoast Company Ltd. a local company, to undertake an aquaculture project in the Barachois at Poudre d'Or. The Company commissioned a feasibility study on aquaculture of the sea cucumber at the Barachois. The consultant carried out bathymetric survey, visual assessment, in-depth analysis of the quality of the water and sediment testing.

On 08 March 2016, the company informed my Ministry that the consultants have found the site suitable for the proposed project. Unfortunately, Mauricoast Ltd. could not continue with the project as the company was denied access to the Barachois by Persand Royal Co. Ltd. A legal case was lodged by Mauricoast against Persand Royal Co. Ltd before the Supreme Court on 13 June 2016. Consequently, Mauricoast Ltd has not been able to pursue its activities.

Following representations from Mauricoast Co. Ltd, legal advice was sought from the Solicitor General's Office on this issue.

The Solicitor General has informed my Ministry that Persand Royal Co. Ltd be given a deadline for the removal of the gate and fencing, failing which my Ministry would proceed to the removal of the gate and fencing, whilst reserving the right to seek reimbursement from the company for any cost incurred.

On 06 November 2017, this Ministry advised Persand Royal Co. Ltd accordingly and the company was given a deadline of 21 days to abide by the Ministry's instructions for the removal and relocation of the gate and fencing. However, it failed to do so.

Procedures are under way to relocate the gate and the fencing.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Jhuboo!

Mr Jhuboo: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Could we know from the hon. Minister how much is the rental, how much is the lease charged per year to Mauricoast Ltd?

Mr Koonjoo: There is no lease for any barachois in Mauritius.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Ramful!

Mr Ramful: May I know from the hon. Minister if there is any clause in the contract with regard to any time limit that has been given to Mauricoast for it to start operation?

Mr Koonjoo: I said there is no cost also because it remains the property of the Ministry and the Government.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Jhuboo!

Mr Jhuboo: Madam Speaker, Government charges the following rental figures for hotel site. It is up to Rs2 m. per year, annual fee. For agricultural land in Plaine Sophie, it is Rs1,000 lease. Now, in this particular case, Government gives a permission or grants a permission to a company on an extent of 100 *arpents* and does not derive a single rupee out of it. Will the Minister agree with me that Government should at least charge a sum, even a small fee?

Mr Koonjoo: Madam Speaker, I must make it clear once for all that even in the past there was no charge, no fees for anybody looking for a concession in the sea, especially in the sea. In the land, it is something different. So, I must insist to say that there is no charge, no fees, nothing. It remains the property of the Government. We give it for people, especially cooperative, to carry out aquaculture in the lagoon. But we are even thinking about that also in the future, what to do about the lagoon and, if not, change the place and put them outside the lagoon.

Madam Speaker: Last question, hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Is not it the case that, in fact, Mauricoast is unable to go ahead with the project because they do not have money and they have actually served a notice on SMEDA last year, requesting them to ask MauBank to give them Rs20 m. and, when they refused, they are now going after the SMEDA? So my question is: is not it the truth that, in fact, Mauricoast does not even have the money to go ahead with this project?

Mr Koonjoo: I do not have this information, Madam Speaker. I do not know about this. If they have done it, I do not know.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Jhuboo!

MAURITIUS MARITIME TRAINING ACADEMY - OFFICER-IN-CHARGE – RECRUITMENT

(No. B/45) Mr R. Uteem (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the Mauritius Maritime Training Academy, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the name, qualifications and salary of the officer-in-charge thereof and the procedure used for the recruitment thereof.

Reply: I am informed that the Post of Head of the Mauritius Maritime Training Academy was filled on 01 September 2016 by a recruitment exercise following a Public Advertisement from local candidates.

The selected candidate Dr. Sanjiv Kumar Babooa assumed duty on 01 September 2016. Amongst the other qualifications required for the post, Dr. Babooa holds a PhD in Administration from the University of South Africa.

He has been offered a 3-year contract for the post as from the date of his assumption of duty with a monthly salary of Rs72,400 plus other allowances in accordance with the recommendations of Pay Research Bureau.

I am tabling before the House a copy of the Contract of his employment and the conditions, together with details of his qualifications and experience.

As regards the last part of the question, as I mentioned earlier, the post was advertised locally and twelve (12) candidates applied for the post out of whom seven (7) candidates were eligible for the post and they were called for interview and all of them attended.

The Selection Panel comprised Mr J. D. P. Labonne, Deputy Permanent Secretary of my Ministry as Chairperson of the Selection Exercise. Mr R. Prayag, Chairperson, Mauritius Oceanography Institute, Prof (Mrs) R. Mohee, then Vice Chancellor, University of Mauritius and Mrs S. Mohit Juliette, Assistant Manager, Human Resources of my Ministry were members.

All procedures, in accordance with the Public Service Commission Regulations and with the approval of the Public Service Commission, had been followed for the recruitment exercise.

TUESDAY 03 APRIL 2018

ST BRANDON GROUP OF ISLANDS – MARINE PROTECTED AREA

(No. B/88) Mr E. Jhuboo (Third Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the St Brandon Archipelago, he will state if same is proposed to be declared a marine protected park.

Reply (The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands): I am informed that the Ministry of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping, is not proposing to declare St Brandon Group of Islands as a marine protected area for the time being.

ST BRANDON - ISLETS – LEASE

(No. B/103) Mr J. C. Barbier (Fifth Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether he will state if St Brandon Island has been leased out and, if so, indicate the –
(a) name of the leaseholder ;
(b) terms and conditions of the lease, and
(c) date of coming into operation of the said lease and reasons for the renewal thereof, if any.

Reply (The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands):
With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that Raphael Fishing Company Ltd holds a permanent lease for some of the islets, while the other islets are under the responsibility of the Outer Islands Development Corporation.

With regard to part (b) of the question, the terms and conditions of the lease agreement dated 11 October 1901 are as follows –

- (a) the company was to export to Mauritius all guano found in the islands and islets and pay a royalty fee of Rs5 for each tonne delivered;
- (b) all products of the islands and islets were to be delivered to Mauritius;
- (c) all clauses and conditions in the grant of “jouissance” were to be maintained and continue to bind the company, and
- (d) the lease was at an annual price of Rs1, payable on 02 October every year.

With regard to part (c) of the question, the date of coming into operation of the lease is 02 October 1901.

The question of renewal does not arise inasmuch as the lease is a permanent one. This has been confirmed in a judgement of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council delivered on 30 July 2008.

FISHERMAN REGISTRATION CARD – ISSUE & CANCELLATION

(No. B/104) Mr J. C Barbier (Fourth Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the Fisherman Registration Card, he will state the number thereof which have been issued and retrieved, respectively, since January 2015 to date.

Reply: I wish to inform the House that no Fisherman Registration Card has been issued since January 2015.

Furthermore, I am informed that the last issue of Fisherman Registration Card was effected in 2009. Regarding the second part of the question, I am informed that a total of 196 Fisherman Registration Cards have been cancelled between January 2015 to date for the following reasons -

- (a) 98 fishers passed away;
- (b) 24 fishers surrendered their card due to inability to go fishing as a result of old age;
- (c) 4 net fishers have relinquished their cards;
- (d) 69 fishers have voluntarily surrendered their cards for personal reasons, and
- (e) 1 fisher has proceeded abroad.

TUESDAY 10 APRIL 2018

MV ANNA VESSEL – CHARTERING – AMOUNT PAID

(No. B/174) Mr D. Ramful (Third Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the chartering of vessel MV ANNA, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Shipping Corporation Ltd., information as to the –

- (a) total amount that has been paid therefor, as at to date, and
- (b) reasons for the delay in the acquisition of a vessel.

(Withdrawn)

FISH FARMING ZONES & BARACHOIS - ALLOCATION

(No. B/175) Mr D. Ramful (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the allocation of Large Scale Fish Farming Zones and Barachois, he will state if Expressions of Interests were launched prior to the allocation thereof and, if not, why not, indicating, in the case of the allocation of Barachois if an agreement or Memorandum of Understanding is entered into with the promoter thereof setting out clearly the terms and conditions thereof.

FISHING BOATS - REGISTRATION

(No. B/180) Mr J. C. Barbier (Fourth Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the fishing boats, he will state the relevant authority responsible for the registration thereof for artisanal fishers, indicating if a non-registered fisher may register his/her boat for artisanal fishing and, if not, why not.

(Withdrawn)

TUESDAY 24 APRIL 2018

RÉMY OLLIER, MAHEBOURG – BOAT PASSAGE

(No. B/270) Mr T. Henry (Fourth Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the proposed construction of a channel at Rémy Ollier, Mahebourg, he will state where matters stand.

Mr Koonjoo: Madam Speaker, at the very outset, I want to underline that these requests were already made by my friend hon. Jhugroo, now the Minister, and his colleague hon. Hurreeram. I say it because this problem is there since more than a decade and my hon. friend should know that the problem is there - I said more than a decade - when his Leader was the Minister of Finance.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order! Hon. Minister, I have drawn your attention several times that when you are replying to your PQs, please do not get engaged in conversation with other hon. Members of the House.

(Interruptions)

Please! Even if they make remarks, hon. Rutnah, this is not allowed!

Mr Koonjoo: I am informed that representations were made by fishermen of Mahebourg to the effect that they were having difficulties to navigate through the existing boat passage at Rémy Ollier, Mahebourg, and which has become shallow due to silting over time.

With a view to alleviating the difficulties of the fishermen and other users, my Ministry initially proposed to go for a de-silting of the passage.

However, given the environmental complexity of the project, my Ministry, jointly with all the Government bodies, conducted ecological and bathymetric surveys, amongst others, and carried out an Expression of Interest exercise to shortlist multi-disciplinary consultants. The EOI exercise was completed in October 2017 and a shortlist of three consultants consortiums was drawn.

This project is currently at procurement stage, and my Ministry will launch shortly a request for proposal for consultancy services to conduct an Environmental Impact Assessment, that is, EIA, study as the environmental complexity of the works warrants an EIA licence as per the Environment Protection Act of 2008.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Henry!

Mr Henry: Merci, Madame la présidente. Le ministre est en train d'induire la Chambre en erreur en disant que l'honorable Hurreeram aussi était présent. La première réunion qui a été faite, c'est l'honorable Jhugroo et moi-même, à l'époque, on avait fait...

Madam Speaker: Hon. Henry! Please sit down! Please sit down, I said! This morning, I drew the attention of another hon. Member not to say that *on est train d'induire ou le ministre est en train d'induire la Chambre en erreur*. I drew attention to this. If you have doubts and you want to come with a motion, then you do come with a motion against the hon. Minister. But, please, do not say this.

Mr Henry: Misinformed, sorry. Can we have a time frame for the project to be implemented?

Mr Koonjoo: I just replied, Madam Speaker, that it is a complex problem and we are taking all the necessary measures to get it done as soon as possible.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Ramful!

Mr Ramful: This procurement exercise, the expression of interest has been on the website of the Ministry since June 2017. Is the hon. Minister saying that till now they have not been able to choose a consultant?

Mr Koonjoo: With your permission, Madam Speaker, I will give the reply. He said last year; 2017 means last year. I will give some information, Madam Speaker, with your permission, to let him know how it is complex. The boat passage was first dredged by the Sugar Planter's Mechanical Pool Corporation in the year 1984.

(*Interruptions*)

I hope the hon. Member was there.

At the time, there was no need for an EIA licence. The dredged materials were scattered along the shore of Rémy Ollier, Mahebourg. It is good the hon. Member knows it. Representations from fishermen on the difficulties encountered to navigate through the existing boat passage at Mahebourg dated back to more than 10 years.

In May 2017, my Ministry carried out renovation works at the Mahebourg Fish Landing Station. Actually, with the law in force, an EIA licence and all necessary clearances should be secured prior to starting any physical site works at sea. The dredged materials will also have to be handled and dumped in an appropriate permanent dumping ground. The three shortlisted consultancy consortium were -

- (a) Mega Design Ltd in association with WML Coast;
- (b) GIBBs (Mauritius) Ltd in association with PRDW Africa (Pty) Ltd, Diospyros Ltd, Hooloomann & Associates Ltd, and
- (c) the NIRAS Associates, in association with VYYAASS Consulting Engineers Ltd.

(*Interruptions*)

C'est la loi!

The Terms of Reference for the Request for Proposal of consultancy service to conduct an EIA study have been finalised and is due to be launched very shortly.

The Terms of Reference includes the various multidisciplinary expertise that would be required for undertaking the EIA study within the sea/lagoon. The tasks expected from the consultant also include

- submission of inception report;
- investigating and reporting of all technical issues;
- submission of Environmental Impact Assessment Report;
- submission of a proper environmental monitoring plan, and
- preparation of project cost estimate, among others.

These are the details, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Next question, Hon. Henry!

BOATS - ARTISANAL FISHING – REGISTRATION

(No. B/278) Mr J. C. Barbier (Fourth Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the fishing boats, he will state the relevant authority responsible for the registration thereof for artisanal fishers, indicating if a non-registered fisher may register his/her boat for artisanal fishing and, if not, why not.

Reply: The Permanent Secretary of my Ministry is the relevant authority responsible for the registration of fishing boats of less than 24 metres overall length, in accordance with Section 42 of the Fisheries and Marine Resources Act 2007.

As regards the registration of boats for artisanal fishing, one of the conditions thereof is that the owner of the boat should be a registered fisher. This condition, which dates back to 2007, has been put in order to avoid situations whereby fishing boat owners get involved into activities other than fishing.

POINTE AUX SABLES – DÉBARCADÈRE - FISH LANDING STATION

(No. B/296) Mr P. Armance (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether in regard to the fish landing station at ‘Débarcadère’ Pointe aux Sables, he will state if he is aware of the deplorable state thereof and, if so, indicate if consideration will be given for the renovation and refurbishment thereof.

Reply: I am informed that a plot of land of an extent of 1,286 m² at “Débarcadère” Pointe aux Sables, is vested in my Ministry to be used as a fish landing station where fishermen of the locality land their catch. There is no building infrastructure on this site. It is actually clean and tidy.

However, my attention has been drawn to the effect that the surrounding lands belonging to other owners are not properly cared of. My Ministry cannot undertake clearing and maintenance of private properties. So, the question of renovation and refurbishment therefore does not arise.

TUESDAY 08 MAY 2018

MAURITIUS SHIPPING CORPORATION - VESSEL MV ANNA – CHARTERING

(No. B/334) Mr D. Ramful (Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the chartering of vessel MV ANNA, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Shipping Corporation Ltd., information as to the –

- (a) total amount that has been paid therefor, as at to date and
- (b) reasons for the delay in the acquisition of a vessel.

Mr Koonjoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Mauritius Shipping Corporation Ltd. that an amount of Rs223,951,246 has been spent for the charge of MV ANNA from 03 May 2015 to 24 April 2018.

Regarding part (b) of the question, I am further informed that, in view of the unavailability of the suitable second hand cargo vessel on the international market, the Board of MSCL decided to procure a new vessel in April 2016 based on the expert advice of MSCL's international ship broker and consultant. Howe Robinson Partners is the consultant name. I understand that the financing option for the procurement of the new vessel is currently under consultation.

Mr Ramful: May I ask the hon. Minister whether he has taken cognizance of the remarks made in the Audit Report with regard to the delay in acquiring new vessels and what does he propose to do?

Mr Koonjoo: The delay has been caused because of the complexity of the harbour in Rodrigues and also there is no harbour in Agaléga as such. We all know how tedious and difficult it is for the boats which carry goods to Agaléga.

(Interruptions)

I am coming to that! This problem is difficult because, at that time, there was a need to buy a second hand vessel which would suit both Rodrigues and Agaléga. I must tell you the whole thing, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. In February 2013, the consortium, Strategic Networking Partners & Consulting Ltd. and the Maritime Group (International) Limited London, was appointed and they submitted a report on 26 October 2013 for the replacement of the Mauritius Pride. By the end of May 2014, decisions were already taken to sell the Mauritius Pride because it had already reached the end of its economic useful life and was becoming costly to operate and maintain in compliance with solace international and also with the IMO regulations. A policy decision was taken at that time by the Government in May 2014 to purchase a second hand multipurpose container vessel as a replacement for the Mauritius Pride and procedures were initiated to that effect. On 04 July 2014, a consultant Roland Capital Limited was appointed by MSCL to advise and assist MSCL during the whole process of the purchase of a second hand container or multipurpose vessel.

According to the consultant and the appointed shipbroker, at that time, an appropriate second-hand vessel with the specification required by the MSCL was very rare on the market and there is a scarcity of vessel as per the requirement of the MSCL satisfying the specific technical and navigational constraint for the safe berthing of Rodrigues and Agaléga.

Bidding exercises were carried out for the...

(Interruptions)

Yes, the hon. Member wants to listen?

(Interruptions)

Bidding exercises were carried out for the procurement of the second-hand cargo vessel in 2014 and 2015. However, during the physical inspection processes these vessels were found to be in poor conditions, which would eventually lead to high maintenance cost, and ultimately the unavailability of a second-hand vessel on the international market complying with the Merchant Shipping Act which is the main cause.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Leopold!

Mr Leopold: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Can the hon. Minister inform the House while he will purchase a new vessel, will it be just a cargo vessel, just a passenger vessel or a mixed one?

Mr Koonjoo: It should be a mixed one, as my hon. friend should know. But, the problem is that we have to satisfy the conditions both in Rodrigues and also in Agaléga. Agaléga is more important because there, people who have gone to Agaléga know how difficult it is for any boat to disembark the goods that they have brought there. It is all....

(Interruptions)

We don't have any quay there. It is a very risky job and all is done by *traîneau*, and people's life is at risk. Thanks God the Indian Government is there, and is helping us to have a new jetty and also a new *piste* for the airplane, otherwise it would have been very difficult.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Can the hon. Minister enlighten us further; the Indian Government is going to construct a jetty there in the foreseeable future, why is the Government buying a vessel that is going to be like a barge when very soon we are going to have a jetty? Is this a calculated move, hon. Minister, because if you are buying a vessel that will become a shore without a jetty and soon we are going to have a jetty, so I think somewhere there is ...

Mr Koonjoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I just said that it is quite difficult for the MSCL to find a suitable vessel which will comply with the demand for Rodrigues and also specially for Agaléga.

(Interruptions)

I never said barge! I never said barge!

The Deputy Speaker: Next question, hon. Ramful!

LARGE SCALE FISH FARMING PROJECTS & BARACHOIS – ALLOCATION

(No. B/335) **Mr D. Ramful (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien)** asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the allocation of Large Scale Fish Farming Zones and Barachois, he will state if Expressions of Interests were launched prior to the allocation thereof and, if not, why not, indicating, in the case of the allocation of Barachois if an agreement or Memorandum of Understanding is entered into with the promoter thereof setting out clearly the terms and conditions thereof.

Mr Koonjoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in line with the Government policy to develop the ocean economy, my Ministry is promoting the development of aquaculture to increase the production and create employment. In this context, 20 sites have been prescribed for the development of the large scale aquaculture activities in accordance with the Fisheries and Marine Resources Regulations 2015. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that in accordance with section 8 (b) of the Fisheries and Marine Resources Act, applications for authorisation for large scale fish farming projects are made to the Economic Development Board which is responsible for the promotion of activities with a view to attracting potential promoters.

All applications are assessed by a technical committee set up at the Economic Development Board, formally to the Board of Investment, and comprising key stakeholders. The recommendations of the technical committee are forwarded to the Permanent Secretary of my Ministry who, in turn, issues the letter of authorisation to the Economic Development Board, which subsequently informs the promoter accordingly. 18 sites were allocated for large scale aquaculture projects in line with the above-mentioned process.

However, three sites are in the process of being retrieved as one promoter has informed that he is not proposing to go ahead with his project and two other promoters have not made any progress in the implementation of their project.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to the second part of the question, I wish to inform the House that in line with the Government vision to promote fisheries and aquaculture, the Ministry of Housing and Lands has vested six Barachois in my Ministry as from 2014 onwards. The processes of allocation of these Barachois started in 2014 and they were allocated to promoters on a pilot basis. Letters of authorisation with conditions have been issued to the promoters. The latter are authorised

to use the Barachois with the technical support of my Ministry for aquaculture projects for a specific period of time. The letter of authorisation specifies the Barachois remains the property of my Ministry.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Ramful!

Mr Ramful: Can the hon. Minister, therefore, confirm that both in the case of large scale fish farming and in the case of Barachois, in both cases neither has there been an expression of interest nor has there been an MoU signed with the promoter in the case of Barachois?

Mr Koonjoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I just explained that there was no MoU and no expression of interest. It was the...

(*Interruptions*)

Yes?

(*Interruptions*)

It was the intention of the Government to give specially to the co-operative people, the fishermen, free of charge and there is nothing to pay, there is no lease for these Barachois or otherwise. Everything was free and it was given for the people to come out of poverty, to increase...

(*Interruptions*)

Yes?

(*Interruptions*)

Kisanla pan comprend?

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Minister!

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Koonjoo: I am listening to the hon. Member.

The Deputy Speaker: Please address the Chair!

Mr Koonjoo: This was the ultimate aim of the Government, to create employment, to create jobs and also to give people the means to live a better life.

The Deputy Speaker: Question Time is over! The Table has been advised that PQ B/343 has been withdrawn.

TUESDAY 15 MAY 2018

FISHERMAN REGISTRATION CARD - APPLICANTS – TRAINING

(No. B/409) Mr J. C. Barbier (Fourth Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the fishermen, he will state if any training is offered thereto prior to obtaining the Fisherman Registration Card and, if so, give details thereof.

Reply: I wish to inform the House that prior to obtaining a Fisherman Registration Card, eligible applicants have to follow the General Course for Fisher at the Fisheries Training and Extension Centre of my Ministry.

Prior to enrolment for the training course, all eligible applicants between the age of 18 and 50 have to undergo medical tests to ensure that they are fit to work at sea. Arrangements are made with the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life to carry out medical tests at hospitals nearest to the residences of the applicants.

The duration of the course is six weeks and it includes both taught modules and practical sessions. The session comprises, *inter alia*, an overview of the Fisheries sector, Oceanography and Marine Science, Fishing Techniques, Navigation and Safety at Sea.

LES SALINES – MARINA – CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/410) Mr J. C. Barbier (Fourth Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the proposed construction of a Marina at Les Salines, Port Louis, he will state where matters stand.

Reply (The Prime Minister): I am informed by the Director General of the Mauritius Ports Authority that the development of a marina at Les Salines, Port Louis, was part of the ex-Neotown Project.

In accordance with the Port Master Plan 2016, no marina development is being planned at Les Salines.

EXCLUSIVE ECONOMIC ZONE – MARINE SPATIAL PLAN

(No. B/414) Dr. A. Boolell (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the development of the ocean economy, he will state if his Ministry has prepared a Marine Spatial Plan therefor and, if so, give details thereof and, if not, why not.

Reply (The Rt. hon. Minister Mentor): I shall reply to this Parliamentary Question.

On 16 December 2016, Government agreed to the elaboration of a Marine Spatial Plan for the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of the Republic of Mauritius in view of the increasing demand for marine space in the EEZ for various purposes, particularly, fisheries and aquaculture, coastal development, tourism and leisure.

The main purpose of marine spatial planning is to identify the utilisation of marine space for different sea uses in accordance with national policies and legislation, while taking into consideration the preservation, protection and improvement of marine environment, including resilience to climate change impacts. It will also contribute to the effective management of marine activities and the sustainable use of marine and coastal resources through the creation of a framework for consistent, transparent, sustainable and evidence-based decision making.

The elaboration of the Marine Spatial Plan is in line with the implementation of the 2030 UN Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

A Coordinating Committee on Marine Spatial Planning comprising relevant Ministries, Departments, Parastatal Bodies and NGOs, has been set up at the level of my Ministry since February 2017. The Coordinating Committee has, so far, met on three occasions under the chairmanship of the Senior Chief Executive of my Ministry.

Following discussions held at the level of the Coordinating Committee, a questionnaire survey has been carried out among the relevant stakeholders to identify ongoing and potential projects within the maritime zones. Based on the information gathered, three Working Groups have been constituted to focus on specific issues namely –

- (i) Planning for New Economic Activities;
- (ii) Conservation and Coordination of Marine Spatial Planning Related Projects, and
- (iii) UNDP Project for Mainstreaming Biodiversity Online Platform.

The Working Groups have met on several occasions and their work is ongoing.

A Marine Spatial Plan is a long-haul participatory process requiring the collaboration of each and every stakeholder. Although Marine Spatial Plan is now gaining momentum, few countries have adopted an elaborated plan. Government has taken the commitment to elaborate the Marine Spatial Plan in the maritime zones while employing the best of the practices.

I am placing in the Library a full brief on the elaboration of a Marine Spatial Plan for the Republic of Mauritius.

WEDNESDAY 20 JUNE 2018

STATEMENT BY MINISTER FERME MARINE DE MAHEBOURG LTD - FLOATING CAGES – INCIDENT

The Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping (Mr P. Koonjoo): Madam Speaker, with your permission, I wish to make the following statement.

At Adjournment time, at the sitting of the Assembly on 15 May 2018, the Fourth Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien, hon. Henry, raised the issue of an incident which occurred at an aquaculture farm in Mahebourg. The hon. Member has more specifically enquired whether there was any threat to the marine environment as a result of the incident.

Madam Speaker, I am informed that on Saturday, 26 May 2018 at 0630 hours, during the routine check by the workers of the *Ferme Marine de Mahebourg Ltd*, it was observed that the net of one of the floating cages of the company located at one of its sites at Pointe aux Feuilles had been cut at three distinct places. Each cut was one metre in length and was a straight one with no sign of tagging. The *Ferme Marine de Mahebourg Ltd* has, *inter alia*, informed my Ministry that the case has been reported to the Vieux Grand Port Police Station as there is a suspicion of vandalism. A police enquiry is underway.

The National Coast Guard reported on site and took photographs of the site. I am also informed that similar incidents have been reported in the past by the *Ferme Marine de Mahebourg Ltd*.

Madam Speaker, with regard to any likely adverse impact on the marine environment, I wish to reassure the House that several physical preconditions are required for the spawning of the red drum in the wild, which include an extended photoperiod and appropriate temperature which is not the case in Mauritius for the species of this fish.

As to the fish which went missing from the floating cages would not be able to spawn, no adverse impact is likely to occur on the marine environment. Besides, I wish to point out that since the setting up of the cages, no spawning or red drum has been observed in the cages or in the vicinity or thereof. I thank you, Madam Speaker.

TUESDAY 03 JULY 2018

POUDRE D'OR - REGISTERED FISHERMEN

(No. B/494) Mr S. Rughoobur (Second Member for Grand'Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the registered fishermen, he will state the number thereof in the region of Poudre d'Or, along the coast line to Mont Choisy, for each of the years 2000, 2010 and 2017.

(Withdrawn)

FISHERMEN - LOAN FACILITIES

(No. B/495) Mr S. Rughoobur (Second Member for Grand'Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the

fishermen, he will state if consideration will be given for the granting thereto of soft loan facilities without guarantee for the maintenance of their boats.

(Withdrawn)

FISHERMEN – BAD WEATHER ALLOWANCE

(No. B/496) Mr S. Rughoobur (Second Member for Grand'Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the fishermen, he will state the quantum of funds earmarked for the empowerment thereof in relation to climate change over the past three years, indicating if consideration will be given for changes in the payment of the bad weather allowance thereto, in the wake thereof.

(Withdrawn)

AQUACULTURE PROJECTS – IMPLEMENTATION

(No B/517) Mr J. C. Barbier (Fourth Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to aquaculture projects, he will state the number thereof implemented and in progress respectively, indicating in each case the -

- (a) name of the promoter thereof;
- (b) cost thereof;
- (c) number of persons to be employed therefor, and
- (d) estimated production capacity thereof.

Reply: In regard to part (a) of the question, I wish to inform the House that todate, thirteen aquaculture projects have been implemented as follows -

- (i) two large scale projects at Pointe aux Feuilles and Bambous Virieux, respectively;
- (ii) ten floating cage culture projects – two at Grand Gaube, two at Poudre d'Or, two at Grande Riviere Sud Est, two at Quatre Soeurs and two at Bambous Virieux, and
- (iii) one barachois project at Poudre d'Or.

As for part (b) of the question, eight aquaculture projects are in progress. I am tabling the information regarding the names of the promoters, the cost of each project, the number of persons to be employed, and the estimated production capacity.

TUESDAY 10 JULY 2018

LE BOUCHON – MV BENITA – SHIPWRECK

(No. B/570) Mr D. Ramful (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the shipwreck of the MV Benita at Le Bouchon, he will state the amount of compensation –

- (a) recovered by the Government of Mauritius, and
- (b) paid to the fishermen of the region as at to date.

(Withdrawn)

CORAL REEF REHABILITATION PROGRAMME – IMPLEMENTATION

(No. A/12) Mrs D. Selvon (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity, and Environment and Sustainable Development whether, in regard to the project announced publicly in Mauritius and in international environment events in 2015 by his Ministry to systematically replant corals where they have been depleted or seriously damaged, he will give a detailed current status thereof, indicating where same have been implemented as at to date by his Ministry.

Reply (Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping): Coral rehabilitation and coral farming projects were started by the Albion Fisheries Research Centre and the Mauritius Oceanography Institute of my Ministry since the bleaching events which occurred in 1998.

Since then these institutions have been undertaking pilot projects for culturing corals which are fast growing, bleaching resistant and are rare and threatened species.

Following the success obtained, small scale ocean based coral nurseries have been established.

Under the coral reef rehabilitation programme, the Albion Fisheries Research Centre has set up several coral nurseries at Blue Bay, Balaclava and Trou aux Biches. Overall, about 3,500 reef building coral fragments have been fixed on 35 coral tables.

My Ministry is also exploring new techniques and technologies for coral reef rehabilitation. Under the budgetary measure for the financial year 2017-2018, my Ministry has been allocated a budget of 8.2 million MUR for the period 2017 to 2020 to promote coral farming by fishermen and SMEs by setting up of sea-based coral farms for developing ornamental corals for the tourism sector, aquarium market and high-end jewellery manufacturing for local market. My Ministry has recently initiated a “Community-Based Coral Culture Project for the Republic of Mauritius”. The project is being carried out jointly by the Mauritius Oceanography Institute (MOI) and Albion Fisheries Research Centre (AFRC).

The project is being implemented at four selected locations (North-Grand Gaube, East-Quatre Soeurs, South- St Martin, Bel Ombre and West-La Galette) around the island.

Field surveys and interviews of coastal communities and fishermen have been undertaken for the identification of suitable sites where coral farms would be set up. Consequently, 65 participants have already been enlisted, 34 at Quatre Soeurs and 31 at La Galette. Six nurseries (three at Quatre Soeurs and three at La Galette) have already been set up and put at sea. “Demo Coral Farms” comprise approximately 2,500 and 2,600 coral fragments at Quatre Soeurs and La Galette respectively.

TUESDAY 17 JULY 2018

PERSAND ROYAL CO. LTD - OYSTER FARMING PROJECT

(No. B/638) Mr R. Uteem (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the authorisation granted to Persand Royal Co. Ltd. to use the Petit Barachois, at Poudre d'Or, he will state the terms and conditions thereof, indicating if any one of them has been unilaterally varied and, if so, indicate the reasons therefor.

Mr Koonjoo: Madam Speaker, I am informed that on 14 March 2013, the then Ministry of Fisheries received an application from the company Persand Royal Co. Ltd. regarding the proposed implementation of an Oyster Farming Project at a site situated in the region of Merville, Grand Gaube. The project proposal was analysed by technical officers of the Ministry who recommended that authorisation be granted for implementation thereof on a pilot basis for a period of three years. However, following consultations with all stakeholders, the site identified by the company was not

found to be suitable. Further surveys were undertaken by officers of the Ministry together with the promoter, following which the site at *Petit Barachois* at Poudre d'Or, which is vested in my Ministry, was found to be appropriate for the project. Subsequently, on 09 January 2014, a letter was issued to the company Persand Royal Co. Ltd. authorising the latter to implement the Oyster Farming Project at *Petit Barachois*, Poudre d'Or, on a pilot basis for a period of three years, jointly with the Aquaculture Division of the Albion Fisheries Research Centre. A series of fifteen conditions were attached to the authorised letter, one of which was that the *barachois* shall remain the property of then Ministry of Fisheries. I am tabling a copy of the list of conditions.

Madam Speaker, the conditions attached to the authorisation letter issued to Persand Royal Co. Ltd. also include a clause which reads as follows, and I quote –

“The above conditions may be amended and new conditions may be added at any time, should a need arise.”

In the light of this condition, amendments were brought to the conditions on two occasions, as follows –

- i. on 25 January 2016, following a request from the company, the authorisation period granted in January 2014 was extended to an additional period of three years, that is, up to January 2020;
- ii. on 24 March 2017, upon consultation with the Attorney-General's Office, my Ministry informed the company Persand Royal Co. Ltd. of a new condition whereby it would have to provide an access to the company Mauricoast Ltd. to which an authorisation has been granted, in September 2015, for the implementation of a Sea Cucumber Farming Project at a site adjacent to the one allocated to Persand Royal Co. Ltd.

I wish to point out that there is only one access to both sites and a gate has been erected thereat by Persand Royal Co. Ltd. since November 2014, thereby denying access to the representatives of the Mauricoast Co. Ltd. to the site allocated to them. This has become a source of conflict between the two companies. It is in this context that the new condition was added to the authorisation granted to Persand Royal Co. Ltd.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Minister, I think you have finished with your reply.

Mr Koonjoo: Yes, I have finished.

Madam Speaker: Okay! Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Yes, I have a couple of supplementary questions. The first one, Madam Speaker, would the hon. Minister tell us why is it that Persand Royal Co. Ltd. has been granted only a lease of three years, renewable for another three years, meaning six years whereas for the *Grand Barachois* which is just next door, Mauricoast, the company owned by the husband of hon. Mrs Boygah, has been granted an unlimited lease?

Mr Koonjoo: Madam Speaker, there was a grant of three years for Persand Royal Co. Ltd. and for Mauricoast it was for five years. It depends on the size of the *Barachois* and it also depends on how much money each company is investing.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: The hon. Minister mentioned that there was a dispute as to the access to the sea. Isn't the hon. Minister aware that on 03 April 2017, following an action entered by Mauricoast against Persand Royal Co. Ltd. precisely to have access, and I quote –

“Miss Ambroisine states that there is no live issue” and the Judge says: “Being given that the applicant - meaning Mauricoast - has been given an access to the *barachois*, there is no live issue.”

So, as at April 2017, in the Court, before the unilateral modification of the *bail*, the Court had already ruled that there is an alternative access for Mauricoast.

Mr Koonjoo: Madam Speaker, I beg to differ with the hon. Member. There are not two accesses in this *barachois*. There is only one access and they were supposed to share one access for both *Petit Barachois* and *Grand Barachois*. Alright? I talked to both parties and they agreed! Yes! Hmm!

Madam Speaker: Please!

Mr Koonjoo: They agreed.

(Interruptions)

To lé barbara twa, manzer!

Madam Speaker: Please! Hon. Minister!

Mr Koonjoo: There was enough place for two concessioners to work together; *Petit Barachois* and *Grand Barachois*. They agreed to go ahead, but ultimately Persand Royal Company Limited constructed something which was illegal. That could have led them to seizure of the *barachois* right there, according to the conditions I have given to the hon. Member. We did not follow the rules because the guy has invested but, unfortunately, when my officer from the Ministry went to see, and the result was that they had to go to the Police Station in Grand Gaube. They have put the complaint at the Police Station and some of the staff in Port Louis, in Casernes, were threatened by *gorilles*...

(Interruptions)

Yes, it is. Unfortunately, I have to use the word.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Please, proceed!

Mr Koonjoo: *To konne banela bien twa!*

Madam Speaker: Hon. Minister, please, proceed!

Mr Koonjoo: We are waiting for the SLO to give the verdict and then we will take action upon that.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Madam Speaker, the hon. Minister takes full responsibility for what he is saying because there is a video on Youtube which, in fact, shows completely the opposite what the hon. Minister said; namely that officers from his Ministry and his advisor, Mr Shakeel, tried to pull down illegally a gate of Mr Persand, and was it not for the presence of the Press, they would have gone ahead and illegally pull down that gate.

Mr Koonjoo: That we will see later on, Madam Speaker. When the SLO will give their ruling, we will see to it how we will go ahead with the case.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Uteem!

FISHERMEN - BAD WEATHER ALLOWANCE

Mr J. Leopold (Second Member for Rodrigues): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. My concern is addressed to the hon. Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping. It is about zoning in Rodrigues, a structure set in place for bad weather allowances.

Given the fact that Rodrigues is only 108 km² in size, very small and with a gust of 70 km/hour, we can feel the gust everywhere on the island in Rodrigues, but the Fisheries Department has divided Rodrigues into four zones. Given that it is very small, as I have said, we can feel the bad weather everywhere. It is unfair because, for example, if there is one zone which is declared as bad weather zone, because Rodrigues is very small, the fisherman can go from the bad weather zone and fish in other areas. He will have the bad weather allowance and at the same time he will go fishing. So, I appeal to the hon. Minister to see to it if he can convert back Rodrigues to one zone only, just in lagoon. A similar study for the cost implication has already been done and it would not cost much. So, I appeal to the hon. Minister of Fisheries to see to it whether he can consider converting the four zones into one zone.

The Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping (Mr P. Koonjoo): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I have taken note of this problem and I must consult the people from Rodrigues itself to find out the solution. I will do the best.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you! Hon. Baloomoody!

TUESDAY 31 JULY 2018

LE BOUCHON - MV BENITA - SHIPWRECK

(No. B/793) Mr D. Ramful (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the shipwreck of the MV Benita at Le Bouchon, he will state the amount of compensation –

- (a) recovered by the Government of Mauritius, and
- (b) paid to the fishermen of the region as at to date.

Reply: I am informed that a sum of Rs46,164,723.79 has been claimed by the Government of Mauritius to the insurers of MV Benita (London P & I Club) for the expenses incurred during the grounding of the vessel and for other payments. Out of the sum claimed, a partial settlement of Rs25,061,137.12 has already been paid by the London P & I Club. The outstanding balance is still being processed at the level of the insurance company.

Regarding part (b) of the question, I am informed that a sum of Rs637,176.00 has already been paid to the 11 fishermen and one fishmonger at Le Bouchon.

TUESDAY 16 OCTOBER 2018

ST BRANDON - FISHING COMPANIES

(No. B/853) Mr E. Jhuboo (Third Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to St Brandon, he will state if consideration will be given for the reviewing of the fishing rights allocated to fishing companies thereat.

(Withdrawn)

BAIN DES DAMES - FISHING PORT

(No. B/854) Mr E. Jhuboo (Third Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the proposed installation of a fishing port at Bain des Dames, he will state where matters stand.

(Withdrawn)

FISHING SECTOR - JAPANESE FISHING VESSELS – LICENCES

(No. B/855) Mr E. Jhuboo (Third Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the fishing sector, he will state if any partnership agreement has been signed between Japan and Mauritius for the –

- (a) construction of a fishing port/jetty, and
- (b) issuing of licences to Japanese fishing vessels besides the existing agreements with the Federation of Japan Tuna Fisheries Co-operative Associations.

(Withdrawn)

JAPAN - FISHING AGREEMENT

(No. B/875) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade whether, in regard to the proposed signature of a Fishing Agreement between Japan and Mauritius, he will state where matters stand, indicating if –

- (a) Cabinet approval has been sought and obtained therefor and, if so, when, and
- (b) the said Agreement contains any reference linked to the membership of Mauritius in the International Whaling Commission.

Reply (Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping): I shall reply to PQ B/875.

There is currently no proposal for a Fishing Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Mauritius and the Government of Japan, and consequently parts (a) and (b) of the question do not arise.

TUESDAY 23 OCTOBER 2018

FISHING INDUSTRY – YELLOWFIN TUNA

(No. B/906) Mr E. Jhuboo (Third Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the fishing industry, he will state if there is a potential risk for a shortfall of yellowfin tuna on the market and, if so, indicate the measures taken to address same.

Mr Koonjoo: Madam Speaker, I wish to inform the House that in regard to the Fishing Industry, no potential risk for a shortfall of yellowfin tuna on the market is foreseen in this year.

I would like to highlight that a Ministerial Committee has been set up under the aegis of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade and entrusted with the responsibility to ensure, amongst others, that the supply of tuna raw material to our processing factories in Mauritius is not disrupted. At the request of the Committee, the EU agreed that a joint meeting with the EU fishing operators in Brussels be held to discuss issues including the supply of the raw materials. The first consultation meeting between the EU fishing industry and the Indian Ocean fishing operators was held in 22 August 2018 and a second one recently on the 18 October 2018.

At the meeting, the representatives of the EU informed that they would monitor the fishing activities and quota utilisation by their fishing vessels operating in the Indian Ocean in such a way that would ensure a regular supply of raw materials to the processing plants based in Mauritius during the whole year. Besides, the local cannery is making necessary arrangements for alternative source of supply of raw materials from other countries. For example, the private sector, they are in touch with the Curaçao Island in South America.

Mr Jhuboo: Madam Speaker, the stock of yellow tuna has reached critical status and I am tabling 3 reports; the first one, Le Rapport de la 22eme Session de La Commission des Thons de l'Océan Indien –

« Une évaluation de l'albacore a été réalisée en 2016. Le stock est surpêché et soumis à la surpêche.»

A second Report, Madam Speaker, from yellowfin tuna fish source – “stocks are undergoing overfishing.”

and the third, from the Wildlife Foundation, Madam Speaker, issuing a warning about the repeated failure of Member States to implement the limits agreed by the Commission. So my question to the hon. Minister is: what is done at the level of his Ministry to protect, to preserve the stock, to restrict the issuing of further fishing licences to fishing companies?

Mr Koonjoo: Madam Speaker, I just replied to the question of the hon. Member. In Mauritius, our Ministry together with the private sector, we are doing all our best and let me remind the Member that when he was - I think that you were in the Government? No?

Madam Speaker: Go ahead with your answer.

Mr Koonjoo: I mean, the last Government.

(*Interruptions*)

Yes, your party was there. We have been doing all our best. Every year, it is the same story. Since I became Minister in 2015, 2016, 2017 and even 2018, the same song is being sung by people outside; newspapers. And ultimately there has been no such thing as any shortage of the tuna fishing - specially the yellowfin. The Member talked about the skipjack. The craze is for the yellowfin tuna fish. What I told the House about today, it is the report given by the European Union together with Mauritian companies and the Mauritian Ministry. For the time being, I say there is none. In the past also there has never been any shortage of tuna yellow fish in Mauritius, and I do not believe that there will be. In a way, I just said that we have taken all the precautions to find a solution, in case there is any shortage of yellow tuna fish in Mauritius.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Bérenger!

Mr Bérenger: Can I ask the hon. Minister whether we have figures for the amount of tuna? We are talking about yellowfin caught in our economic zone - not in Seychelles' or Tanzania's or Madagascar's economic zone; the amount of tuna caught in our economic zone this year, last year.

Mr Koonjoo: I do not have it on me Madam Speaker, but I can assure the hon. Member. He is an old Member of the Parliament, an ex-Prime Minister, an ex-Leader of the Opposition, he knows pretty well how, in Mauritius, we do not have a large amount of tuna yellow fish in Mauritius. He should know that.

(*Interruptions*)

I said I do not have the figures!

(*Interruptions*)

Madam Speaker: Please! Hon. Koonjoo!

(*Interruptions*)

Hon. Koonjoo, please proceed with your reply.

Mr Koonjoo: Let me clarify one thing Madam Speaker, with your permission, and I'll give some figures. Mauritius was not affected by this catch limitation imposed by the purse seiners at the catch level of Mauritius purse seiners in 2014, and it was less than 5,000 tonnes. However, in 2017, and this I will explain, our local fishing vessels had caught 17,672 tonnes of tuna in our ocean. Yes, can I repeat? 17,672 tonnes. This the problem with the European Union. When they found that Mauritius had reaped a big harvest of tuna, they started putting themselves questions: how come that Mauritius, a small island like this, is reaping a big harvest in the ocean. That is due to the new method. I must tell you that when they took the new method, we were losing because when...

(*Interruptions*)

It is, yes.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Shakeel Mohamed! I will stop him when required. I do not need you to tell me.

Mr Koonjoo: Madam Speaker, the problem is that the signal was given to all countries to go on for tuna fish, specially the yellowfin tuna fish. There was a rat race and those countries with better technology were able to reap bigger harvest.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Minister, I think this was not the question that was asked by hon. Bérenger. So, I will request hon. Shakeel Mohamed for the next question.

Mr Mohamed: Thank you. There are three reports, Madam Speaker, that have been referred to by hon. Jhuboo pertaining to his question. I am here referring to another report which I have come across, which was prepared with the support of the European Commission, and it dates back to 2016. At page 4 and paragraph 20 of that Report I read: 'The tuna species targeted by the EU purse seine fleets are skipjack tuna, yellowfin and bigeye tuna. In the Indian Ocean, two of these species are not

currently overfished but, one species, yellowfin, is currently overfished and overfishing is continuing. We, therefore, can conclude that the EU fleets are mainly catching fish classified as sustainable but only by a very fine margin. So, this report clearly shows that the yellowfin is at risk and clearly it is being overfished. Is the hon. Minister challenging this Report or does he believe that he has got other reports that he can table that can show that whatever he said in the three reports plus this fourth one not correct? Or maybe he is correct?

Mr Koonjoo: Madam Speaker, I just said that according to our Report, and when I say our Report, it is the Report of the EU together with Mauritius, there is no shortage up to now.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Please!

Mr Koonjoo: I must explain Madam Speaker, with your permission, that the yellowfin tuna is the most looked about or after everywhere in the world. This is the truth everybody knows. Unfortunately, we do not have those technologies where we can, in a maximum, exploit these resources. For the time being, we do not have any, but if the hon. gentleman can give me the Report - I think they have got two reports - I will try to tally with my Report in our Ministry and we will find out the reason.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Jhuboo, last question!

Mr Jhuboo: Thank you, Madam Speaker. According to the Minister, there is no shortfall, but yet the Foreign Minister last year had to seek an exemption from the European Union to supply the local manufacturers. My question, Madam Speaker, is the hon. Minister aware of a video circulating, posted on the social media by one Mr Rampal, showing illegal transhipment of tuna under our nose? So, I would like to know from the hon. Minister what is being done at the level of his Ministry to control the looting of our resources?

Mr Koonjoo: Madam Speaker, I do not know Mr Rampal. Who is he? Is he in the authority, in the EU? I do not know, I will try to find out.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Jhuboo, next question!

POR T DEVELOPMENT - FORT WILLIAM -- FISHERS

(No. B/910) Mrs D. Selvon (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the fishing communities of Bain des Dames, Les Salines, Pointe aux Sables and the Grand River North West in Constituency No. 1, Grand River North West and Port Louis West, he will state the policy and measures taken as to the uncertain future thereof in view of the expansion of the port and other activities in these regions.

Reply: I am informed by the Mauritius Ports Authority that it is presently in the process of finalising the award of consultancy services for the project of port expansion and development of port related activities in the area of Fort William. According to the Mauritius Ports Authority, it is not foreseen that the port development will affect the activities of the fishers of the region.

Nevertheless, the whole project will be subjected to an Environment Impact Assessment Study which will, *inter alia*, address the issue of any impact on the fishers' community. In this connection, if need be, conditions may be included in the EIA licence so as to ensure that consultations are held with the fishers' community and measures are taken in the course of implementation of the project so as to cause the least disturbance to the fishers.

TUESDAY 30 OCTOBER 2018

CASE NOYALE FISHERIES POST – CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/957) Mr E. Jhuboo (Third Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the construction of the new Case Noyale Fisheries Post, he will state where matters stand.

The Minister of Youth and Sports (Mr S. Toussaint): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that tenders for the construction of the New Case Noyale Fisheries Post were launched on 30 July 2018 with closing date 29 August 2018.

The project is currently at bid evaluation stage. The expected date of award is end November 2018.

Mr Jhuboo: I know the hon. Minister is not the substantive Minister, but before this tender exercise, there was another one which was launched in December 2017. Can we know why this previous exercise was cancelled?

Mr Toussaint: Actually, Mr Deputy Speaker Sir, it was launched on 23 November 2017, with closing date 22 December 2017. Six bids were received at that time. The price quoted by the bidder, who was found to be technically responsive to the bid, was above the project estimated cost by more than 15 % and negotiation with the bidder to reduce the quoted price within the threshold of 15 % of the estimated cost failed. As a result of this, the bid exercise was cancelled.

Mr Jhuboo: I know the Minister is acting on behalf of his colleague, but maybe he will be able to solve a simple problem. In La Gaulette, there are 22 fishermen, in Le Morne 34, in Case Noyale 50. Each month, they have to go to La Preneuse to have their cards stamped. It is much easier to have one officer from the Ministry of Fisheries to go at a given time, at a respective date in a village council and have the cards stamped.

The Deputy Speaker: Put your question!

Mr Jhuboo: Could the hon. Minister look into this matter?

Mr Toussaint: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will pass on the information to my colleague.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question, hon. Jhuboo!

FISHERMEN COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES - SEMI-INDUSTRIAL FISHING BOATS – GRANT

(No. B/995) Mr P. Armance (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the proposed Grant Scheme for the purchase of semi-industrial fishing boats, he will state the number of applications therefor received at his Ministry since the implementation thereof to date, giving a list of the beneficiaries thereof, including the quantum of funds disbursed in each case.

Reply: I wish to inform the House that the said Grant Scheme is provided to the Fishermen Cooperative Societies for the acquisition of Semi-Industrial Fishing Boats fitted with inboard engine and all navigation, communication, safety and fishing equipment.

Financial assistance is provided in the form of a grant of 50% of the cost of the Semi-Industrial Fishing Boats up to a maximum amount of Rs4 m. per fishermen cooperative society.

Since the implementation of the grant scheme, 11 applications have been received to date of which only five met the eligibility criteria to qualify for the grant. However, the application for the fifth promoter was subsequently turned down as he changed the originally approved project.

The number of beneficiaries and funds disbursed as grant to each beneficiary are as follows

–

SN	Beneficiary	Grant amount (million Rs.)	Boat constructor	Remarks
1	Mardrin Offshore	4	Japan	Boat registered on 07 Feb 2018 and already effected two fishing trips.

	Fishermen Cooperative Society Limited			
2	Yeye Offshore Fishermen Cooperative Society Limited	4	Sri Lanka	Promoter in Sri Lanka at present and is expected to bring the boat to Port Louis shortly.
3	New Vision Offshore Fishermen Cooperative Society Limited	3.775	India	Due to constraint in the construction of the boat in Sri Lanka, the promoter shifted to India to look for another boat builder. The Letter of Intent has been extended.
4	Collette Blanche Offshore Fishermen Cooperative Society Limited	4	Sri Lanka	Boat is under construction in Sri Lanka and will be delivered at Port Louis in February 2019.
5	Babul Offshore Fishing Cooperative Society Ltd	NA	Mauritius	The application was turned down as the promoter changed the originally approved project.
TOTAL		15.775		

As at date, a total of Rs15.775 m. has been credited to MauBank Ltd to finance the construction of boats in favour of the four promoters.

FISHING INDUSTRY - ELECTRONIC CATCH REPORTING SYSTEM

(No. B/996) Mr P. Armance (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the implementation of the new Electronic Catch Reporting System, he will state where matters stand.

Reply: In January 2018, bids were invited from service providers, through the Restricted Bidding Method for the Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of an Electronic Reporting System. The potential bidders were –

- (i) Globavista Limited;
- (ii) Satellite Air Time, and
- (iii) Collecte Localisation Satellites.

The closing date for submission of bids was initially on 19 February 2018, which was extended up to 05 March 2018 due to queries set by bidders. Subsequently, only one bidder submitted his proposal, namely the Collecte Localisation Satellites (CLS).

A Bid Evaluation Committee (BEC) was set up to evaluate the bids. The BEC noted that the CLS complied with all mandatory requirements and was retained for the technical evaluation. The BEC noted that the CLS met all the technical requirements as well. Then the bid was recommended for financial evaluation.

The BEC found that the bid price of approximately Rs11 m. was 36% higher than the estimated cost of Rs8 m. It was, therefore, recommended that –

- (i) the bidding exercise be relaunched;
- (ii) the user department be requested to submit updated specifications if applicable, and
- (iii) arrangements be made for additional funds that would be required to procure this service.

The sum of Rs11.5 m. has now been earmarked for the next tendering exercise. The bid has been relaunched on 01 October 2018 and the closing is on 05 November 2018.

TUESDAY 27 NOVEMBER 2018

FISHERS – FISHERMAN REGISTRATION CARD

(No. B/1134) Mr J. C. Barbier (Fourth Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked of the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the fishers, he will give a list of those who have obtained a Fisherman Registration Card since April 2018 to date.

Reply: I wish to inform the House that since April 2018 to date, fifty-one fishers have been granted a Fisherman Registration Card. I am tabling the list thereof.

FISH AGGREGATING DEVICES – OPERATIONAL

(No. B/1135) Mr J. C. Barbier (Fourth Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the Fish Aggregating Devices, he will state the number thereof in operation, indicating when the lost ones will be replaced.

Reply: I am informed that out of 28 Fish Aggregating Devices, 13 are currently in operation around the island. The remaining 15 have been damaged and lost. Action is currently being taken at the level of my Ministry for the replacement thereof. It is expected that all the Fish Aggregating Devices will be operational by mid-December 2018.

TUESDAY 04 DECEMBER 2018

FISHERIES AND MARINE RESOURCES BILL – INTRODUCTION

(No. B/1192) Mr E. Jhuboo (Third Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the proposed introduction of a Fisheries and Marine Resources Bill in the House, he will state where matters stand.

(Withdrawn)

MARINE POLLUTION BILL – INTRODUCTION

(No. B/1193) Mr E. Jhuboo (Third Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the proposed introduction of a Marine Pollution Bill in the House, he will state where matters stand.

(Withdrawn)

FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL ORGANISATION PORT STATE MEASURES AGREEMENT – MAURITUS SIGNATORY

(No. B/1221) Dr. A. Boolell (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether he will state if Mauritius is a signatory to the Port State Measures Agreement.

Reply: Mauritius is a signatory to the Food and Agricultural Organisation Port State Measures Agreement since 31 August 2015. This Agreement aims at addressing the issue of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing by preventing vessels engaged in such type of activities to continue to operate, thus blocking fishery products derived from IUU fishing from entering national and international markets.

Mauritius is fully compliant with the Agreement and is implementing all the measures contained therein, such as -

- (i) sharing of data with other FAO Member States, FAO and Regional Fisheries Management Organisations whilst respecting confidentiality requirements;
- (ii) mandatory advance request for Port entry;
- (iii) all documents submitted by vessels to be duly verified and counterchecked prior to authorisation for port entry being granted;
- (iv) catch inspection to be carried out once any vessel has entered the Port, and
- (v) denial of entry to any vessel identified as an IUU vessel, except in force majeure.

I wish to highlight that in a recent Inspection report dated 11 November 2018, the Director General of the DGMARE of the European Union has noted that there have been a lot of improvements by Mauritius over the recent years in the systems for traceability and in the administrative structure. Mauritius is now in a strong position to fight IUU fishing.

2019

TUESDAY 26 MARCH 2019

OCEAN ECONOMY SECTOR – JOB CREATION

(No. B/34) Mr E. Jhuboo (Third Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the Ocean Economy sector, he will state the number of jobs created since 2015 to date.

Mr Koonjoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the required information is being compiled and will be placed in the Library as soon as possible.

Mr Jhuboo: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I thank the Minister for his reply, but I do have the answer from him. He actually replied to hon. Mohamed and stated that 3,000 jobs were created by his Ministry. Now is my question to the hon. Minister. The target was 25,000 jobs for the

term. So, according to my information, he needs to create 22,000 jobs for the remaining year. Can we know how he is going to turn things around?

Mr Koonjoo: I have already said the answer. I am waiting the whole thing to come in front. If the hon. Member's friend has got the answer, he better gets it from him.

The Deputy Speaker: You have more questions?

Mr Jhuboo: Yes. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, his ambition was to double the contribution of the ocean industry to the GDP, investing in the following sectors: aquaculture, marine services, marine commerce, marine bio-technology, offshore oil and gas, marine renewable energy. My question to the hon. Minister is: has he created these sectors and how many jobs have been created in these sectors?

Mr Koonjoo: I already replied. It is being compiled.

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I told the hon. Member that it is being compiled. After compilation, he will have it.

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Jhuboo, please! Hon. Ganoo!

Mr Ganoo: The Government Vision of 2030 mentioned the setting up of a National Ocean Council as a driving force and which will be the body at the heart of all these projects and development. Can I ask the hon. Minister if this Council has been set up?

Mr Koonjoo: I will ask the hon. Member to come with a substantive question and I will reply.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Jhuboo, next question!

MARINE POLLUTION BILL - INTRODUCTION

(No. B/35) **Mr E. Jhuboo (Third Member for Savanne & Black River)** asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the proposed introduction of a Marine Pollution Bill, he will state where matters stand.

Mr Koonjoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to inform the House that the Marine Pollution Bill has initially been drafted with the aim of incorporating the provisions of the International Convention for Prevention of Pollution from Ships 1973 as modified by the Protocol of 1978 (MARPOL 73/78) into the laws of Mauritius. Mauritius has ratified the following annexes of the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships 1973 as modified by the Protocol of 1978. The following annexes are –

- (i) Annex I - Prevention of Pollution by Oil, which is important;
- (ii) Annex II - Control of Pollution by Noxious Liquid Substances in the Bulk;
- (iii) Annex III - Prevention of Pollution by Harmful Substances Carried by Sea in Packaged Form;
- (iv) Annex IV - Prevention of Pollution by Sewage from Ships, and
- (v) Annex V Prevention of Pollution by Garbage from Ships.

As such, in order to accelerate the procedures of the ...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Reply, hon. Minister!

Mr Koonjoo: But he wants to speak, I am giving him time to speak.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Mohamed! Please!

Mr Koonjoo: In order to accelerate the procedures of the domesticating the aforesaid convention instead of proceeding with the enactment of the Marine Pollution Bill, my Ministry came forward with several separate regulations in line with the section 228 (1) (c) of the Merchant Shipping Act 2007, which stipulates that the Minister to whom the responsibility for the subject of shipping is assigned, may make regulations for giving effect any international convention to which Mauritius is a party. Consequently, the key provisions of the Annexes 1 and 2 of MARPOL have been incorporated into the Merchant Shipping Regulations, the regulations came into force in 01 March 2019 as per Government Notice No. 47 of 2019.

The following annexes of MARPOL are presently being redrafted into regulations and once these are finalised, same will be submitted for vetting to the Attorney-General's Office –

- (i) Annex III - Prevention of Pollution by Harmful Substances Carried by Sea in Packaged Form;
- (ii) Annex IV - Prevention of Pollution by Sewage from Ships, and
- (iii) Annex V - Prevention of Pollution by Garbage from Ships.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Jhuboo! Please!

Mr Jhuboo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, an important feature of MARPLE in the Convention is the complete ban on the disposal at sea of plastic. My question was clear. We cannot ratify, we cannot go through with the Bill unless we ratify the Convention on Annex V. I would like to know from the hon. Minister when will he ratify the Annex V of the Convention?

Mr Koonjoo: It is coming, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. It is not yet ratified. Please, tell your friends!

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Adrien Duval!

Mr A. Duval: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I would like to ask the hon. Minister on the same question of hon. Jhuboo with regard to dumping of, not just plastic, but metal canisters. We see it every day, these foreign vessels coming to the Port and all the dumping that is being done in our seas. We would like to know whether he will come with severe criminal provisions in the Bill and how he plans on enforcing the legislation that we are still waiting for, whether he can tell us?

Mr Koonjoo: I have just said, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that it is coming. We have started and it is on the way. So, we will have to wait.

The Deputy Speaker: Last question, hon. Jhuboo!

Mr Jhuboo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, since it is a very technical issue, can we know from the hon. Minister whether he will hold consultations with all stakeholders, namely, ReefWatch, the Mauritius Wildlife Foundation and even Mr Copemootoo?

Mr Koonjoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we know that it is very important because it is a question of life and death, especially for countries like Mauritius where we have got so many ships coming in with so many bad things in the water. We are taking all precautions. It is very, very

important. It is not a joke. I hope that my friend understands that we are working very hard and we are on the way to finalise everything. As you know, first of all, it should be gratified and then the measure will take place.

The Deputy Speaker: Time is over!

Hon. Members, the Table has been advised that the following Parliamentary Questions have been withdrawn: B/46, B/48, B/49, B/51, B/52, B/53, B/62, B/63, B/67, B/72, B/73 and B/74.

BAIN DES DAMES - FISHING PORT

(No. B/36) Mr E. Jhuboo (Third Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the proposed installation of a fishing Port at Bain des Dames, he will state where matters stand.

Reply: I wish to refer the hon. Member to the reply made in respect of PQ B/878 on 28 November 2017.

ILLEGAL FISHING – OFFENCES

(No. B/37) Mr E. Jhuboo (Third Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to illegal fishing, he will state the number of offences committed, convictions secured and fines imposed therefor, since 2015 to date.

Reply: I wish to inform the House that with regard to illegal fishing, the number of offences committed since 2015 to date is 1,318 as per our record. The total fines inflicted amounts to Rs279,400.00 for the period 2015 to date. The number of cases brought before Court were 127 whereby 120 persons were convicted.

MAURITIAN TERRITORIAL WATERS - JAPANESE AUTHORITIES - FISH CATCHING

(No. B/61) Mr T. Henry (Fourth Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade whether, in regard to the agreement signed between his Ministry and the Japanese Authorities for fish catching in our territorial waters, he will give a list of the species of fish concerned therewith.

Reply (The Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping): I wish to highlight that there is no Government to Government Fishing Agreement between Mauritius and Japan. However, a Fishing Agreement was signed in 2000 between the Federation of Japan Tuna Fisheries Cooperatives Association and the then Ministry responsible for Fisheries.

The Fishing Agreement was renewed on successive occasions in 2002, 2003, 2005, 2006, and 2007. The current one was renewed in 2009 between the Ministry of Agro-Industry, Food Production and Security and the Japan Tuna Fisheries Cooperatives Association.

The Agreement provides for tuna longline fishing in the EEZ of Mauritius and the species authorised include Yellowfin Tuna, Bigeye Tuna, Skipjack Tuna and Swordfish.

TUESDAY 02 APRIL 2019

OCTOPUS FISHING - CLOSING SEASON

(No. B/102) Mr E. Jhuboo (Third Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to octopus fishing, he will state where matters stand as to the proposal for a reconsideration of the closing season thereof for 2019.

Mr Koonjoo: Madam Speaker, I wish to inform the House that in line with the provision of the Fisheries and Marine Resources (Fishing of Octopus) Regulations 2016, a two-month close period for the fishing of Octopus is in place from 15 August to 15 October since 2016.

The House may further note that my Ministry is contemplating to hold consultations with all stakeholders including the fishermen community before taking another firm decision on the introduction of a second closure.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Jhuboo!

Mr Jhuboo: Madam Speaker, thank you. I would like to thank the hon. Minister for clarifying this issue since he has himself created a lot of confusion when he announced the following

« Le ministre a déclaré le 14 janvier qu'il n'y aurait très probablement pas de deuxième fermeture annuelle pour « ne pas bousculer les pêcheurs en cette année d'élections ».

Dr. Boolell: This is electoral rigging, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Dr. Boolell, the hon. Member had the floor, he had his question. Hon. Jhuboo, yes!

Mr Jhuboo: My question to the hon. Minister pertains to the regulations that he has introduced in 2016. I would like to know from him whether the regulations have produced the anticipated benefits as far as illegal fishing is concerned during the closure of the seasonal fishing.

Mr Koonjoo: Madam Speaker, there are two parts of the question that the hon. Member is asking me. First, as to whether there has been any improvement when this method was put into action. I have got the figures with me and I will put it that yes there has been improvement in the ...

(Interruptions)

Can the hon. Member please listen?

(Interruptions)

What is his problem? Every time I speak in the House, he has got problems?

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Minister, please, I think you know that you should not engage in a conversation with any hon. Member, especially Members from a sitting position.

Mr Koonjoo: I have answered, Madam Speaker, concerning whether there has been an improvement in the tonnage or not. Let me tell the hon. Member that in 2009 there was 84 tons of octopus collected in Mauritius. After the introduction of this closure in 2016 - we started in 2015 - it went up to 38 tons; in 2017: 39 tons and in 2018: 118 tons.

Let me also add that the mean weight after the closure was in 2016 about 1550 tons; in 2017 it was about 1124 tons; in 2018 and I said 1354 tons, that is, there has been an overall increase in the tonnage after the method was introduced in 2015. Can the hon. Member repeat the second question, please?

Madam Speaker: That is why I said one question at a time.

(Interruptions)

Mr Koonjoo: He was talking about the illegal fishing. Yes, I have got the answer, but I can hand it to the ...

Madam Speaker: If you have the information, later you can circulate it.

Mr Koonjoo: It is not with me, but I know that there has been improvement in the collection of octopus especially so far it is concerned about the number of people we have caught as illegal fishermen.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Jhuboo!

Mr Jhuboo: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I have in my possession ...

Madam Speaker: Next question!

Mr Jhuboo: No, I have ...

Madam Speaker: We have spent five minutes already on this question!

Mr Jhuboo: I have got only one question, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Look, hon. Jhuboo, we have spent already 5 minutes on this question. Alright! I may grant you one additional question, but please be concise, be brief because, otherwise, it won't be fair to the others that questions are not replied.

Mr Jhuboo: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I have in my possession the regulations of our friends from the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and I have the regulations introduced by the Minister in 2016. In the regulation for the RRA, mention is made –

“No person shall collect, kill, fish, land or have in his possession any octopus etc.”

In his regulation, mention is made simply, ‘no person shall fish’. So, if one is caught with an octopus on his head walking on the street, he cannot be fined. So, will the hon. Minister agree with me that his regulation needs to be amended and properly drafted?

(Interruptions)

Mr Koonjoo: Madam Speaker, I must admit that there have been some mistakes in the regulations and we know about it, we will correct it in the future.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Jhuboo!

SEMI-INDUSTRIAL FISHING BOATS – GRANT SCHEME

(No. B/138) Mr J. C. Barbier (Fourth Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the Scheme for the Grant for the Purchase of Semi-Industrial Fishing Boats for Off-Lagoon Fishing to Registered Fishermen Co-operative Societies, he will state –

- (a) when same came into operation;
- (b) the beneficiaries thereof, indicating the respective date of disbursement thereto, and
- (c) the number of pending applications therefor.

Reply: Regarding part (a) of the question, I wish to inform the House that a Grant Scheme for the acquisition of Semi-Industrial Fishing Boats by registered Fishermen Cooperative Societies is in place since January 2017.

The Scheme provides for a grant of 50% of the cost of the Semi-Industrial Fishing Boats up to a maximum amount of Rs4 m. per Fishermen Cooperative Society. The remaining cost of the boat is financed by the Fishermen Cooperative Society through a loan from MauBank Ltd.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I am tabling the requested information.

Regarding part (c) of the question, the House may wish to note that my Ministry has invited applications anew from registered Fishermen Cooperatives Societies who wish to benefit from this Scheme through a Press Communiqué dated 28 January 2019. The closing date for the receipt of applications was 08 March 2019.

As at that date, only four applications had been received. An Evaluation Committee has been set to examine the applications.

TUESDAY 16 APRIL 2019

DEEP OCEAN WATER APPLICATION PROJECT

(No. B/202) Mr A. Duval (First Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the implementation of the Deep Ocean Water Application Project, he will state where matters stand.

Reply (The Prime Minister): In reply to Parliamentary Question B/992 at the sitting of 22 November 2016, the House was informed that a Deed of Concession between the Government of the Republic of Mauritius and Urban Cooling Ltd (UCL) was signed on 23 December 2015, for the implementation of the Deep Ocean Water Application Project.

The House was further informed that UCL had already completed the survey of public and private buildings to gather technical details for the onshore component of the project. In parallel, a marine survey in the Port Area was also undertaken by the Company for the purpose of designing the offshore component of the project.

The Deed of Concession will become effective when the conditions provided therein will have been met. As at date, UCL has already obtained an EIA Licence and necessary authorisation from the Mauritius Ports Authority.

The applications made by the Company for the implementation of the inland pipe layout and lease of State land at Les Salines are currently under consideration at the level of the Road Development Authority and the Ministry of Housing and Lands, respectively.

Moreover, the Company has also submitted a draft Agreement for Cold Energy Purchase embodying the terms and conditions of the contract to be signed between UCL and the Government of Mauritius for the supply of cold energy to Government premises. The draft Agreement, in particular the proposed financial models, are currently being examined by the relevant authorities.

TUESDAY 23 APRIL 2019

FISHERMEN - BAD WEATHER ALLOWANCE

(No. B/265) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the bad weather allowance, he will state the total number of fishers eligible and registered therefor, indicating

- (a) the quantum thereof payable per fisher per day;

- (b) the number of days same was paid since 2015 to 2018, on a yearly basis, indicating the total amount paid, and
- (c) if consideration will be given for a review thereof in view of the minimum wage and the annual increase of pensions and other allowances and salary compensations.

(Withdrawn)

TUESDAY 14 MAY 2019

MAURITIUS SHIPPING CORPORATION LTD – VESSEL – ACQUISITION

(No. B/351) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the proposed acquisition of a new vessel from China, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Shipping Corporation, information as to the –

- (a) estimated cost thereof;
- (b) procurement procedure followed and outcome thereof;
- (c) number of visits effected by officers of the Corporation to China in relation thereto, indicating the cost incurred, and
- (d) expected delivery date thereof.

Mr Koonjoo: Madam Speaker, at the very outset, I wish to inform the House that Mauritius Shipping Corporation Ltd (MSCL) is a private company governed by the Companies Act of Mauritius and managed by a Board of Directors.

I also wish to invite the attention of the House to the provisions at Section 3(1) (g) of the Public Procurement Act 2006 which reads as follows, and I quote –

“This Act shall not apply to procurement undertaken by any public body in respect of vessels, including maintenance, repairs and periodic overhauls in a dry dock.”

However, for the purpose of transparency and upon the request of the Mauritius Shipping Corporation Ltd, the Public Procurement Office has, in the Circular No. 6 of 2017, issued Guidelines on Procurement of Vessels and I am tabling the copy on the Circular.

Madam Speaker, I am informed that the cost of a vessel depends on, *inter alia*, the country where the constructing shipyard is based, the size and design of the vessel, the cost of supervising the construction, and the origins of the main parts such as engines and cranes.

(Interruptions)

I said sorry!

Madam Speaker: It is okay. Please proceed, hon. Minister!

Mr Koonjoo: I have further been informed that...

(Interruptions)

...the cost estimate approved by the MSCL Board for the acquisition of a new vessel is Rs800 m. It is to be noted that the cost will be borne exclusively by the MSCL, that is, without any funding from the Government.

Regarding part (b) of the question, I wish to inform the House that MSCL has scrupulously followed the procedures laid down in the Procurement Guidelines. The procurement process

started with an invitation of expressions of interest from shipbuilding companies through an open international bidding on 29 November 2018. Tenders were, thereafter, launched on 18 February 2019 to three pre-selected shipyards.

As at the deadline of 03 April 2019 for submission of bids, only two bids were received. Same are being processed as per procurement procedures. The technical as well as the financial evaluation of the bids have been carried out and a Negotiating Panel, comprising senior civil servants of the Attorney General's Office, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, the Ministry of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport and my Ministry is being constituted to deal with the price and non-price factors with the bidders in order of their ranking as per the Guidelines on Procurement of the Vessels.

Madam Speaker, with respect to part (c) of the question, I am informed that on 25 October 2017, the MSCL Board had decided that a delegation accompanied by MSCL Shipbroker visit at least 6 shipyards in China in respect of the procurement of the new vessel. Accordingly, a delegation comprising the Acting Managing Director of the MSCL and the Technical Consultant accompanied by the MSCL Shipbroker visited seven shipyards in China from 27 November 2017 to 01 December 2017. That was the only visit effected by MSCL in respect of the proposed acquisition of the vessel from China.

As per information gathered by my Ministry, the total cost incurred for the visit of the delegation is Rs510,640. This cost includes the economy class airline and approved rates of *per diem* for the Ag Managing Director and one economy class airline and consultancy charges of the technical consultant as per the contract.

Regarding part (d) of the question, I am informed that the expected delivery date of the vessel is 24 months as from the date of award of contract. Thank you.

Mr Bhagwan: Is the Minister aware that actually the Independent Commission Against Corruption has been apprised of some shortcomings and it is conducting an enquiry into the whole process of this purchase of vessel.

Mr Koonjoo: Madam Speaker, yes, I am aware. In fact, I got a letter from ICAC itself and I told them that I don't have any problem, to go ahead with the enquiry.

Mr Bhagwan: Is the Minister aware that there have been lots of shortcomings concerning the setting up of the Evaluation Committee and also the Bid Evaluation Committee?

Mr Koonjoo: No, Madam Speaker, I am not aware. If the hon. Member can give me the details, I will look into that.

Mr Bhagwan: Can the Minister check and see whether one, Mr Christophe de Bryne something like this residing in Hong Kong was appointed as Chairperson of the Evaluation Committee?

Mr Koonjoo: Sorry, Madam Speaker, I don't have this information.

Mr Bhagwan: Can the Minister check and then report to the House later on whether this gentleman from Hong Kong was appointed by the Mauritius Shipping Corporation to chair the Evaluation Committee?

Mr Koonjoo: When the hon. Member give me the information, I will look into that definitely.

Mr Bhagwan: Can the Minister, at least, inform the House whether he intends to bring to the attention of the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance the whole process of purchasing that vessel and the different shortcomings found and the case which has been referred to ICAC.

Mr Koonjoo: I will definitely do it, Madam Speaker, if I get all the information from the hon. Member, thank you.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Bhagwan!

TUESDAY 21 MAY 2019

FISHERS – BAD WEATHER ALLOWANCE

(No. B/414) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the bad weather allowance, he will state the total number of fishers eligible thereto and registered therefor, indicating –

- (a) the quantum thereof payable per fisher per day;
- (b) the number of days same was paid since 2015 to 2018, on a yearly basis, indicating the total amount paid, and
- (c) if consideration will be given for a review thereof in view of the minimum wage and the annual increase of pensions and other allowances and salary compensations.

Mr Koonjoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that the total number of registered fishers eligible for bad weather allowance was 1,934 as at December 2018.

As regards part (a) of the question, the quantum payable per day per fisher since 2015 is as follows –

- Rs275 in 2015;
- Rs282 in 2016;
- Rs288 in 2017;
- Rs298 in 2018, and
- Rs310 as from January 2019.

As regards part (b) of the question, the number of days and amount paid since 2015 to 2018 are as follows –

- Year 2015 – 134 days, amounting to around Rs69 m.;
- Year 2016 – 156 days, amounting to around Rs77 m.;
- Year 2017 – 94 days, amounting to around Rs46 m., and
- Year 2018 – 134 days, amounting to around Rs68 m.

The total amount paid for the last four years is around Rs260 m.

Regarding part (c) of the question, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the House may wish to note that Bad Weather Allowance is a form of social aid to assist fishers who have not been able to go fishing during a bad weather.

However, they are encouraged to do alternative activities, like mending their nets or repairs of their boats when they are not involved in the fishing activities. Any revision of this quantum will require extensive consultations with the relevant stakeholders.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Ganoo!

Mr Ganoo: In view of climate change now and the increasing number of bad weather in our country, and in view of the fact also that we all know there has been a minimum wage increase and an annual increase in pension and other *prestations sociales*, can I make a plea to the hon. Minister, to ask the hon. Minister of Finance in the next Budget, to make provision for an increase of the bad weather allowance for these fishermen?

Mr Koonjoo: I take note of this, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Adrien Duval!

Mr A. Duval: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have heard the figures nearly half the year, for some years, fishermen were not able to go fishing due to bad weather. The allowance, as hon. Ganoo is saying, is very, very basic minimal compared to the minimum wage. First of all, is it not time now to come up with a plan in view of climate change? Secondly, in view of the decreasing population of fish, is it not time to come up with a long-term plan for these fishermen so that they can live decently? May we know whether he proposes to come up with such a plan in his Ministry?

Mr Koonjoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there had been some requests among the fishermen and we are working upon that.

The Deputy Speaker: Time is over!

TUESDAY 18 JUNE 2019

MAURITIUS MARITIME TRAINING ACADEMY - ALLEGED MALPRACTICES

(No B/461) **Mr G. Lepoigneur (Fifth Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the allegations of malpractices at the Mauritius Maritime Training Academy in relation to the recruitment of three trainees, namely, Mr D. C., Ms R. S. V. and Mr A. H., he will state if inquiries have been carried out thereinto and, if so, indicate the outcome thereof.

Mr Koonjoo: I am informed that on 15 October 2018, the Internal Control Unit was requested by my Ministry to carry out a full inquiry on the alleged malpractices at the Mauritius Maritime Training Academy following a press article that appeared on the newspaper *Le Mauricien* of Monday 08 October 2018.

On the 02 October 2018, the Internal Control Unit submitted its report according to which the allegation was reported to be true. On 24 October 2018, my Ministry referred the case to the Independent Commission against Corruption for a thorough investigation. On 11 December 2018, my Ministry was informed that the ICAC had initiated an inquiry into the case.

Madam Speaker, I wish to inform the House that the outcome of the investigation by ICAC is still being awaited.

Mr Lepoigneur: So, the Minister is aware that this was something that was not in conformity with the Ministry of Ocean Economic, the Marine Training Academy. So, I think there are other exams being carried out for crowd management. Is the Minister aware that there were three people who are supposed to have been sitting for that exam?

Madam Speaker: Hon. Lepoigneur, I have a problem in understanding what you are saying.

Mr Lepoigneur: Yes, Madam Speaker. According to my information, only one of them sat for that exam. What is strange in that, Madam Speaker, the three results are the same for the same

exams, they had the same mark point, the same average of pass. Is the hon. Minister aware about that?

Madam Speaker: He has already replied.

Mr Koonjoo: Madam Speaker, I have already replied that the case is in the hands of the ICAC. I have to wait.

Mr Lepoigneur: The case is at the ICAC for the interim report concerning requirement for trainees, but this one is for Crown Management.

Mr Koonjoo: This is another question. If the hon. Member puts a substantive question, I will reply to it.

Madam Speaker: Please! Hon. Lepoigneur, the supplementary question that you have asked does not come from the main question, right. It is something else which you are requesting, so the hon. Minister will not be able to reply. Next question, hon. Bhagwan!

DEAD SHELLS - IMPORTATION PERMIT - COST

(No. B/494) Mr J. C. Barbier (Fourth Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the importation of dead shells for craft businesses, he will state if consideration will be given for a review downwards of the cost of the importation permit therefor.

Reply: The regulations governing the import of seashells are Government Notice No. 34 of 2016 made under the Fisheries and Marine Resources Act 2007. Any importer of dead seashell should be registered with the Ministry responsible for the subject of fisheries and pay a fee amounting to Rs25,000 per calendar year to the Director-General, Mauritius Revenue Authority before importing any consignment of fish and fish products, which includes seashell.

I wish to inform the House that the removal of coral and seashells in Mauritius are prohibited under the Regulation Government Notice No. 95 of 2006 made under the Fisheries and Marine Resources Act.

A downward review of the importation fee may result in an increased number of importers of seashells which may compromise the control over poaching on local seashells.

Moreover, we are signatory to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) which has as primary objective to preserve and conserve Biodiversity regarding marine species including seashells and ecosystems. Thus, an increase in imports of dead seashells in Mauritius may be viewed as opposing the basic objective of CBD.

TUESDAY 09 JULY 2019

FISHERMEN COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES - OUTBOARD ENGINES

(No. B/615) Mr P. Armance (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the grants for the acquisition of outboard engines by Fishermen Co-operative Societies, as announced in the Budget Speech 2018-2019, he will state the number of grants given and number of outboard engines acquired, indicating the –

- (a) names of the beneficiaries, and
- (b) amount of funds disbursed.

Reply (Minister of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives): Paragraph 75 of the Budget Speech 2018/2019 highlights that to fully tap the economic possibilities in our ocean: a grant of 60 per cent of the cost of acquisition of outboard engines and fishing nets, by fishermen cooperatives, up to a maximum of Rs60,000 would be introduced and all registered fishermen will be provided with a free ice box.

As regards the outboard engines, 11 fishermen cooperative societies have taken advantage of the scheme and my ministry has disbursed a sum of Rs256,616.

I am tabling the list of the 11 cooperative societies which have acquired the outboard engines together with the sum disbursed.

TUESDAY 16 JULY 2019

MAURITIUS MARITIME TRAINING ACADEMY – HEAD

(No. B/649) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the post of Director, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Maritime Training Academy, information as to the name of the incumbent, indicating the date and terms and conditions of appointment thereof.

Mr Koonjoo: Madam Speaker, the correct appellation of the post is Head, Mauritius Maritime Training Academy. I wish to refer the hon. Member to the reply I made to PQ B/45 on 27 March 2018, during which I tabled a copy of the contract of employment of Dr. Sanjiv Kumar Babooa, Head, Mauritius Maritime Training Academy.

Mr Bhagwan: Can I ask the hon. Minister whether the same person was condemned by the Court for abuse of power when he was Registrar at the University of Technology. Is he the same person, who was condemned by the Court for abuse of power at the University of Technology? Can the Minister tell us what is the situation?

Mr Koonjoo: I have already replied, Madam Speaker.

Mr Bhagwan: I have some supplementaries. This is confirmed that the gentleman was condemned. Is the Minister aware and is he prepared to investigate into representations received for abuse of power, abuse of authority prevailing at the Mauritius Maritime Training Academy by the same person with regard to transfer of staff, theft, harassment of an expatriate, Captain Kai? Is the Minister aware of the representation received at his Ministry and even elsewhere to the authorities concerning the present abuse of authority by this same person who did the same thing at the University of Technology?

Mr Koonjoo: Madam Speaker, I repeat the same thing again. The same question was put to me by his colleague there, by the side of him, and I gave the reply to him also. So, he better talks to his friend.

Mr Bhagwan: Can we deduce that this Mr S. K. B. is tolerated by the Ministry, by Government because he is a political nominee, although *ses antécédants*? So, he is tolerated being given he is a political nominee of the Minister and the Government of the day?

Mr Koonjoo: If the Member is not satisfied with my answer for the last time, you can go to the Court, please.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Can I know from the hon. Minister, just if he finds it normal that someone who has already been found guilty, we are not talking about presumption of innocence here, we are not talking about someone on bail, someone who has already been found guilty of an offence, be heading an important institution like the Mauritius Maritime Training Academy?

Mr Koonjoo: I'll give an additional information to the hon. Member. On 09 July 2019, the Independent Commission Against Corruption informed my Ministry that the case against Dr. Babooa is still under appeal. So, you understand the meaning, it is still under appeal.

Madam Speaker: Last question!

Mr Bhagwan: Madam Speaker, one last supplementary.

In view of this heavy *antécédant* of this person, can the Minister inform the House, the country and the taxpayers whether it is not time for the Government not to renew his contract which is expiring at the end of August this year?

Mr Koonjoo: We are waiting for the reply from the ICAC.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Bhagwan!

TUESDAY 30 JULY 2019

OCEAN ECONOMY UNIT - HEAD – POST

(No. B/722) **Mr P. Armance (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West)** asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the post of Head of the Ocean Economy Unit, he will state the –

- (a) number of applications received therefor, indicating the number of applicants interviewed, and
- (b) name and qualifications of the successful applicant.

Reply: I am informed that the post of Head, Ocean Economy Unit has been re-advertised by the Ministry on 29 April 2019 to both local and international candidates. The closing date for the submission of applications was 20 May 2019.

Five applications have been received as at closing date, one from international candidate and four from local candidates.

The screening exercise is in process.

TUESDAY 13 AUGUST 2019

FISHING LICENCES – BENEFICIARIES

(No. B/800) **Mr D. Ramful (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien)** asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the Fishing Licences, he will give the list of the beneficiaries thereof, region-wise, since January 2015 to date, indicating the procedure followed for the issue thereof.

Mr Koonjoo: Madam Speaker, as the information is bulky, I am tabling same, including the procedures followed.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Ramful, he is tabling the information required.

Mr Ramful: Okay!

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Ms Sewocksingh!

TUESDAY 17 SEPTEMBER 2019

MAURITIUS - MARINE PROTECTED AREAS - FLAT ISLAND

(No. B/829) Mr A. Duval (First Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the marine area surrounding Flat Island, he will state if consideration will be given for the inclusion thereof in the Marine Protected Areas of Mauritius.

(Withdrawn)

FOREIGN INDUSTRIAL FISHING VESSELS - FISH PRODUCTION

(No. B/830) **Mr A. Duval (First Member for Curepipe & Midlands)** asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the measure taken to allow foreign industrial fishing companies to fish in our shallow water banks, as announced in the Budget Speech 2018-2019, he will state the number of foreign industrial fishing vessels having fished in our shallow water banks since July 2018 to date, indicating the total fish production and the amount thereof –

- (a) sold on the local market, and
- (b) exported.

Mr Koonjoo: Madam Speaker, I wish to - I am just talking about the same question which has been changed now, all right - I wish to inform the House that...

Madam Speaker: No. Hon. Koonjoo, please carry on! But the question has not been changed, it is as it is on the Agenda.

Mr Koonjoo: Okay, thank you.

...there is only one Mauritian owned foreign flagged industrial fishing vessel, namely “Diego Star 2”, which has been fishing in our shallow water banks since July 2018 to date. Madam Speaker, the total fish production of the vessel for this period was 224.9 tons, which was entirely sold in the local market and therefore there is no export.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Adrien Duval!

Mr A. Duval: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Therefore, if we understand correctly, what was announced in the Budget 2018/2019 by the Prime Minister that he will now allow foreign fishing vessels to fish in our coastal waters has not yet been implemented. May we know if Government is still going to go ahead with this?

Mr Koonjoo: It is being implemented, Madam. So, we will stick to that.

Mr A. Duval: Madam Speaker, can we know from the hon. Minister what are the safeguards that are going to be put in place to ensure that we control the species and quantity of fish that is fished in our coastal waters when he is implementing this policy to allow foreign vessels to come now to our coastal waters?

Mr Koonjoo: Madam Speaker, everything is controlled by my Ministry and especially if my hon. friend is worried about whether there will be any problem concerning the alien fish in our country...

(Interruptions)

Yes.

Madam Speaker: Please, proceed with your reply. Don't take heed of what they say.

Mr Koonjoo: I must assure him that there is nothing of the sort. Everything has been taken into consideration. So, the foreign fish or any other fish which has got problem, and we are taking all precautions to correct everything.

Mr A. Duval: This is *en dehors du cadre*. Madam Speaker, it is an important question. I will make the point anyway even though if he does not want to answer. You have, in your National Export Strategy of your Ministry, underlined the importance in the short-term to come up with the proper assessment of all the fish species that we have, the stock level and these are commitments that you have given to the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission, as well, and the European Union, and you are announcing that you are going now to let foreign fishing vessels come and fish, and you cannot tell us what are the safeguards that have been put in place. Therefore, whatever you have said to the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission, whatever you have said in your strategic paper was just empty words. Is that what we should conclude?

Mr Koonjoo: No, Madam Speaker, it is not that. If we have given our word, we will keep our word. I don't know what my hon. friend has gathered from what we have spoken to the Tuna Fishing. We are maintaining. Just like the Prime Minister has given his word, we will maintain that.

Mr A. Duval: Madam Speaker, can I ask a last question? It would be completely contradictory to the commitments that have been given since 2015 by the Minister himself and this country to international organisations that we would limit the number, for example, of tuna fish, that we would reduce the number because the fish are endangered. So many questions have been answered to this House and we are going to allow foreign fishing vessels. What I want is for the Minister to backpedal on this. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether he can give a commitment to the House today that he will not go ahead with letting foreign fishing vessels fish in our coastal waters?

Mr Koonjoo: Madam Speaker, there is no backpedalling, nothing. We will stick to our word and we will find to it that that we give our people in Mauritius who can fish in our water.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Osman Mahomed, we will take the question of hon. Bodha now.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Yes, thank you. PQ B/827.

Mr Bodha: Thank you, Madam. We had a meeting with the Prime Minister and the UNODC.

NET FISHING - ILLEGAL - CASES

(No. B/831) Mr A. Duval (First Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to illegal net fishing, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the fisheries protection services, since January 2015 to date, the number of reported cases thereof, indicating the number of –

- (a) contraventions booked, and
- (b) nets seized.

Mr Koonjoo: Madam Speaker, I wish to inform the House that with regard to the illegal net fishing, since January 2015, as per our record –

- (a) the number of reported cases is 770;

- (b) the number of contraventions booked is 55, and
- (c) the total length of nets seized amounts to 41,382 metres.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Adrien Duval!

Mr A. Duval: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, the Minister must be aware that there is a flaw in the legislation. The figure says it all, 700 reported cases, 55 contraventions only and that it is difficult to prosecute. The Minister has given again a commitment to this House since 2015 that he would come with the Fisheries Act so that we may remedy all these shortcomings.

Pas plus loin que l'année dernière, en 2018, pendant la PNQ, le ministre répétait le fait que le Bill allait être présenté au plus vite. May we know where this famous Fisheries Bill is?

Mr Koonjoo: Madam Speaker, I do not decide about what Bill is coming first or second, it is the hon. Prime Minister who decides and he decides according to his importance and as such, I can tell the House that twice we have got ready about the Bill, but, unfortunately, something happened in our Ministry. Twice we lost our Permanent Secretary. Twice! So, everything was disturbed, but still we are already ready with the Bill, it depends now on the hon. Prime Minister, whenever he tells us, we will be going to the Parliament, no problem.

Mr A. Duval: I hope that he has found his Permanent Secretary back. With regard to the Bill, are we to understand that this commitment...

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Koonjoo: They have passed away.

(*Interruptions*)

Mr A. Duval: Okay, I didn't know, sorry.

(*Interruptions*)

I hope that the commitment then to bring it by the end of this mandate will still hold and that you will talk to the Prime Minister to make sure it is on the agenda because this, as the hon. Minister must know, is something that is very serious, not only can't we control and prosecute illegal net fishing in our local waters, but also we cannot do so for foreign fishing vessels that are depleting our Exclusive Economic Zone.

Madam Speaker: We have understood your question. Yes, hon. Minister. You don't have any reply?

Mr Koonjoo: I don't want to add anything.

Madam Speaker: Okay. Next question, hon. Adrien Duval!

LAGOONS - FISH - INVASIVE SPECIES

(No. B/832) Mr A. Duval (First Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the invasive fish species in our lagoons and coastal waters, he will state the –

- (a) measures taken for same to be identified and surveyed, indicating the number thereof identified and the estimated population per species, and
- (b) remedial measures taken for the eradication thereof, since January 2015 to date.

Mr Koonjoo: Madam Speaker, I understand that the hon. Member refers to the alien species.

(Interruptions)

I say alien.

Madam Speaker: Don't engage in any conversation with the Members of the Opposition and I'll ask Members of the Opposition also to allow the Minister to reply, please.

Mr Koonjoo: Regarding part (a) of the question, the MOI and the Shipping Division of my Ministry exercise strict control over ballast water from vessels calling at the Port Louis harbour to prevent alien and invasive species from entering our waters.

Surveys carried out both in Port Louis and Port Mathurin have revealed that there are no alien/invasive species in our waters.

Furthermore, I am also informed that whenever there is a proliferation of a certain local species of fish due to climate change or climatic conditions and other reasons, arrangements are made by my Ministry, in collaboration with the NGOs and other departments to participate in removing such species.

Consequently, part (b) of the question does not arise.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Adrien Duval!

Mr A. Duval: I am surprised that the hon. Minister says there are no invasive species. The Prime Minister, himself, in the Budget announced, I think, Rs5 m. to remove the crown-of-thorns starfish. May we know on that score so far how many have been captured in terms of quantity? I do not know how will you quantify in terms of tons or catch itself. If we can know?

Mr Koonjoo: Madam Speaker, I just replied that, so far both in Mauritius and in Rodrigues, we have been constantly looking for any species entering our waters and it is very, very important because we have gone through many important meetings with foreigners to find out if we have got any ballast water, any foreign species coming in our waters. That is very important because it can give rise to anything.

So, we take all the precautions and I just said that we have never had, neither in Mauritius nor in Rodrigues because the Port is important, anything can enter in the waters especially if we have got things which can cause havoc to the health of the people. We take all the precautions. So far nothing has been found out in our waters.

Mr A. Duval: Madam Speaker, I must say I really do not trust the answer of the Minister.

Madam Speaker: No, you cannot say this. You cannot say that you do not trust the answer.

Mr A. Duval: Not trust, but I do not think this answer is very factual.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Now, you are not correcting, hon. Shakeel Mohamed.

Mr A. Duval: Madam Speaker, the question to the hon. Minister is: given that we do not have a proper monitoring procedure for ballast of ships that come to Mauritius, unless the Minister himself goes to physically dive in these...

Madam Speaker: Ask your question!

Mr A. Duval: ...*dans les cales des bateaux*.

Madam Speaker: What is your question?

Mr A. Duval: And this is one of the shortcomings that you have to remedy.

Madam Speaker: What is your question?

Mr A. Duval: The question is, Madam Speaker, again, given that in the Budget we recognised the need to get rid of invasive fish species, do you not have any quantifiable data to give report to this House today?

Mr Koonjoo: I just reported, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: There are none.

Mr Koonjoo: If the hon. Member doesn't want to listen, I can't tell him more than that. We know that both in Mauritius and in Rodrigues, there are lots of changes coming in the harbour, lots of things. Both harbours are developing very fast and if the Prime Minister has spoken about the precaution, of course, he has all the reasons to take precaution, but I am not saying that we have got species coming in our waters, in our harbour. This is not true at all, and if he does not believe me, then ...

(*Interruptions*)

Madam Speaker: No.

Mr Koonjoo: I am just sorry for him.

Mr A. Duval: Madam Speaker, crown-of-thorns starfish have eaten away kilometres of corals in Australia and they are eating away in Mauritius. They have been found in Rodrigues, the Prime Minister has recognised that in his Budget.

Madam Speaker: Don't make a statement, hon. Adrien Duval. Ask your question!

Mr A. Duval: Madam Speaker, let me ask, with regard to the thousands of *ombrines* that have fled from the fishing nets in Mahebourg, that are alien fish, thousands of them, whether a survey has been done at the level of his Ministry since that PNQ to determine what impact it has had? I said that I do not trust his answer because by definition...

Madam Speaker: No, you are repeating this again. Please withdraw this!

Mr A. Duval: But Madam Speaker, he has to be careful of what he says.

Madam Speaker: No, but you cannot say! *Non, non, non*. If you say that you do not trust the answer, the reply given by the hon. Minister, then you have to come with a Motion to the House. I am sorry. Hon. Adrien Duval, please ask your question, he will give you the reply.

Mr A. Duval: Can we have an update on the thousands, many thousands, 15000, 20000, 30000, 40 000 fish that fled from the Mahebourg fish farm? An update as to if they are still in our lagoon in Mauritius? As to what the impact there has been? They are predatory species and whether or not...

Madam Speaker: One by one, please!

Mr A. Duval: they have taken over the lagoon yet or not, and what is being done to control?

Mr Koonjoo: I am sorry to say it, Madam Speaker, that people from my Ministry, have reported that they have not seen any.

(*Interruptions*)

Madam Speaker: Okay! Hon. Adrien Duval! Next question, hon. Henry! Hon. Henry! Hon. Henry! Next question is yours!

Mr Henry: It was so funny, Madam Speaker!

TUESDAY 24 SEPTEMBER 2019

ROUND ISLAND – MARINE PROTECTED AREAS

(No. B/885) Mr A. Duval (First Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the marine area surrounding Round Island, he will state if consideration will be given for the inclusion thereof in the Marine Protected Areas of Mauritius.

Reply: I wish to inform the House that my Ministry is currently implementing a project entitled ‘Mainstreaming biodiversity into the management of the coastal zone in the Republic of Mauritius’ funded by United Nations Development Programme/Government of Mauritius/Global Environment Facility.

Under this project, the marine areas around the Northern Islets which include Round Island have been identified as potential sites for study to be proclaimed as Marine Protected Areas.

In this context, ecological surveys are being carried out to confirm the suitability of the site

2020

TUESDAY 05 MAY 2020

COVID-19 - REGISTERED PROFESSIONAL FISHERS - FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

(No. A/21) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (Fourth Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the registered professional fishers, he will state the number thereof who have benefitted from financial assistance during the Covid-19 lockdown as at to date, indicating the quantum thereof disbursed.

Reply: I would like to draw the attention of the hon. Member that there is no such profession as ‘registered professional fishers’. In fact, under Section 11 of the Fisheries and Marine Resources Act, fishermen are registered as ‘artisanal fishermen’, ‘bank fishermen’ or ‘trainee bank fishermen’.

A total number of 1,810 registered artisanal fishers benefitted from a financial assistance amounting to Rs23,064,750 during the lockdown period which started on 19 March 2020 and ended on 14 May 2020 for registered artisanal fishers as they were allowed to resume their fishing activities as from 15 May 2020.

Indeed, for the period 15 May to 31 May, eligible fishers were paid their Bad Weather Allowance.

EXCLUSIVE ECONOMIC ZONE - FOREIGN FISHING VESSELS -ILLEGAL OPERATION ILLEGALLY

(No. B/19) Mr K. Lobine (First Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to our Exclusive Economic Zone, he will state the number of reported cases of foreign fishing vessels operating illegally therein during the Covid-19 lockdown, indicating the actions taken in relation thereto, if any.

Mr Maudhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that during the Covid-19 lockdown which started on 20 March 2020, there have not been any reported cases of foreign fishing vessels operating illegally in our Exclusive Economic Zone.

During the lockdown period, there were 11 foreign fishing vessels operating in our Exclusive Economic Zone under a Mauritian licence issued by my Ministry. Their movements were monitored through the Vessel Monitoring System of the Albion Fisheries Research Centre of my Ministry.

Additionally, I wish to inform the House that any type of fishing vessel present in our EEZ is monitored on a 24/7 basis by the National Coast Guard Operations Room through the Coastal Surveillance Radar System, the Vessel Monitoring System and the Automatic Identification System. Moreover, during the same period, 14 foreign flag fishing vessels operating outside the EEZ of Mauritius and which were not holders of Mauritian Fishing Licences called at Port Louis for transhipment and related activities.

I am also informed that during the confinement period, the National Coast Guard has carried out 44 surveillance sorties covering our Exclusive Economic Zone of which 28 were airborne using the Dornier and 16 were seaborne using different patrol vessels, including the Barracuda. There has been no reported case of illegal fishing in our EEZ from these 44 surveillance sorties.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I have also to inform the House that on 21 April of this year, I had a meeting with the representatives of the Mauritian Bank Fishing Operators who are all allowed to operate during the lockdown and I stress upon them the need to combat forcefully illegal fishing in our Exclusive Economic Zone. I requested for their support and assistance in this endeavour.

At the level of my Ministry, a communication network system through satellite phones has also been set up to tackle illegal fishing. Any Mauritian Bank Fishing Vessel who suspects illegal fishing activities occurring in our EEZ is urged to report the matter through this communication system to my Ministry.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Armance!

COVID-19 PANDEMIC - EXCLUSIVE ECONOMIC ZONE - SPECIAL TEMPORARY LICENCE

(No. B/51) Mrs S. Mayotte (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to owners

of pleasure crafts, he will state if consideration will be given for the issue thereto of a special temporary licence to allow them fish in our Exclusive Economic Zone to earn a living amid the economic crisis generated by the Covid-19 pandemic and, if not, why not.

(Withdrawn)

CURFEW PERIOD - ARTISANAL FISHERS - COMPENSATION

(No. B/57) Mr F. David (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the artisanal fishers, he will state the quantum of the compensation paid thereto during the curfew period amid the Covid-19 pandemic, indicating the number thereof concerned therewith.

Reply: The Curfew Order as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic became effective on 20 March 2020. The strict confinement measures have also been made applicable to the fisher community and consequently they have not been allowed to go out at sea for fishing.

In a bid to provide financial assistance to the artisanal fishers, Government has agreed to grant an exceptional financial compensation of Rs5,100 to each registered fisher.

This exceptional compensation was paid for the months of March and April 2020 on 09 April and 27 April 2020 respectively, through direct credit into the individual bank accounts of each registered artisanal fisher.

I wish to inform the House that this compensation should not be linked to the Bad Weather Allowance. The fishers have been provided with the financial compensation of Rs5,100 on an exceptional basis and the quantum has been aligned with the Self-Employed Assistance Scheme.

Out of 1894 registered artisanal fishers, 1810 registered artisanal fishers have benefitted from this special compensation, amounting to a total sum of Rs18,462,000 for the months of March and April 2020.

The 84 remaining registered artisanal fishers were not paid this exceptional compensation as they were in breach of the conditions on their fisherman registration card and had not stamped their fisherman registration cards over the last six months.

THURSDAY 14 MAY 2020

PARTIAL DECONFINEMENT – FISHERMEN

Mr F. David (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West): Merci, M. le président. Ma requête s'adresse au ministre de l'Economie bleue, des Ressources marines, de la Pêche et de la marine.

M. le ministre, nous sommes à la veille de la date prévue par le gouvernement pour la reprise partielle et contrôlée des activités et vu les nombreux appels que je reçois, et encore aujourd'hui, de plusieurs pêcheurs, je me rends compte de leur confusion la plus totale.

Ma question est donc la suivante, M. le ministre: à partir de demain 15 mai, les pêcheurs aux casiers et les pêcheurs à la ligne peuvent-ils reprendre leurs activités et, si oui, doivent-ils être munis d'un Work Access Permit ou est-ce que leurs carte de pêcheur et carte d'identité seront suffisantes? Merci pour eux.

The Minister of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping (Mr S. Maudhoo): Mr Speaker, Sir, indeed tomorrow all the fishermen are going to fish. They do not need the WAP, they need only their fisherman card, even for the fishmongers, but they need to have their fisherman card with them while going for fishing.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Dr. Gungapersad!

TUESDAY 09 JUNE 2020

GRAND PORT – REGISTERED FISHERS

(No. B/134) Mr R. Duval (Fourth Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the registered fishers of the District of Grand Port, he will table copy of the list thereof.

(Withdrawn)

LA PASSE OF MAHEBOURG – CREATION

(No. B/135) Mr R. Duval (Fourth Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the creation of La Passe of Mahebourg, he will state where matters stand, indicating the expected completion date thereof.

(Withdrawn)

WEDNESDAY 10 JUNE 2020

SKIPPERS – TEMPORARY FISHERMEN CARD

Mr R. Woochit (Third Member for Pamplemousses & Triolet): My request goes to hon. Maudhoo. There are so many skippers around the island working in glass bottom boats, artisanal and recreation boats that are idle at home. They are not allowed to go fishing because they don't have the *carte pêcheur*. Can the Minister allow these skippers to go fishing on a temporary basis until the tourism industry picks up, please?

The Minister of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping (Mr S. Maudhoo): Mr Speaker, Sir, I'll look into the matter with my colleague, the Minister of Tourism, and then inform the Member.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Ms Foo Kune!

TUESDAY 30 JUNE 2020

GRAND PORT DISTRICT – REGISTERED FISHERS

(No. B/194) Mr R. Duval (Fourth Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the registered fishers of the District of Grand Port, he will table copy of the list thereof –

Reply: I am laying a copy of the list of the registered fishers for the District of Grand Port, as requested by the hon. Member, in the Library of the National Assembly.

LA PASSE OF MAHEBOURG – COMPLETION DATE

(No. B/195) Mr R. Duval (Fourth Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the creation of La Passe of Mahebourg, he will state where matters stand, indicating the expected completion date thereof –

Reply: I would wish, at the very outset, to clarify the term ‘La Passe of Mahebourg’, as referred to in the PQ by the hon. Member.

There are currently three boat passages in the lagoon of Mahebourg, namely, Remy Ollier boat passage, Mare Chicose fish landing station boat passage and the Fisheries Post of Mahebourg boat passage. I presume that when the hon. Member is mentioning ‘La Passe de Mahebourg’, he is, in fact, referring to the main boat passage of Remy Ollier in the lagoon of Mahebourg. For your information, there is another boat passage called La Passe, near Ile de la Passe, for which there is currently no project being undertaken by my Ministry.

Following the request of my colleagues hon. Hurreeram, hon. Toussaint and hon. Doolub on this issue, I met with the representatives of fishers at my Ministry on 03 June 2020. Among the issues discussed during the meeting was the boat passages in the lagoon of Mahebourg, and the difficulties encountered by fishers to use the said boat passages.

I am informed that there are presently 132 fishers utilising the three boat passages in Mahebourg, and that at low tide, only the Remy Ollier boat passage is navigable. My Ministry is aware of the matter and has already initiated a project to re-open all the boat passages to ease the movement of fishing and patrol boats in the lagoon of Mahebourg at Remy Ollier. I would request fishers of the region to bear with us for some months as the project has already been launched.

Indeed, the project consists of site preparation for dredging, actual dredging, stockpiling of dredged materials within a secured area, proper disposal of dredged materials and provision of proper navigation aids.

Any project pertaining to dredging in the lagoon imperatively requires an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), as per Part B of the First Schedule (Section 15C) of the Environment Protection (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2006 under the Environment Protection Act 2002 (GN No. 142 of 2006).

Consequently, an EIA study was initiated in January 2019 to assess the significance of the direct environmental impacts of this project.

A draft EIA report has been submitted by the consultant to my Ministry in December 2019. The final EIA report was scheduled to be submitted in April 2020, but due to the sanitary curfew in

place, a delay of two months has occurred in the project. The final EIA report is now expected by mid-July this year.

Once the final EIA report has been received, the Fisheries Protection Service of my Ministry will apply for an exemption of an EIA licence to the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change, following which the project bid documents will be prepared for launching of the bids for the dredging of the boat passages. These processes are expected to take up to 26 weeks. Following the selection of the contractor, the actual dredging work is expected to take up to six months for completion for the re-opening of the boat passages in the lagoon of Mahebourg.

This means that, as from today, the estimated date of completion for the project, if all goes well, would be June 2021 (now-July 2020 for final EIA report + 10 months).

TUESDAY 07 JULY 2020

FISHERMEN - BAD WEATHER ALLOWANCE

(No. B/249) **Mr F. David (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West)** asked the Minister of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the Fishermen Bad Weather Allowance, he will state the quantum of compensation paid and corresponding number of bad weather days over the period 15 May to 30 June 2020, indicating the number of fishermen concerned therewith.

Reply: My Ministry effects payment of Bad Weather Allowance to registered fishers, based on the official report regarding the general state of the sea around Mauritius, issued by the Mauritius Meteorological Services at the end of each month.

Two types of fishing grounds are used for the calculation of Bad Weather Allowance, that is, in-lagoon and off-lagoon, but fishers are registered to operate either in-lagoon, both in-lagoon and off-lagoon, or off-lagoon. The in-lagoon is further divided into four regions –

Region 1: Cap Malheureux to Pointe aux Sables

Region 2: Pointe aux Sables to Le Morne

Region 3: Le Morne to Blue Bay

Region 4: Blue Bay to Cap Malheureux

Earlier, fishers used to register as either in-lagoon or off-lagoon. However, due to overfishing, a policy decision was taken in 2006 to train fishers to extend their fishing activities off-lagoon.

There are currently 65 in-lagoon registered fishers, who due to their age and health were unable to follow the training course and thus were unable to extend their fishing activities off-lagoon. These fishers are paid their Bad Weather Allowance based on the general state of the sea report from the Mauritius Meteorological Services report, for the regions within which they operate in-lagoon.

The rest of the 1,822 registered fishers operate both in-lagoon and off-lagoon, and are paid Bad Weather Allowance based on the general state of the sea off-lagoon.

The first step for the payment of Bad Weather Allowance for a month is the stamping of fisherman registration cards, which is carried out from the 01 to the 08 of the following month.

The second step is to crosscheck the records of fisherman registration cards which have been stamped, against the main register in the fisheries post, to ascertain that the fisher is indeed active in fishing activities and is not drawing any other social benefit.

However, in spite of bad weather, a few fishers have been found to go out for their fishing activities. During random checks by officers of my Ministry on bad weather days, these fishers have been found at sea and thus lose their eligibility for the Bad Weather Allowance.

I wish to inform the House that these fishers sign the Record Book at the Fish Landing Station and also have their catch (that is, fish species and weight) recorded, even on bad weather days. These records are then checked against the report from the Mauritius Meteorological Services for the general state of the sea to ascertain the eligibility of registered fishers for the Bad Weather Allowance.

For the period 15 to 31 May 2020, out of the 1,887 registered fishers, 125 fishers did not stamp their cards between the 01 to 08 June 2020. 1,762 fishers stamped their cards, but only 1,756 were eligible for the Bad Weather Allowance. Five registered fishers from Regions 1 and 2 were not paid Bad Weather Allowance as the general state of the sea was favourable for fishing activities. One registered fisher was on a fishing campaign, and as such was not eligible for Bad Weather Allowance.

Thus, for the period 15 May to 31 May 2020, Bad Weather Allowance was paid to 1,756 eligible fishers, amounting to Rs4,399,345.00, which was effected on 22 June 2020.

The exercise for the payment for Bad Weather Allowance for the month of June is ongoing. In fact, registered fishers have until 08 July to stamp their fisherman card, following which the payment will be worked out and payment made to eligible fishers, at latest by 20 July 2020.

The quantum for Bad Weather Allowance for the month of June 2020 will depend on the number of eligible fishers who stamp their cards. As at 06 July 2020, an average of 61% of registered fishers had stamped their fisherman registration cards, representing a total of 1,155 registered fishers.

I wish to inform the House that since the payment for Bad Weather Allowance started, this is the first time that we have had 24 bad weather days recorded off-lagoon.

Thus, the quantum for the month of June 2020 is expected to be around Rs16 m. and each registered off-lagoon fisher is expected to receive Rs8,760 as Bad Weather Allowance.

I am laying in the library of the National Assembly a detailed breakdown on the number of bad weather days for the period of 15-31 May and the month of June as provided by the Mauritius Meteorological Services in its official report.

OUTER ISLANDS - SHIPPING VESSEL

(No. B/265) Mr J. Léopold (Second Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the shipping vessel due to be delivered to serve the Outer Islands of the Republic of Mauritius, including Rodrigues, as announced in the Budget Speech 2020-2021, he will state the type thereof.

Reply: I am informed that the shipping vessel due to be delivered to serve the Outer Islands of the Republic of Mauritius including Rodrigues, as announced in the Budget Speech 2020-2021, is a multipurpose cargo vessel of around 8200 Dead Weight Tons (DWT) with an approximate of 400 loaded containers of twenty feet equivalent units (TEUs). It is important to note that the cost of the new vessel will be borne exclusively by the MSCL, that is, without any funding from the Government.

As the House is aware, presently, M/V Trochetia, which is a passenger cum cargo vessel, was procured in 2001 as a backup of Mauritius Pride. However, MSCL was advised that for sustainability of the company, MSCL should have one passenger cum cargo vessel as well as one cargo vessel only. Thus, after the sales of Mauritius Pride in 2014, M/V Anna was chartered as a cargo vessel to service the island of Rodrigues and later replaced by another chartered vessel M/V Black Rhino.

In view of the fact that M/V Trochetia is now 19 years old, it is contemplated to replace it by a passenger cum cargo vessel.

RODRIGUES - SEA FREIGHT RATES

(No. B/266) Mr J. Léopold (Second Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the sea freight rates to and from Rodrigues, he will state if he is in presence of representations to the effect that same are exorbitant and, if so, indicate the consideration given thereto, if any.

Reply: I wish to inform the House that, as at date, according to records available at my Ministry no representation has been received with regard to any exorbitant sea freight rates to and from Rodrigues. I am also informed that at the level of the Mauritius Shipping Corporation Ltd, no such request has been received.

However, on 18 February 2011, there was a Cabinet decision, amongst others, as regards the tariffs on the Rodrigues route to be revised every 2 years to adjust for inflation.

The tariffs for passenger fare and freight were increased by 20% and 30% respectively, effective as from April 2011. The cumulative inflation rate for the years 2011 and 2012 was 10.4% and the tariffs (both passenger and cargo) were increased accordingly by 10.4% which took effect as from April 2013.

For the year 2015, the proposed increase in tariffs based on the last two years cumulative inflation rate was 6.7% and should have been effective as from April 2015. However, following representations made by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly (RRA), the increase in tariffs was kept in abeyance for more than 4 years, that is, until July 2017.

The reviewed sea freight rates in Rodrigues route were effective as from 01 July 2017. These new sea freight tariffs and structure were reviewed after consultation with the representatives of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly (RRA) in April/May 2017. The RRA proposed to increase the freight for both alcoholic and soft drinks to lower its consumption and social impacts and to decrease freight on commodities such as animal feed and goods exported from Rodrigues such as live animals to encourage production and exportation. I wish to inform the House that there are different tariffs for different commodities and I am laying a copy of the minutes of meeting held on 27 April 2017 at Rodrigues and a copy of the different tariffs in the Library of the National Assembly.

However, I must stress that the passenger fares have remained unchanged. The next tariff review was due in July 2019 and I am informed that consultation with the RRA and other stakeholders will be held shortly.

I would like to invite my hon. colleagues representing the island of Rodrigues to make proposals for any review of freight charges through Rodrigues Regional Assembly (RRA) and in view of COVID-19 negative impact, consideration will definitely be given to –

- i. revise the freight charges on essential commodities such as rice, flour, milk, live animals and others, and
- ii. boost both exportation and importation of products to cater for food security.

TUESDAY 21 JULY 2020

FISH LANDING STATIONS - DEVELOPMENT & EMBELLISHMENT

(No. B/344) Mr F. David (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the proposed development and embellishment of the fish landing stations island-wide, he will state where matters stand, indicating the nature and schedule of works planned for the landing stations of Bain des Dames and of Pointe aux Sables, respectively.

(Withdrawn)

TUESDAY 28 JULY 2020

RODRIGUES - IN-LAGOON FISHING ZONES - CONVERSION

(No. B/400) **Mr J. Léopold (Second Member for Rodrigues)** asked the Minister of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the representations made by people in Rodrigues for the conversion of the four existing in-lagoon fishing zones thereat into one single zone, he will state if consideration is being given thereto and, if so, indicate where matters stand.

Mr Maudhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that since 2006, the fishing zones in Rodrigues are divided into four zones. It is on this basis, among others, that the Bad Weather Allowance is paid monthly to the Rodriguan fishers.

As per records available at my Ministry, there have been representations made in 2010 and 2014 for the conversion of the four existing in-lagoon fishing zones in Rodrigues into one single zone. After considering these representations, the then Ministry of Fisheries and Rodrigues did not accede to the request based mainly on the advice of the Meteorological Services.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am pleased to announce in view of the representation on this issue and even from the Mauritian fishers regarding the four in-lagoon fishing zones in Mauritius, I am contemplating the conversion of the four existing in-lagoon fishing zones in Mauritius and in Rodrigues respectively into one single zone.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Léopold!

Mr Léopold: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir, and thank you for your reply, hon. Minister. As you know, meteorology is not an exact science and it takes only less than 15 minutes for the fishers to get from one zone to another. On this line, would the Minister look into the matter as soon as you possibly can, quickly, address the matter?

Mr Maudhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, this will be done as soon as possible.

Mr Armance: Mr Speaker, Sir, since the Minister mentioned same is going to be implemented in Mauritius as well, may we know about the timeframe for implementation, where matters stand at the level of his Ministry?

Mr Maudhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, when I say as soon as possible because this is done through regulation, so, it won't take a long time for me to bring in the regulation.

Mr Speaker: The Table has been advised that PQ B/447 has been withdrawn.

Next question!

BAIN DES DAMES & POINTE AUX SABLES FISH LANDING STATIONS

(No. B/405) **Mr F. David (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West)** asked the Minister of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the proposed development and embellishment of the fish landing stations island-wide, he will state where matters stand, indicating the nature and schedule of works planned in respect of the Bain des Dames and Pointe aux Sables fish landing stations, respectively.

Mr Maudhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, as the House may be aware, in accordance with the Fisheries Regulations 1983, as subsequently amended, there are currently 61 fish landing stations grouped under 14 fisheries posts. Since I took office as Minister of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping, I requested my Officers to work out on a project for the upgrading and embellishment of each of the fish landing stations island-wide with the dwell objective of providing a conducive environment to the fishers and upgrading the working environment of our Fisheries

Protection Officers. In this context, a comprehensive inventory of the existing amenities at the fish landing stations was carried out in the months of March and April 2020 and a report has been submitted. As per the report, there is a number of upgrading works involving, in some cases, major and in others minor works to be carried out at these fish landing stations.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the estimated cost of the works stands at around Rs22 m. my Ministry will proceed with the works on a priority basis subject to availability of funds.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in the same vein, I am pleased to inform the House that the Grand Gaube fish landing station, which has been completely renovated, will be inaugurated in August 2020.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to the embellishment works at the Bain des Dames and Pointe aux Sables fish landing stations, following a request from my colleague, Dr. the hon. Ms Chukowry, Parliamentary Private Secretary, for the provision of toilet blocks, jetties and slipways for fish landing station at both Bain des Dames and Pointe aux Sables, officers of my Ministry effected a site visit on 30 April 2020. During the site visit, both the fisher Community and residents of Bain des Dames expressed their wish for the relocation of the existing fish landing station of Bain des Dames to a site around 1000 metres away from the existing site and converting the present fish landing station into a public beach.

Consequently, on 15 May 2020, my Ministry made a request to the Ministry of Housing and Land Use Planning for the exchange of the existing vested land at Bain des Dames Fish Landing Station with a plot of land facing the sea approximately 1000 metres away.

Mr Speaker, Sir, a site visit is being scheduled on Friday 31 July 2020 with officers of Housing and Land Use Planning for the relocation of the fish landing station. Once, approval is obtained from the Ministry of Housing and Land Use Planning, my Ministry will initiate procedures for the installation of the required amenities.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to the fish landing station at Pointe aux Sables, I am informed that officers of the Ministry of Housing and Land Use Planning and my Ministry have effected a site visit on 08 July 2020 for the demarcation of the land thereat. Upon receipt of the report from the Ministry of Housing and Land Use Planning, my Ministry will initiate procedures for the construction of a jetty as well as a toilet block.

Mr Speaker: Hon. David!

Mr David: Merci, monsieur le ministre, pour vos précisions. Puis-je savoir si un appel d'offres en bonne et due forme sera lancé pour ces travaux de développement et d'embellissement à Bain des Dames et à Pointe aux Sables, et si oui, avec quel calendrier préliminaire?

Mr Maudhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, for the fish landing station for Bain des Dames, in fact, there is a fish shed with all the amenities, of course, the water tank, the electrical works, etc and a sum of about Rs800,000 has been earmarked but we have not launched any Expression of Interest till now. For the Pointe aux Sables fish landing station, it will cost about Rs1.3 m. but we have not yet started with the quotation. Once, we have the green light from the Ministry of Housing and Land Use Planning, we will initiate the procedures.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Armance!

Mr Armance: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Regarding the fish landing station of Pointe aux Sables, may I know from the Minister whether there has been a feasibility study regarding the sea level and the ground level, if yes, what is the output and if no, are you prepared to make a feasibility study regarding the sea level and the ground level?

Mr Maudhoo: I thank the hon. Member for this question. I have no information right now on this issue. I will definitely look into it before proceeding.

Mr Speaker: Next question, hon. David!

EXCLUSIVE ECONOMIC ZONE - INTERNATIONAL FISHING VESSELS - LICENCES

(No. B/443) Mr R. Duval (Fourth Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to international fishing vessels, he will give the list thereof issued with licences to fish in our Exclusive Economic Zone as at to date.

(Withdrawn)

TUESDAY 04 AUGUST 2020

INTERNATIONAL FISHING VESSELS – FISHING LICENCE

(No. B/470) Mr R. Duval (Fourth Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to international fishing vessels, he will give the list thereof presently holding licences to fish in our Exclusive Economic Zone.

Mr Maudhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, as the House may be aware, licenses to fish in our Exclusive Economic Zone are issued by my Ministry to foreign fishing vessels in accordance with Sections 34 and 35 of the Fisheries and Marine Resources Act 2007. Licences are issued to the following fishing vessels –

- (a) European Flag purse seiners and longliners registered in European countries, namely, Spain, France and Italy, and
- (b) Non-European Flag purse seiners and longliners registered in countries, namely, Seychelles, Taiwan, the Province of China, People's Republic of China, Republic of Korea, Oman and Japan.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I am tabling the list of foreign fishing vessels that are presently holding licenses to fish in our Exclusive Economic Zone.

Mr R. Duval: Can the hon. Minister state whether, in light of the annual revenue of fishing companies which run into billions of rupees, if there is a case to review the licenses and, if so, when does the Minister propose to come up with the appropriate regulation to review and increase the license fee?

Mr Maudhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, indeed, I did find it a big anomaly with the license fee. We have written to the agents and the boat owners that the license fee will be increased. We are still negotiating and awaiting the fishing season. They have made some proposals, but we are still negotiating on the amount.

Mr R. Duval: Will the hon. Minister declare how much fee has been being paid by the company globally on an annual basis?

Mr Maudhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, in fact, we have three agreements, namely the new Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the Republic of Mauritius and the European Union; fishing agreement between the Republic of Mauritius and the Government of the Republic of Seychelles;

fishing agreement between the Government of the Republic of Mauritius and the Japan Tuna Fisheries Cooperative Association.

Now, the validity of fishing licence for Japanese longliners is either six months or one year and there are different licence fees, like Rs12,000 for an initial period of six months; Rs20,000 is levied for a licence for a period of one year, and then, we have for European vessels, the validity of licence is one year – it's Euro 8,500 for a European purse seiner; 4,000 for a European supply vessel, 4,125 for a European longliner. For Seychelles fishing licence, it has a validity of either six months or one year. The licence fees for Seychelles fishing vessels are 24,000 for a purse seiner annually. USD 5,000 for a supply vessel annually; USD 17,500 for a longliner for a period of six months or USD 30,000 per year.

Mr Speaker: Last supplementary!

Mr R. Duval: Can the hon. Minister state how many fishing vessels in total operate and fish within our territorial sea annually?

Mr Maudhoo: I have just tabled the list. The hon. Member can go along it.

Mr Speaker: Honourable Members, the Table has been advised that PQs B/518, B/519 and B/480 have been withdrawn. Next question!

MV BENITA VESSEL -WRECK - COMPENSATION

(No. B/506) Mr Osman Mahomed (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the wreck of vessel MV Benita in 2016, he will state the compensation received from the insurer thereof, giving a breakdown thereof.

(Withdrawn)

TUESDAY 11 AUGUST 2020

MV WAKASHIO - GROUNDING & OIL SPILL - DUE DILIGENCE REPORT

The Leader of the Opposition (Dr. A. Boolell) (*by Private Notice*) asked the Minister of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to vessel MV Wakashio, the subsequent grounding thereof and the oil spill in the region of Pointe d'Esny, he will state if –

- (a) a due diligence exercise was carried out regarding the state of the vessel within the first week of the grounding and, if so, indicate -

- (i) when, and
- (ii) will copy of the Due Diligence Report, if any, be tabled, and
- (b) a Court of Investigation has been or will be appointed to inquire thereinto and, if so,
 - (i) when, and
 - (ii) will the terms of reference and composition thereof be tabled.

Mr Maudhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, as the House is aware, the bulk carrier MV Wakashio, registered in Panama, 299.9 metres long and 50 metres wide, on ballast (no cargo onboard), went aground about 1 nautical mile off Pointe d'Esny on 25 July 2020 at 19 31 hours.

The registered owner of the vessel is Okiyo Maritime Corporation and the insurers are the Japan Ship Owners' Mutual Protection and Indemnity Association (Japan P&I Club).

On the same day, at 22 00 hours, an Emergency Committee met under the chairpersonship of the Commissioner of Police at the National Coast Guard, Operations Room, in relation to MV Wakashio aground off Pointe d'Esny and directed relevant policing deployment.

The National Oil Spill Contingency Plan (NOSCP) was concurrently activated by the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change.

On the same day, that is, on Saturday 25 July 2020, at 20 18 hours, the Director of Shipping of my Ministry requested the following information from the Master of MV Wakashio through the Mauritius Radio Services (MRS) -

1. full particulars of the vessel;
2. distribution of fuel oil, diesel and lubricating oil in tanks on A4 format;
3. general arrangement, plan of vessel indicating where fuel, diesel, lubricating oil are found;
4. extent and update on damage to vessel on A4 format;
5. whether ingress of water was under control;
6. situation with respect to stability of vessel, and
7. update on whether vessel is pounding on the reefs.

In line with section 150 of the Merchant Shipping Act, the Director of Shipping immediately convened a coordination meeting, which was held on Sunday 26 July 2020 at 08 00 hours in the morning, comprising, *inter alia*, representatives from the Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change, National Coast Guard, Special Mobile Force, National Disaster Risk Reduction Management Centre, Mauritius Ports Authority, the Mauritius Telecom, and Fisheries Division of my Ministry to take stock of the situation and initiate appropriate action thereon.

On the same day, that is, on Sunday 26 July 2020, the Director of Shipping requested the following additional information from the Master of MV Wakashio, through the then vessel's local agent, Capt. Vivian Olivier of Rogers Shipping Ltd. So, again, the complete set, that is -

- (a) the complete A4 copy general arrangement plan;
- (b) A4 copy of ballast plan;
- (c) statement of facts/report of incident;

- (d) exact position of vessel at the time of incident;
- (e) updated soundings of all compartments onboard vessel and status of vessel after grounding;
- (f) soundings of depths around the ship;
- (g) status of voids and cofferdams;
- (h) status of ingress of water in engine room;
- (i) specifications of fuel and diesel oils;
- (j) specifications of lubricating oils;
- (k) crew list;
- (l) ships statutory certificates;
- (m) actual voyage plan;
- (n) extract from Bridge Movement Book, official Log Book and GPS Book;
- (o) display of pertinent section of navigation chart;
- (p) status of machinery and all auxiliaries onboard;
- (q) were all facilities, such as lighting, running water, toilets, still operational onboard.

On the same day, the Director of Shipping established contact with the ship owner and instructed that the Lloyd's Standard Form of Salvage Agreement (LOF) be signed as soon as possible. The LOF is the standard agreement form signed between the owner of the ship and salvors to undertake salvage operations.

The LOF was signed on 26 July 2020 in Singapore between the General Manager of Okiyo Maritime Corporation and SMIT Salvage Pte Ltd and a copy was received by the Director of Shipping on the same day. In all salvage operations, the salvors are selected and appointed by the ship owner.

On the same day, the NCG, the SMF and the Police set up an Incident Command Post at Blue Bay. My Ministry also put at the disposal of relevant stakeholders, the Blue Bay Marine Park Centre and the necessary logistic facilities for coordination purposes.

On the same day, that is, 26 July 2020, the NCG had already deployed 332m of booms at the boundary of the Blue Bay Marine Park as a preventive measure in case of oil spill. Officers of the Fisheries Division of my Ministry provided assistance during the deployment of booms at sea to prevent any damage to the marine ecosystems. There were also daily aerial reconnaissance by the Police Helicopter Squadron and the Dornier aircraft.

Since 27 July 2020, the Albion Fisheries Research Centre has been conducting regular monitoring of seawater at Pointe d'Esny, Blue Bay Marine Park and at Mahebourg waterfront for physico-chemical parameters and hydrocarbons. No sign of pollution from the casualty was detected at these sites.

On 28 July 2020, a site visit was conducted by officers of the Albion Fisheries Research Centre (AFRC) along the shoreline from Blue Bay to Pointe Jérôme, following reported black hairline debris from MV Wakashio along the shoreline. Again, no oil spill/oil sheen or dead fish was observed.

On 29 July 2020, it was reported that there was water ingress of about 2 metres in the engine room of the vessel, due to broken internal pipes. Same was repaired on the same day and no trace of oil spill was observed. The Mauritius Oceanography Institute (MOI) carried out off-reef bathymetry survey in order to have proper information on depth of sea prior to connecting the tug at stern of the casualty vessel.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that in cases of maritime casualties, daily progress reports also called situation reports are submitted by the Salvage Master to the Director of Shipping.

On 30 July 2020, it was reported by the Master of the vessel that the ship was stable, no cracks were detected, and the tank tops were not damaged. No sign of spillage was observed around the vessel.

On 31 July 2020, it was reported by the Master of the vessel that the vessel was lively due to rough seas and had changed heading, that is, angle with respect to the reef. However, no deterioration of vessel and oil spill was observed. Neither the tank tops nor the deck was damaged and there was no sign of cracks. The Platform Supply Vessel (PSV), the Stanford Hawk which was in the vicinity of Madagascar was re-routed by SMIT Salvage to the casualty site.

On 01 August 2020, salvors continued to monitor the status of the vessel ...

Dr. Boolell: On a point of order, Mr Speaker, Sir. I have asked two specific questions and the questions are very focused. Can I ask the hon. Minister to be precise and give focused replies in relation to the questions that I have put to him?

Mr Maudhoo: But I have to explain. It is good for everybody to know.

Dr. Boolell: Be precise!

Mr Maudhoo: On 01 August 2020, salvors continued to monitor the status of the vessel and their assessment of damage sustained by the vessel and provided their daily progress report to the Director of Shipping. I am informed by the Director of Shipping that, on 02 August 2020, the Salvage Master has reported the following -

- (i) the forepeak water tank, 6 water ballast tanks and the engine room were breached, pipe duct were breached and tidal;
- (ii) the Special Casualty Representative (SCR) and the Salvage Master informed that the risks for an oil spill at that stage was deemed low;
- (iii) the Special Casualty Representative affirmed that due to harsh weather conditions and the very high risk of pipe breakage during pumping, transfer of fuel oil from the vessel was not recommended, and
- (iv) oil from bottom tank of ship was being transferred by salvors to tanks located at the upper location in ship in order to minimise any risk of oil spill.

On 03 August 2020, the Special Casualty Representative reported that the weather conditions were not favourable and the sea was too rough, with waves of maximum heights of 5 metres, for a tug to connect to the casualty vessel MV Wakashio. Due to bad weather conditions, the vessel had moved forward 70 metres and salvors had dropped the starboard anchor to prevent such movement.

On 04 August 2020, the Special Casualty Representative informed that weather conditions had worsened and that the sea was too rough, with peak waves of over 5 metres high, for any tug to connect to the casualty vessel MV Wakashio. In order to prevent the vessel from moving from its grounded position, the Naval Architects from SMIT Salvage recommended that cargo No. 6 be filled with sea water to 80% of its capacity, and Salvage Master followed their instructions.

On 05 August 2020, the Special Casualty Representative reported that no oil spill was observed around the vessel except for some minor oil sheen that the salvage presumed was coming from the lubricating oil of the propeller shaft. He also informed that the risk of oil spill from the vessel was still low. One of the nine cargo holds was intentionally filled in by salvors to stabilise the vessel, resulting in the tilting of the vessel at the rear. However, before refloating the vessel, pumping/transfer of oil was envisaged on barge through pipe.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I have to add that from 26 July ...

Dr. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, again, with all due respect, this is not statement time. I expect the hon. Minister to be focused in respect of the two specific questions I have put to him. You cannot have so much latitude. I think it is not fair. I will refer you to page 305 of Erskine May. Nothing stops you from making a statement later on.

Mr Maudhoo: On 06 August 2020, at 08 50 hours, the Special Casualty Representative informed the Director of Shipping that the structure of the vessel had weakened due to continuous stresses and strains caused by the high waves and that the risk of an oil spill was imminent. At 11 05 hours, the Special Casualty Representative informed that the vessel had suffered structural failure in way of fuel tank No. 1 Starboard. This tank contained 1,183 cubic metres of Heavy Fuel Oil (HFO), which started to leak into the sea.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as from 06 August 2020, due to continuous leaking of the fuel tank, it resulted into a Tier 3 oil spill situation. A Tier 3 oil spill is when more than 100 metric tons of fuel oil is spilled into the sea. The National Oil Spill Contingency Plan (NOSCP) with respect to a Tier 3 response was triggered.

Under section 34(1) of the Environmental Protection Act (EPA), the hon. Prime Minister declared an Environmental Emergency on 07 August 2020 and directed the concerned public departments to take all appropriate actions to contain and mitigate the impacts of the oil spill.

Under section 16(2) of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act, the National Crisis Committee issued, after consultation with the hon. Prime Minister, an order for closure of specific places...

Dr. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have asked for your ruling in respect of the specific question I have put and I have even said that you can refer to page 305 of Erskine May. I do grant you some latitude can be given.

Mr Maudhoo: I have nearly finished.

Dr. Boolell: But he cannot go astray.

Mr Maudhoo: I have nearly finished.

Dr. Boolell: And he cannot go adrift, please.

Mr Maudhoo: I have nearly finished. Assistance was also requested from international organisations, including the United Nations, European Union and foreign friendly countries, such as Australia, France, India, Japan and South Africa through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade.

All electronic equipment are also in the custody of the Mauritius Police Force. There were 20 crew members onboard the vessel. Out of these, four crew members have been interviewed thus far by the investigator.

In parallel, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that the CCID boarded the vessel in company of the Second Officer of MV Wakashio on 09 August 2020.

Mr Speaker, Sir, a Court of Investigation is normally appointed under section 10(2) of the Merchant Shipping Act and is composed of a Chairperson who holds or who has held judicial office and two other persons with skills and knowledge in maritime matters.

I intend to take stock of the preliminary inquiry report to be submitted by Capt. A. Coopen, who is the Chairperson of the Preliminary Inquiry Committee - Commission if I can say - and thereafter appoint the aforesaid Court of Investigation in consultation with the Prime Minister.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the House will appreciate that to draft the terms of reference of the Court of Investigation, the report of the preliminary inquiry is needed. The report of the preliminary inquiry is expected very shortly.

Our country is facing an unprecedented environmental and ecological disaster. Government is confident that people of Mauritius will come together once again to live up to the challenges of this incident. I take this opportunity to heartily thank all volunteers and officers who are toiling day and night. I also place on record the gratitude and appreciation of foreign States and Government who have spontaneously extended their assistance to the people of Mauritius.

Dr. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, before I put my supplementary questions, I would like to place on record our heartfelt thanks to the thousands of Mauritians and foreign citizens who volunteered to help save our environment.

Let me come to the first question! As Minister of Shipping, has he bothered to find out, within the first week of grounding, whether the Captain of the vessel has complied with all established procedures while sailing in the territorial waters of Mauritius?

Mr Maudhoo: This onus is on the Director of Shipping, and I understand that the preliminary inquiry and all the reports are coming. So, as the report will be ready, we will...

Dr. Boolell: You don't know. Alright.

Mr Maudhoo: Still...

Dr. Boolell: Okay. Has the Captain submitted his report?

Mr Maudhoo: The Director of Shipping was in contact with the Captain of the vessel.

Dr. Boolell: No, has he submitted a report? Because, by law, he is bound to submit a report. Has he submitted a report?

Mr Maudhoo: Not a report; he has submitted...

Dr. Boolell: Has he submitted, yes or no?

Mr Maudhoo: He has submitted statements of facts asked by the Director of Shipping.

Dr. Boolell: And, in the meantime, there is the worst oil disaster in this country. Has your Ministry bothered to find out from the Captain within the first week of the grounding what went wrong for his ship to get stranded on our reef?

Mr Maudhoo: The preliminary inquiry is on, Mr Speaker, Sir. This will determine.

Dr. Boolell: Mr Speaker, in the meantime, there is the worst oil disaster. Can I ask the hon. Minister, knowing that Mauritius is signatory to the Intervention Convention, why is it that right from the outset, we did not board the plane and took advantage of the facilities being extended to us by people from the private sector to pump the oil right since the beginning?

Mr Maudhoo: No. But there was no private sector who phoned, and especially the bad weather. You know, Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to point out that once the salvors - that is the protocol of the law, the Merchant Shipping Act, which I have already given precision in my answer, that in line with the Merchant Shipping Act, we have followed what has been. It is the same case like Angel I -

the facts which have been wrongly distorted. The same. The salvors take command of the boat and they start.

Dr. Boolell: Mr Speaker, we are talking of the worst oil spill disaster that this country has ever known. We are talking of livelihoods. We are talking of people eking out a living from the sea. We are talking of ecosystem which is collapsing. In a Press Conference by Government on Thursday the 6th, 2020, it was said that '*dépi ki sa bato la finn echouer, bann autorites finn pran tou bann dispositions nécessaires*'. Can I ask the hon. Minister what measures were taken by his Ministry with regard to the vessel in the first week of the grounding from 25 to 31 July and assess whether there was a risk of oil spill, and what measures were taken to prevent the oil spill?

Mr Maudhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir...

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Maudhoo: ...the due diligence has been made constantly by the relevant authorities and reported on a daily basis to the Director of Shipping. Daily reports have been communicated to the authorities. Daily reports have been received from the salvors.

Dr. Boolell: Have you finished, Minister?

Mr Maudhoo: Yes.

Dr. Boolell: Last Tuesday, in his parliamentary reply to Question B/476 from hon. Léopold, the hon. Minister of Environment was bragging about the preparedness of his Ministry. I quote - “(...) in the event of a major oil spill in any part of the lagoon in the Republic of Mauritius (...)"

Yet, this Government did not assume its responsibility, with the consequences that there has been a collapse of the ecosystem in this country, and we hold this Government totally responsible and the two Ministers, the Minister of Environment and the Minister of Fisheries. They are both guilty of impropriety. They should resign!

(*Interruptions*)

They should resign! That's what they are! Incompetent! Sheer incompetence!

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Maudhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir...

Mr Speaker: Hon. Assirvaden! Hon. Assirvaden, behave yourself!

Mr Maudhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, we are not only talking of Mauritius but the whole world. Every ship is salvaged by salvors. This is it.

Dr. Boolell: Mr Speaker, until last Wednesday, that is, 05 August, the Minister of Environment and yourself led our nation and our country to believe that the situation was under control...

Mr Maudhoo: It was.

Dr. Boolell: ...when, in fact, an environmental disaster was looming in our country. Don't you think that you should both either step down or revoke for your incompetence, your slowness to react and your short-sightedness?

Mr Maudhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, you know, this is a very serious issue.

Dr. Boolell: It is a serious issue.

Mr Maudhoo: I don't want to do politics...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Maudhoo: You know, we are implementing. The Government, headed by the hon. Prime Minister...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Maudhoo: We have already started. The Opposition is, on all rooftops, just shouting and making all sorts of cheap politics.

Mr Speaker: This is the last warning, hon. Assirvaden!

(Interruptions)

Are you putting the question, hon. Member?

Mr Ramful: Thank you. There have been a lot of criticisms with regard to your Ministry taking all the time to take control of the situation. Now, if you have nothing to hide...

(Interruptions)

This is the question. There is an agreement which has been signed between the company and the salvage team, and a copy of that agreement is in the possession of the Director of Shipping. For the sake of transparency, would you be prepared to table a copy of the agreement so that the population is made aware when the company was supposed to start the salvage operation?

Mr Maudhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have nothing to hide. I have no hidden agenda; neither the Government, neither the Prime Minister, neither anybody on this side. So far, the Government has left no stone unturned to deal with this catastrophe.

(Interruptions)

Even the population is aware of this!

(Interruptions)

I don't reply! You know, Mr Speaker, Sir,...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

(Interruptions)

Order on this side also!

Mr Maudhoo: You know...

(Interruptions)

Mr Ramful: Whether he is ready to table the agreement or not! This is all!

Mr Maudhoo: The salvage...

Mr Ramful: I asked the Minister whether he is prepared to table the agreement.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Abbas Mamode!

Mr Maudhoo: The salvage agreement - now all this is with the inquiry, but I don't think this is a document which can be given. The preliminary...

(Interruptions)

Listen! Ecoutez! Il y a une enquête qui a été enclenchée. Alors, attendons voir. Let them see all the documents and, obviously,...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Ramful!

(Interruptions)

Mr Maudhoo: Non, non...

Mr Speaker: Hon. Ramful, you put your questions, and don't argue! Hon. Dr. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: Yes. Mr Speaker, in the light of what the hon. Minister has stated, from the grounding on 25 July, it took the Prime Minister a very long 14 days to declare an environment emergency. Has your Ministry received any directions to prepare a Contingency Plan and, if so, will he table a copy of that Plan? Because we are talking of people from Rivière des Créoles, Grand Port, Blue Bay, Petit Sable, Grand Sable. All those people are waiting for you to know where is your Contingency Plan to save livelihood, to protect fishermen and to protect all those eking out a living from the sea.

Mr Maudhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the Oil Contingency Plan was deployed on the same day. I already answered this in the main question.

Dr. Boolell: You have not answered; you are running away from the facts, from the reality! You are guilty of impropriety!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition!

(Interruptions)

Leader of the Opposition! Control yourself!

(Interruptions)

Dr. Boolell: Mr Speaker, can I ask the Minister since when exactly has he been made aware that there was a real risk that the vessel will break? Since when?

Mr Maudhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, it is only on the 6th morning that we got that information; that there was a structural crack. We were informed by the salvors. The salvors informed the Director of Shipping and we were informed, and immediately the Oil Spill Contingency Plan started and everything was deployed on the same day.

Dr. Boolell: So far, the hon. Minister has failed to table any of the agreements.

Mr Speaker: Address the Chair!

Dr. Boolell: Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir, I am talking to him; I will talk through you to him. Can I ask the hon. Minister, until last Wednesday, and I mentioned what he said - Now, clearly, he and the Minister of Environment have had what I call a delayed reaction time, with the result that today we are facing the worst oil disaster. Worst oil disaster! In any country which is respectful of the rule of law and democracy ...

Mr Speaker: Put the question!

Dr. Boolell: ... in any country which is respectful, these two Ministers should have resigned! They should have resigned, Mr Speaker, Sir!

Mr Speaker: This is not a question! You are expressing your opinion; this is not a question.
Hon. X. L. Duval!

Mr X. L. Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether it is his '*attendons voir*' attitude that led to the fact that since the vessel was grounded on 25 July, no pumping of oil was made from the vessel to the many available barges existing in Mauritius and owned by the private sector? No attempt was made to fix the starboard side of the ship by anchor so that it would not drift. Is it his '*attendons voir*' attitude that had led, now, to the request for his immediate revocation and dismissal?

Mr Maudhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I already answered that...

(*Interruptions*)

I did answer. Well, listen! Listen!

Mr Speaker: The hon. Minister has the right to answer the supplementary question.

Mr Maudhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, under the Merchant Shipping Act, no one can intervene on the vessel before ...

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Maudhoo: But listen!

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker: Order! Order! Order!

Mr Maudhoo: ... before the LOF is signed and concluded, due to issue of liabilities on the vessel. There is an issue of liabilities. As per international norm, the salvage operation can only be conducted by professional salvors once the Lloyd's Standard Form of Salvage Agreement is signed. It is only the duties of the salvor.

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker, Sir, let me remind the Members of the Opposition, had we taken the decision to try to salvage the vessel ...

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Patrick Assirvaden, be careful! Be careful! I already gave you the last warning!

Mr Maudhoo: I wish to draw your attention. You are all here since so long. Even for Angel I and for Benita, it was the same process.

Mr X. L. Duval: You have the law! You have the right!

Mr Maudhoo: Every time, we have followed the law. We had done the same thing.

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker: Don't argue!

Mr Maudhoo: We are doing the same; we are following the law because there is this liability clause.

Mr X. L. Duval: Section 131!

Mr Speaker: Don't argue hon. X. L. Duval! Last supplementary question, hon. Dr. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, in view of the unprecedented crisis that this country is experiencing following the grounding of the vessel and the oil spill, may I ask the hon. Prime Minister, through you, to set up a Commission of Inquiry to look into any irregularities, inappropriate decision and other culpable acts or omissions, which have brought about this ecological catastrophe which has struck our country and that the two Ministers should step down pending the inquiry?

Mr Speaker: No, this is not a question. So, time is over! You are expressing your opinion. Prime Minister's Question Time!

MV BENITA - SALVAGE OPERATION - PAYMENT

(No. B/537) Mr Osman Mahomed (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the wreck of vessel MV Benita in 2016, he will state the quantum of compensation received from the insurer thereof, giving a breakdown thereof.

Mr Maudhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, according to records available at my Ministry, out of a total sum of Rs34,342,638 claimed by the different stakeholders for the salvage operations, an amount of Rs33,129,298 has been paid so far by the insurer London P&I Club. A balance amounting to Rs1,213,340 would be paid shortly to the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service which has recently submitted the additional information required by the insurer.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission I am tabling a breakdown of the amount claimed by the different stakeholders and the amount paid by the insurer as at 31 July 2020 for the Salvage operation of MV Benita which was grounded at Le Bouchon in 2016.

Mr Osman Mahomed: While I await for the breakdown, I will ask the Minister the following question: in his speech on the Budget presentation on Monday 08 August 2016, the hon. Minister's predecessor, Mr Koonjoo, stated that in the wake of the MV Benita wreck, his Ministry initiated the process of upgrading our legislation to include the requirements therein by drafting a Marine Pollution Bill which had never been done before in the past. Moreover, the Ministry had started drafting a Marine Pollution Liability and Compensation Bill to cover requirements under the International Convention on Civil Liability for oil pollution damages and an International Convention on Civil Liability for bunker oil pollution damages. Now, that was four years ago. Before I come for the question, I went to the library. This Bill has never come to Parliament.

Mr Speaker: What is your question, hon. Osman Mahomed?

Mr Osman Mahomed: Can I ask the hon. Minister whether the legal legislation that we have right now, which is the Merchant Shipping (Civil Liability for Oil Pollution Damage and International Fund for Compensation for Oil Pollution Damage) of 1986, 36 years ago, is adequate for us to enter the Court case for the MV Wakashio case which is at our shores now and for which this morning himself he has stated that we are not able to do anything because conventions prevent us from taking charge of the ship? So, can I ask the hon. Minister whether he finds this legislation adequate or not?

Mr Maudhoo: Well, Mr Speaker, Sir, this is a legal issue and definitely the legal advisers will seek advice from them. But anyway, I think we have provisions in the law and there will be damages in this issue. That is definite.

Mr Speaker: Next question!

Mr Osman Mahomed: I have one more question on B/537. So, in the breakdown, one can see that one of the major components being claimed from the insurance company is for police helicopter squadron. Now, I have photos with me ...

Mr Speaker: You have one question, put your question!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Can I ask the hon. Minister why is it that since this was reimbursed by the insurance company, on the first day itself the Dhruv helicopter or any other helicopter or foreign helicopters could not be mobilized to remove all the oil that has spilled over in the meantime because it was said that we could not do it by ship bunkering because of the weather? Why was this not done as an immediate step for the affected tank that has spilled over in the ocean?

Mr Maudhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I don't know from where the hon. Member get that information, as per records in my Ministry, two days after the vessel got grounded, the salvors were here in Mauritius and then the mobilization was done. It was only after 8 days that they started removing the oil and it took at least 15 to 16 days to remove all the oil. It was never on the second day because the salvors were not even in Mauritius at that time.

Mr Speaker: Your next substantive question!

TUESDAY 18 AUGUST 2020

MV WAKASHIO -WRECK - MARINE ECOSYSTEM - CONTAMINATION

(No. B/604) **Mr A. Ameer Meea (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East)** asked the Minister of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the oil spill from the wreck of vessel MV Wakashio, he will state if an assessment of the damages caused to the fish and natural resources has been conducted and, if so, indicate –

- (a) the outcome thereof, and
- (b) if he has met the registered and non-registered fishers, skippers and hotel operators of the regions affected by same and, if so, indicate the outcome thereof, including if the issue of compensation payable thereto and the period concerned therewith have been discussed and, if so, give details thereof.

Mr Maudhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the oil spill has undoubtedly affected our marine ecosystem and the affected regions have been declared as restricted areas in the interest of public safety and security.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, since the grounding of the MV Wakashio, sea water samples are being collected by the Albion Fisheries Research Centre from the affected regions and beyond, on a daily basis to analyse the physicochemical parameters.

As from 07 August 2020, the oil spill analysis has revealed high level of oil and grease in the samples. This monitoring exercise will be carried out continuously until all the parameters will come back to normal.

A total of 18 fish samples were collected for analysis. The fish specimens were submitted to QuantiLAB Limited for analysis of total hydrocarbon index, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbon and heavy metals. Result of analysis obtained from QuantiLAB on 17 August 2020 indicated the following when compared to Schedule Seven of the Mauritius Food Act 1998, regulation 62 (2) for fish and fish products.

The highest level of contamination recorded were as follows -

- (a) arsenic was high 5.3 mg per kilo in the fish specimen and 6.8 mg per kilo in the squid specimen. The maximum permissible limit is 1 mg per kilo;

- (b) cadmium 1.3 mg kilo in the squid specimen was also high. The maximum permissible limit is 1 mg per kilo;
- (c) total hydrocarbon oil index was 7.6 mg per kilo in the fish specimen and 222.7 mg per kilo in the squid. It should not be detected for them to be consumed.

These give an indication of the level of contamination of fish in the affected regions and the fish are unfit for consumption. My Ministry has issued a communiqué informing the public not to consume seafood coming from the affected regions. They have also been invited to contact the Ministry for any information, clarification and advice that they may need through a dedicated hotline at the level of my Ministry. The hotline number is 173.

As pointed out, the affected regions have been declared restricted areas and no fishing is allowed. The national coast guard and the Fisheries Protection Service are closely monitoring the situation. The testing of fish samples will be carried out continuously until all the parameters will come back to normal. With regard to the mangrove ecosystem, the surveys are still ongoing to determine the extent of damage caused. Therefore the economic and environmental damages remain to be assessed being given the magnitude of the disaster.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (b) of the question, since the occurrence of the unprecedented disaster, I have met fishers, fishmongers and non-registered fishers of the affected regions. Well, my colleague, the Deputy Prime Minister, hon. Obeegadoo, has received representation from pleasure craft operators. Normally, the bad weather allowance is paid as from the 20th of each month for the preceding month. Exceptionally, the bad weather allowance for the month of July 2020 was paid on 14 August 2020, on the eve of the Assumption Day. An amount of Rs17.5 m. has been disbursed for eligible registered fishers over the island who have each obtained Rs10,200.

My Ministry has also arranged for the payment of a special allowance of Rs800 per day per registered fisher and fishmonger who participated in the clean-up operation in the affected regions. Payment of the special allowance was also effected on Friday 14 August 2020. More than 400 fishers and fishmongers participated in those areas.

Mr Speaker, Sir, Government is well aware of the fact that the livelihood of registered fishers, fishmongers and pleasure craft operators of the affected regions that is from Blue Bay to Grand River South East have been seriously affected and they have not been in gainful employment since 27 July 2020 as a result of the grounding of MV Wakashio. In a spirit of solidarity in these difficult moments, Government has introduced a solidarity grant funded from the Prime Minister's Relief Fund for the benefit of 475 registered fishers and 71 fishmongers of the affected regions starting from August 2020. The solidarity grant amounts to Rs10,200 monthly. 292 pleasure craft operators already benefitting from the Self-Employed Scheme and deriving less than Rs10,200 will be taken on board under the solidarity grant at par with the fishers and fishmongers. The first payment will be effected to them at latest by 28 August 2020 through direct credit to the individual bank accounts. This solidarity grant will remain effective up till the resumption of normal activities in the affected regions.

As regards the 31 non-registered fishers who have been declaring their catch to the Fisheries Protection Service of their locality, an Assistance Scheme is being worked out and will be announced shortly. I also wish to inform the House that upon the request of Government, the experts and contractors retained by the owners of MV Wakashio have accepted to give priority to enlist the services of registered fishers, fishmongers, pleasure craft operators and non-registered fishers in the cleaning operation and restoration of the affected regions.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Speaker, Sir, *d'après les informations captées par les images satellites, la zone sinistrée couvre une superficie de 27 km², c'est-à-dire de Blue Bay à Poste Lafayette.*

Therefore, can I ask the hon. Minister whether the analysis that has been done covers the area that I have just mentioned?

Mr Maudhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, up to now, according to report that we have received, the spill has affected Grand River South East to Blue Bay, not Poste Lafayette or Belle Mare.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Speaker, Sir, as the hon. Minister just mentioned to the House that the area has been declared as restricted, I did not hear him in his reply mentioning compensation in terms of hotel and hotel operators. Therefore, can I ask him in the compensation, will beach hawkers also be included as they are also being affected directly because they won't be able to operate in those restricted areas and also the hotels there, apart from hotels scheme, apart from what has been said by the Finance Minister, but these hotels there are impacted doubly, that is by corona, the existing issue and also from Wakashio? What is he doing for hotels in the regions?

Mr Maudhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I will check from my colleague the Deputy Prime Minister, if the beach hawkers are already in the Assistance Scheme, then we will definitely look into. We are aware of that and definitely I will take the matter with the Deputy Prime Minister.

Mr Ramful: Can I ask the hon. Minister whether with regard to compensation, he is well aware that all activities that are related to the tourism sector have all been affected by the Wakashio incident, I have met the taxi owners, taxi operators in and around Blue Bay, Mahebourg and Grand Port, they normally take passengers to the beaches etc... and they have been also affected by this incident, may I request the hon. Minister to kindly consider also the plight of those taxi owners and operators?

Mr Maudhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, my Ministry in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development has set up an e-platform to facilitate the submission of claims. This e-platform which is hosted on my Ministry's website was launched on 14 August 2020. A communiqué, a user guide as well as application forms are available on the website. Any person or entity who has sustained a loss or damage caused outside the ship by contamination resulting from the escape or discharge of bunker oil from the ship, the cost of preventive measures as a consequence of the grounding of MV Wakashio and ensuing oil pollution may submit their claim online together with full justification which will be channelled to the ship owners and/or insurer for assessment and approval.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Speaker, Sir, as the House is aware MV Wakashio has been broken in two pieces. According to public knowledge, half of it or part of it will be brought in deep sea and then will be sunk and there is a part that is stuck on the reef or *banc de sable*, can I ask the hon. Minister what will be done with this remainder, what will Government do for the piece that is stuck on the *banc de sable*?

Mr Maudhoo: In fact, Mr Speaker, Sir, the Director of Shipping has already intimated the owners to submit their plan, I think this was done two days back but this morning the owners have submitted a preliminary wreck removal plan for the aft part of the vessel to the Director of Shipping for approval. So, we are just waiting. They have already submitted their plan. So, they are awaiting the approval of the Director of Shipping.

Mr Speaker: Last supplementary!

Mr Uteem: Thank you. The hon. Minister mentioned the presence of arsenic in the analysis. So, may I know from the hon. Minister what actions are being taken to ensure that no contaminated fish or other seafood products do not find their way to the consumers? So, in the Ministry, do they have Inspectors who go and sample fish which are being sold to the public?

Mr Maudhoo: In fact, Mr Speaker, Sir, this is a very serious issue and the National Coast Guard as well as the Fisheries Protection Officer are all on alert and there is a proper monitoring going on and we will be on our guard, that is definite.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Members. The Table has been advised that PQ B/617 has been withdrawn, PQs B/646, B/647, B/648 have also been withdrawn and that PQ B/625 will be replied by the hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr Speaker: Next question, hon. Ameer Meea!

MV WAKASHIO – SALVAGE AGREEMENT

(No. B/605) Mr A. Ameer Meea (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to vessel MV Wakashio, he will state if contacts have been established between the owner thereof and Government in relation to the wreck thereof and damages caused, especially, for the restoration of our marine ecosystem.

Mr Maudhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, as the House is aware, the registered owner of the vessel MV Wakashio is Procure Maritime Corporation and the insurers are the Japan Ship Owners' Mutual Protection and Indemnity Association, also known as Japan P&I Club.

Following the grounding of MV Wakashio on 25 July 2020, the Director of Shipping established contact with the ship owner on 26 July 2020, after having obtained all information from the Master of the vessel. In line with section 150 of the Merchant Shipping Act 2007, the Director of Shipping instructed the owner to enter into a salvage agreement for the salvaging of his vessel. The owner forwarded to the Director of Shipping on 26 July 2020, a signed Lloyd's Standard Form of Salvage Agreement which is called LOF, the Lloyd's Standard Form of Salvage Agreement is a standard agreement form signed between the owner of the ship and salvors to undertake salvage operations.

Mr Speaker, Sir, on 11 August 2020, letters were sent to both the owners and Ship Insurers Protection and Indemnity Association by the Director of Shipping informing them that, I quote -

“The State of Mauritius, its *préposé*, intends to make claims against you, including claims for preventive, mitigating and reinstatement measures, actions for compensation following the pollution damage.”

The ship owners have acknowledged receipt of the correspondence from the Director of Shipping on 12 August 2020.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as the House is aware, the State of Mauritius holds the Ship Owner Insurer liable for all the losses and damages caused outside the ship by contamination resulting from the escape or discharge of bunker oil from the ship. The cost of cleanup and preventive measures sustains and intends to claim for compensation for such losses and damages from the ship owner and insurer as per section 195 of the Merchant Shipping Act 2007.

My Ministry, in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance, I just announced that the e-platform. Mr Speaker Sir, I also wish to inform the House, being given the magnitude of the disaster, assistance has been sought from international organisation, such as the United Nations Development Programme, the European Union and foreign friendly countries, such as Australia, France, India, Japan and South Africa, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade for ecological environmental, social and economic assessment, that is, a holistic approach in support or claims against the owner and the insurer. It is also envisaged to retain the services of professionals, for example, Environmental Economists, Specialists in coastal and marine

environments having extensive experience to assist us in the preparation of such type of claims, *inter alia*, to –

- (a) natural resource damages, that is, our wetlands and near shore habitats;
- (b) early environmental restoration;
- (c) replenishment and protection of living marine resources;
- (d) early restoration of recreational loss;
- (e) economic recovery, that is, fisheries, tourism and ancillary activities;
- (f) monitoring adaptive management, administrative oversight and a comprehensive planning cost, and
- (g) achieving restoration goals in all the affected areas.

All these will determine the amount to be claimed for all the restoration process. The terms of reference for the appointment of required professional are under preparation.

Mr Ameer Meea: Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir. In a public statement, the owner of Wakashio apologised and also stated that he and his company will take full responsibility of what happened. Mr Speaker, Sir, what I want to know, what concretely does that mean? What concretely does that mean that he will take full responsibility? Does it mean that he will foot the Bill? And also, since we have been working on a claim, has discussion already started, and what has been the outcome? What amount are we talking about?

Mr Maudhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, this is why we need the expertise of professional to determine the amount, because this is an unprecedeted disaster that we have never encountered on our island. So, we are still working on that.

Mr Speaker: Hon. X. L. Duval!

Mr X. L. Duval: In relation to the amount of damages to be claimed, I have listened very carefully to the hon. Minister's reply to the previous question. Is it not very rash, unwise and foolish to say that pollution has not affected fish beyond *Grande Rivière Sud Est*, whereas this simple statement will reduce the amount of claim that can be actually made by the State of Mauritius against the owners? Isn't it very rash and irrational to say so, when you say, yourself, you have not had the experts, and this will reduce our right to compensation?

Mr Maudhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have just said in my answer that the samples that we have collected we are taking it even beyond the affected areas, so, let us wait for all these reports.

(Interruptions)

Mr Ameer Meea: Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir, as the House is aware the ship, is registered in Panama. I have read somewhere in the papers that being the ship is registered in Panama, may render prosecutions very difficult. Has this being looked after by your Ministry or Government?

Mr Maudhoo: I think we have the proper insurance policy that we got all the documents of the MV Wakashio from the owners. So, I think the legal people will look into it, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: Next question, hon. Ameer Meea!

MV WAKASHIO - OIL SPILL - FISHERS - COMPENSATION

(No. B/646) Mr R. Doolub (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the oil

spill in the sea of Mahebourg amid the wrecked vessel MV Wakashio, he will state if any compensation will be paid to the fishers affected therewith and, if so, indicate the –

- (a) quantum thereof;
- (b) period in consideration of which same will be paid, and
- (c) number of fishers eligible therefor.

(Withdrawn)

TUESDAY 03 NOVEMBER 2020

MV WAKASHIO VESSEL – COMPENSATION/INSURANCE CLAIMS

(No. B/700) Mr A. Ameer Meea (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the wreck of the MV Wakashio Vessel, he will state if the professionals to assist in the preparation of the compensation/insurance claims have already been appointed and if so, indicating the terms of reference thereof.

The Attorney General, Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security (Mr M. Gobin): Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir, and thank you, hon. Members for agreeing to this slight change of planning.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I propose to reply to PQ B/700 and PQ B/710 together and I propose also to reply in the following order –

- Firstly, on the claim for expenses incurred by Government and Ministries;
- Second, on claims from individuals and other entities, and
- Thirdly, claims based on future assessment.

Mr Speaker, Sir, firstly, on expenses incurred by Government and Ministries; in connection with the grounding of MV Wakashio after the ensuing oil spill, all the relevant claims are being compiled by the Accountant General's Office and thereafter will be submitted to the Ministry of Blue Economy for onward submission to the insurers of MV Wakashio. The Accountant General's Office has informed that around Rs110 m. of claims have been submitted by Government and public bodies as at date, comprising of about Rs95 m. of claims which have already been incurred and around Rs15 m. of claims which have been earmarked and committed.

With regard to claims by individuals and other entities, Mr Speaker, Sir, the House will appreciate that a mechanism has been put in place to facilitate the submission of claims by members of the public in connection with expenses incurred with respect to the grounding of MV Wakashio and the ensuing oil pollution. The Ministry of Blue Economy has launched an e-platform on Friday 14 August 2020 on the website of the said Ministry in order to enable any person or entity who has sustained a loss or damage as a consequence of the said grounding and ensuing oil spill to submit his or her claim to the Ministry of Blue Economy for analysis before onward transmission to the insurers of MV Wakashio.

I wish to inform the House that the Ministry of Blue Economy has also had working sessions at the level of Citizen's Advice Bureau in Bois des Amourettes, Plaine Magnien, Bel Air Rivière Sèche as well as the Social Welfare Centre of Mahébourg from Wednesday 26 August 2020 to Friday 11 September 2020, to receive claims from the general public. As at 29 October, 2,998 such

claims have been compiled amounting to a total of about Rs1.4 billion and they are made up of several categories, namely, clean-up operations - 114 claims; preventive measures - 9 claims; property damage - 75 claims; loss in fisheries and related activities - 1,360 claims; loss in tourism activities - 818 claims and other sundries - 622 claims, totalling 2,998. At this stage, we have those claims are being screened and assessed by a team of analysts from the Ministry of Finance in collaboration with other officers of the Ministry of Blue Economy. My office is providing an overall supervision to this multi-disciplinary team for assessment of these claims.

Now, on the third part, concerning claims to be based on future assessment, Mr Speaker, Sir, Government has enlisted the participation of a consortium comprising the World Bank, the UNDP, *l'Agence Française de Développement* and the African Development Bank to carry out a Post Disaster Needs Assessment, a PDNA. There are ongoing consultations between Government and the said consortium and I do not want to say more at this stage. After the Post Disaster Needs Assessment, the claim on environmental, social and economic impact will be put together in a document for claims to be made to the insurers of MV Wakashio. So, in answer to the specific question as to whether professionals have been appointed apart from the said consortium I have mentioned, composed of the World Bank, UNDP, *l'Agence Française de Développement* and the African Development Bank, no professional has been appointed for insurance claims.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Speaker, Sir, we have had some information from the hon. Minister concerning claims in relation to marine ecosystem and environmental, etc. Therefore, can I ask the hon. Minister, what is the time frame are we looking at to compile all the claims, the list of claims that the hon. Minister just gave to the House? What is the time frame? And the more so, I am surprised that Government has not engaged any professional to assist in making those claims, because you must have specific information, specific expertise to do such claims, it's not an ordinary claim. That's the point I want to make.

Mr Gobin: Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to make the difference between the assessment of the damage and the claim. And I also wish to make the difference between the expenses which have been incurred as opposed to an analysis. For expenses which have been incurred, the work is ongoing, but that will be completed in a very near future, because we have the figures of those sums which have been incurred. For the assessment to environmental damage, the social impact, this will require the assistance of professionals, indeed, and this is why I said that Government has engaged the services of a consortium, not one but a whole consortium of professionals, we have solicited from not one but four international institutions, I repeat World Bank, the UNDP, *l'Agence Française de Développement* and the African Development Bank.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Ramful!

Mr Ramful: Can I ask the hon. Attorney General with regard to claims from individuals, I am talking about fishermen, skippers, they are people who are relatively poor, now is Government going to assist them by providing them legal advice so that they can concretely come up with claims that can be entertained by the insurance company?

Mr Gobin: Yes, indeed, Mr Speaker, Sir. This is the reason why the E-platform was set up, this is the reason why working sessions were held at the CAB in Bois des Amourettes, Plaine Magnien, Bel Air Rivière Sèche and the Social Welfare Centre of Mahébourg, is to gather the claim, to gather necessary documentation, for example, their receipts of past earnings, and this is why I said also that these claims are being assessed by a team of analysts from the Ministry of Finance. In short, we are building case files and then for onward transmission. I understand what my colleagues are saying that we would need to claim. These claims take time invariably as there are actual expenses incurred in the first place, but then post assessment claims will take time. If we look at the claims in

previous oil spills in other countries, some have taken 10 years or more. I don't foresee that it will take that long in view of the ongoing discussions, but it will take some fair amount of time.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Yes. Can I ask the hon. Minister, is it true to say that Japan has offered its financial assistance to the Government of Mauritius but the Government of Mauritius has refused this assistance?

Mr Gobin: No, this is not the case at all. I want to make difference between what is happening with the Wakashio case involving owners, charterers, insurers who are basically private entities and the G-to-G negotiations, the Government of Mauritius and the Government of Japan are, indeed, in negotiations. We have not refused any help; there are ongoing discussions at very high level, beyond my level, I should say.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Lobine!

CONSTITUENCY NO. 6 - FISHERS - FISHING LICENCES

(No. B/704) Dr. M. Gungapersad (Second Member for Grand'Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to Constituency No. 6, Grand'Baie and Poudre d'Or, he will state the number of Fishing Licences –

- (a) issued to fishers since January 2020 to date, indicating the eligibility criteria therefor, and
- (b) not yet processed.

Mr Maudhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that my Ministry issues fishing licences to semi-industrial fishing boats of less than 24 metres and industrial fishing vessels operating on the banks as well as to industrial purse seiners and long liners operating in the exclusive economic zone of Mauritius.

With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that since January 2020 to date, my Ministry has issued three fishing licences in respect of semi-industrial boats namely Royal Phoenix I, Royal Phoenix II of Babul and Sons Fishing Company Ltd and legacy of Ice 2 Ice fishing Company Ltd owned by two operators residing in Grand Bay.

The eligibility criteria for the licencing of local fishing boats are as follows –

- (a) the boat should be registered under the Mauritian flag;
- (b) it should have not been used in contravention of local, regional and international conservation and management measures;
- (c) it should be seaworthy;
- (d) the boat or vessel and its crew should have a valid insurance cover;
- (e) it should have a valid ship station licence issued by the information and communication technologies Authority;
- (f) it should have a transponder installed on board and should be registered on the vessel monitoring system for daily vessel monitoring system reporting, and
- (g) moreover, the operator should submit proof of installation of Automatic Identification System onboard the fishing vessel.

Regarding part (b) of the question, I am informed that all application for fishing licences received at my Ministry as at date have already been processed and there is no pending application.

Mr Speaker: Next question!

MAURITIUS - SOUTH EASTERN COAST & POUDRE D'OR - DOLPHINS - DEATH

(No. B/709) Mr D. Ramful (First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the stranded dolphins found along the south eastern coast of the island and at Poudre d'Or, he will state if forensic tests have been carried out to determine the cause of death, indicating the results thereof.

Reply: I am informed that, on 26 August 2020, the Albion Fisheries Research Centre of my Ministry was notified of the presence of dead marine mammals in the lagoon of Grand Sables and Petit Sables.

From 26 August 2020 to 14 September 2020, a total of 52 dead marine mammals have been retrieved from the lagoons in the south east, including one in Poudre d'Or. 51 have been identified as melon-headed whales and one as a bottlenose dolphin.

In order to identify the causes of the death of the marine mammals, my Ministry sought the assistance of the Livestock and Veterinary Division of the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security to carry out necropsies on the carcasses.

26 necropsies were performed from 26 August to 04 September 2020, including one on the bottleneck dolphin. Lacerations, broken jaw bones, large bite wounds, empty stomachs, congested and emphysematous lungs, acoustic fat haemorrhage and gas embolism were found to be the most common lesions.

As per the overall interpretation of the results by the Veterinary Services, the main cause of the death of the melon-headed whales is barotrauma, that is, the physical damage to body tissues caused by a difference in pressure and which could have been triggered by a multitude of factors such as navy sonar, oil industry airguns, undersea earthquakes, and volcanic eruptions.

With a view to probing further, swabs and samples of the liver, lung, stomach content, kidney, skin, blood, melon, spleen, adrenal gland, intestine and swabbing taken from the body parts of 19 melon-headed whales and one bottlenose dolphin were sent to the Forensic Science Laboratory for toxicology and aliphatic hydrocarbon residues analysis by the Veterinary Services.

I am informed that the toxicological screening yielded negative results in all the samples whereas aliphatic hydrocarbon was detected in samples from 11 whales.

As regards the dead melon-headed whale found in Poudre d'Or, I am informed that the carcass was in a necrosed and eviscerated state, and its death is attributed to septicaemia and hypovolemic shock.

The House may wish to note that a similar phenomenon was observed in the year 2005 when some 70 melon-headed whales were stranded in the lagoon of Bois des Amourettes. Out of the 70 whales, 35 had died in the lagoon and the remaining were directed to the outer lagoon by creating a sound wall.

A similar exercise was carried out on 28 August 2020 by officers of the Albion Fisheries Research Centre with the participation of local artisanal fishers and pleasure craft operators to herd out a pod of 150 live mammals through "*la passe Danois*" towards the high seas.

MV WAKASHIO VESSEL OIL SPILL - SEAFOOD CONTAMINATION - ASSESSMENT

(No. B/729) Mrs K. Foo Kune-Bacha (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the seafood contamination resulting from the MV Wakashio Vessel oil spill, he will state if a recent assessment on the safety of seafood consumption has been conducted and if so, indicate when and the outcome thereof.

(Withdrawn)

TUESDAY 10 NOVEMBER 2020

INDIAN OCEAN - TUNA FISHING - BOYCOTT

(No. B/787) Ms J. Bérenger (First Member for Vacoas & Floréal) asked the Minister of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to tuna fishing in the Indian Ocean, he will state if he is aware of the threat of boycott expressed by some chains of supermarkets in Europe as a protest of overfishing thereof and, if so, indicate the measures envisaged to address same.

Mr Maudhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that this is not the first time that European NGOs come in the forefront to press for a reduction in the catch of mainly yellowfin tuna in the Indian Ocean. This happens every time meetings of the IOTC are to be held.

I am also informed that this time two UK retailers, namely Tesco and the Co-op Group as well as one Belgian firm Colruyt, have declared their intention to boycott tuna products being processed in the Indian Ocean by coastal states of the IOTC. The main qualm of these pressure groups is that the IOTC is not implementing effective management measures for the sustainable exploitation of yellowfin tuna.

As the House may be aware, Regional Fisheries Management Organisations, such as the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission, have been setup to manage tuna resources which are highly migratory pelagic species, and which are not confined to any specific area.

Membership of IOTC is open to Indian Ocean coastal states as well as to countries or regional economic integration organisations which are members of the United Nations or one of its specialised agencies and are fishing tuna in the Indian Ocean. Currently, the IOTC has 31 contracting members, including 19 Indian Ocean coastal states namely Australia, Bangladesh, Comoros, France for Reunion Island, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Mozambique, Pakistan, Seychelles, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Republic of South Africa, United Republic of Tanzania and Thailand.

Each year, the IOTC meets and based on statistics submitted by parties, takes the necessary management measures to ensure the sustainable exploitation of different species of tuna.

Based on the analysis of data submitted by member states, the yellowfin tuna has been found to be subject to overfishing. Accordingly, IOTC has adopted rigorous conservation and management measures relating to catch and effort reduction to allow the stock of yellowfin tuna to recover.

In this respect, during the 20th Session of the IOTC held in 2016, a resolution relating to the reduction of purse seine catch of yellowfin tuna by 15% was adopted for member states catching more than 5000 tonnes. In view of the fact that Mauritius was catching less than 5000 tonnes it was exempted. However, in 2019, at the 23rd Session of the IOTC, Mauritius was included in the list of countries required to reduce their catch by 7.5% as it's purse seine catch had exceeded the 5000 tonnes limit.

I am informed that the 24th Session of the IOTC virtual meeting was held from 02 to 06 November 2020. During this session, the Mauritian delegation made a statement on its commitment towards the sustainability of the yellowfin tuna in the Indian Ocean.

Mauritius supported the setting up of management procedures and a quota allocation scheme to ensure the sustainability of the stocks of yellowfin tuna. The delegation also made a statement regarding the declared intention of some buyers to boycott Indian Ocean tuna which will be detrimental to the economy of the coastal states which are processing tuna taking into consideration the already marked economic downturn worldwide.

The Mauritian delegation also supported the proposal to hold a special session of the Commission to address the issue of yellowfin tuna stock status subsequent to the Scientific Committee to be held in December 2020.

I am further informed that the 7.5% catch reduction of yellowfin tuna, which was allocated to Small Island Developing States, (SIDS), has been rolled over till the next special session scheduled for early next year. Mauritius is fully committed to the sustainability of fish resources in the Indian Ocean and would stand guided by the work of the Scientific Committee. Mauritius also subscribes to the decision taken at the level of the heads of delegations concerning proposals for fresh resolutions.

Accordingly, the Mauritian delegation recommended that the IOTC should issue an appropriate statement expressing its concern for the intention of the buyers and to reassure the International Community that necessary measures will be taken at the appropriate time and with appropriate scientific advice to ensure the continued sustainability of fish stocks in the Indian Ocean.

Our recommendations were supported by the participating countries and in particular by Japan, Indonesia, Seychelles and India which have strongly voiced out their support.

Mr Speaker, Sir, management of tuna stock of the Indian Ocean requires concerted efforts of all coastal states and the European Union whose fishing vessels exploit their resources and the license issued by coastal states.

I wish to assure the House that Mauritius is committed to preserve the tuna stocks with a view to ensuring sustainable exploitation while also safeguarding the interest of our tuna Industry.

Mr Speaker: Next question!

MV WAKASHIO VESSEL OIL SPILLAGE – LAGOON CLEANING

(No. B/794) **Mr D. Ramful (First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien)** asked the Minister of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether in regard to the cleaning of the lagoon as a result of the MV Wakashio Vessel oil spillage, he will state the –

- (a) name/s of the contractors to whom the contracts therefor was awarded, indicating the terms and conditions thereof, and
- (b) number of –
 - (i) registered fishermen, and
 - (ii) skippers from the affected region, enlisted therefor, indicating the allowance paid thereto

The Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change (Mr K. Ramano): M. le président, après l'échouement du MV Wakashio au large de Pointe d'Esny le 25 juillet 2020 et le déversement d'hydrocarbures survenu le 6 août 2020, quelque 30 kms du rivage sur le sud-est ont été touchés. Le nettoyage du lagon et des rives a d'abord été entrepris par diverses organisations du secteur public, à savoir le *National Coast Guard*, la *Special Mobile Force*, le *Living*

Environment Unit de mon ministère, la *Central Electricity Board*, le *Mauritius Fire and Rescue Services*, les collectivités locales, les différentes ONG et aussi les membres du public incluant les pêcheurs et les skippers des régions affectées. De plus, la compagnie d'assurance, Japan Protection & Indemnity (P& I) Club engageait les services de Polyeco Société Anonyme afin d'entreprendre, entre autres, le nettoyage et l'enlèvement des booms artisanaux saturés.

Vers le 10 août 2020, à la demande du *National Crisis Management Committee*, le Japan P & I Club et l'*International Tanker Owners Pollution Federation Ltd (ITOPF)* ont été invités à élaborer un plan d'action pour le nettoyage des rives. Le 14 août 2020, en vue de la mobilisation de l'équipe d'experts pour l'exercice de nettoyage, le public a été aimablement informé par un communiqué de cesser le nettoyage des rivages.

ITOPF a présenté le plan d'action sur le nettoyage le 17 août 2020. Le plan d'action était fondé sur les relevés des rivages et comprenait, entre autres, la délimitation des zones de nettoyage, l'attribution des zones prioritaires, les techniques propres au site, les exigences en matière d'équipement et de personnel et la gestion des déchets selon un calendrier précis.

M. le président, suite à l'approbation du Plan d'action par le *National Crisis Management Committee*, Le Floch Depollution, désigné par le Japan P&I Club, a démarré les opérations de nettoyage à partir du 19 août 2020. Cependant, le 21 août 2020, mon ministère a envoyé une lettre au Japan P&I Club pour exprimer sa préoccupation et son insatisfaction à l'égard du rythme des opérations de nettoyage menées par ce dernier. Par suite de quoi, le 23 août 2020, Polyeco S.A. a également été désignée par le Japan P&I Club pour les opérations de nettoyage. Par conséquent, Le Floch Depollution a été affecté à la région de Rivière des Créoles jusqu'à Pointe du Diable et Polyeco S.A. de Blue Bay à Rivière des Créoles.

M. le président, le nettoyage est effectué selon quatre étapes, à savoir -

- (i) l'enlèvement des huiles usées accumulées/empilées et des booms artisanaux ;
- (ii) la collecte des débris contaminés, tels que les bouteilles en plastique, le bois et autres déchets généraux ;
- (iii) l'enlèvement des algues contaminées et le lavage et
- (iv) lavage sous pression des roches contaminées dans des conditions précises.

À ce jour, les opérations de nettoyage des différents sites sont à différentes étapes. Pour ce qui est de l'enlèvement des déchets, on m'informe que les deux entrepreneurs se sont entendus avec les entreprises locales pour le faire.

M. le président, en ce qui concerne les termes et conditions du contrat de nettoyage entre le Japan P&I Club et les deux entreprises mentionnées, la Chambre doit noter qu'il s'agit des accords privés. Selon les renseignements reçus des deux entrepreneurs, les modalités du contrat ne peuvent être divulguées.

M. le président, quant à la partie (b) de la question, je suis informé que le ministère de l'Economie bleue, des Ressources marines, de la Pêche et du Transport Maritime a effectué un paiement de R 1,564,800 à 504 pêcheurs des régions de Bambous Virieux, Grand Rivière Sud-Est, Mahébourg et Trou d'Eau Douce qui ont effectué le nettoyage du 10 août au 14 août 2020. Par ailleurs, selon Polyeco Société Anonyme, à partir du 16 août 2020, 71 pêcheurs enregistrés et 99 skippers ont travaillé avec eux pour le nettoyage.

Cependant, Polyeco S.A a informé que les termes de leurs accords et leur rémunération sont confidentiels. Quant à Le Floch Depollution, la compagnie nous a informée qu'il a sous-traité l'exercice de nettoyage avec la compagnie Maxiclean et selon les informations qui nous ont été

communiquées, parmi il y a 5 pêcheurs, 18 pêcheurs non-inscrits, 1 skipper et aussi un ‘bayant’ qui sont parmi le personnel.

Mr Ramful: Thank you, hon. Minister. The reason why I asked this question is because initially during the different meetings that the Ministry of Marine Resources had with the fishers and skippers at Mahebourg and the regions, they were promised that all of the employees who would be recruited for the cleaning purposes would be recruited from the pools of fishers and skippers who come from the affected regions. Now, apparently, one of the companies is subcontracting the contract for cleaning to Maxiclean, and Maxiclean in turn is recruiting people from outside the region. Is there a possibility of your Ministry looking into the matter so that Maxiclean or the main company can recruit people from the affected region?

Mr Ramano: M. le président, je dois dire que mon ministère et aussi le ministère de mon collègue de la Pêche ont eu plusieurs de travail avec les compagnies concernées et aussi la compagnie *ITOPF* qui agit comme *Advisory Body* en ce qui concerne le nettoyage. Nous avons émis le souhait et aussi demandé à ce que préférence soit donnée aux pêcheurs, aux plaisanciers et aussi aux propriétaires des bateaux pour qu'ils puissent être concernés avec toute l'entreprise de nettoyage. Donc, ils nous ont fait savoir qu'ils sont en train de faire de leur mieux à ce niveau, même en ce qui concerne le sous-contracteur qui a été employé, là aussi le message a été passé pour que préférence soit donnée aux personnes de la région.

Merci.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Members, PQ B/813 has been withdrawn.

Hon. Members, I have to address the House concerning hon. Osman Mohamed. Earlier today, while putting a supplementary question in connection with PQ B/775, addressed to the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, you purported to lay a few documents in support thereof. I have perused the said documents and it is noted that one of it is, in fact, a letter addressed personally to the hon. Deputy Prime Minister and the other documents are directly linked to the subject matter of the said letter.

In the circumstances, the laying of documents which the hon. Deputy Prime Minister already has personal cognisance is not accepted.

Time over! I suspend the sitting for 30 minutes.

At 4.17 p.m., the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 5.02 p.m. with Mr Speaker in the Chair.

Mr Speaker: Please be seated!

TUESDAY 17 NOVEMBER 2020

MV WAKASHIO VESSEL OIL SPILL - SEAFOOD CONTAMINATION

(No. B/859) **Mrs K. Foo Kune-Bacha (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the seafood contamination resulting from the MV Wakashio Vessel oil spill, he will state if a recent assessment on the safety of seafood consumption has been conducted and, if so, indicate when and the outcome thereof.

Mr Maudhoo: Mr Speaker Sir, I wish to inform the House that following the grounding of MV Wakashio on 25 July 2020 and the oil spill on 06 August 2020, the Ministry of Health and

Wellness issued a communiqué on 08 August 2020 to, *inter alia*, ban the consumption of seafood from those affected regions. Moreover, by virtue of GN1148 of 2020, the affected regions have been proclaimed restricted areas. As at date, fishing activities are still not allowed in those regions.

In parallel, the Albion Fisheries Research Centre of my Ministry initiated an assessment to ascertain whether the seafood in the affected regions is safe for consumption.

The assessment comprises analysis of sediments, seawater and seafood. With regard to sediments, samples are being collected from 27 sites along the shoreline in the lagoon as well as at the mangrove sites. Samples for water are being collected from 27 sites both in-lagoon and off-lagoon within the affected regions.

With regard to analysis of seafood, the Albion Fisheries Research Centre is conducting regular surveys in the affected regions which comprise the collection of seafood samples, including, amongst others, fish, oyster, shellfish and squid, for analysis to detect the presence of total hydrocarbons, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons and heavy metals. The tests are being carried out by a private laboratory, namely, Quantilab Ltd.

Following the oil spill, a first round of seafood sampling was carried out from 14 to 27 August 2020. Samples were collected in-lagoon from 22 sites located both within and outside the affected region. Total hydrocarbons were detected in samples collected at three sites namely at Pointe d'Esny, Deux Frères and Mahebourg. The presence of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons was detected in samples collected at Mahebourg only.

A second sampling exercise has been effected from 02 September to 08 October 2020. Samples were collected in-lagoon and off-lagoon, submitted to Quantilab Ltd for analysis. The test results did not reveal any presence of total hydrocarbons and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons in the samples.

A third round of sampling has been carried out off-lagoon in the regions of Grand River South East to Mahebourg on 22 and 23 October 2020. The samples were collected and tested. Again, total hydrocarbons and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons have not been detected in any of the samples.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the recent results obtained pertain to samples collected on 05 November 2020. Test results did not reveal presence of total hydrocarbons and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons in the seafood samples.

This assessment being carried out has revealed that total hydrocarbons and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons are not being detected in the seafood samples as from the second round of the sampling exercise.

However, the collection and analysis of seafood samples both in-lagoon and off-lagoon will be maintained during the month of November 2020 with a view to ascertaining that the seafood from these regions is safe for consumption.

Mr Speaker, Sir, monitoring in any unsafe area will continue until the risk assessment process reveals no risk.

In the light of the assessment, a decision will be taken to allow fishing activities in the affected regions.

I also wish to inform the House that the payment of the solidarity grant of Rs10,200 to the registered fishers, registered fishmongers and fisher applicants in the affected regions will be maintained until the resumption of the fishing activities.

Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha: Dans un article de presse, quelques pêcheurs du Sud Est témoignent pêcher et vendre illégalement leurs prises malgré l'interdiction qui pourraient s'avérer dangereux à la

consommation. L'honorable ministre peut-il nous dire si des tests sont effectués dans des spécimens dans des points de vente de manière aléatoire partout sur l'île?

Mr Maudhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, in fact, the fish sold in that region do not come from those regions. The fish they buy and sell are taken from other regions of the island and sold over there.

Mr Speaker: Next question!

MV WAKASHIO VESSEL -WRECK & SINKING

(No. B/864) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the MV Wakashio Vessel, he will state the names of the experts who advised Government on the handling of the wreck and sinking thereof, respectively, indicating the quantum of fees paid thereto and source of the funds used therefor.

Mr Maudhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that no experts have been hired by my Ministry to advise Government on the handling of the wreck and sinking of the forward section of MV Wakashio and, therefore, payment of fees does not arise.

A notice was served in line with requirements of section 150 of the Merchant Shipping Act on 19 August 2020 by the Director of Shipping on Okiyo Maritime Corporation, owners of MV Wakashio, giving them instructions for the scuttling of the forward section of MV Wakashio at the planned sinking position.

The term planned sinking was then used instead of scuttling as it was a joint decision made by all stakeholders present at the National Crisis Committee chaired by Dr. the hon. Husnoo, Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management.

The conditions attached to the planned sinking were as follows –

- (a) before the operation, SMIT Salvage shall ensure that all hydraulic oil is removed from the equipment on the forward section of MV Wakashio;
- (b) SMIT Salvage shall provide evidence in terms of pictures and videos that the forward section of MV Wakashio does not contain any polluting elements, that is, fuel oil, gasoline and other oily products;
- (c) SMIT Salvage shall ensure that all precautions have been taken to ensure no parts, debris, gear loaded on forward section of the MV Wakashio float after the scuttling operation, that is, hatch covers, ruins, etc., and
- (d) the Salvage Master shall take pictures and make videos of the scuttling operation and stay on site to ensure that there are no floating parts which would affect the safety of navigation and any floating debris is to be collected and placed on the boat tugs expedition and summit for appropriate disposal.

Furthermore, the planned sinking operation shall be witnessed by Marine Mammal Observers, two from Marine Megafauna Conservation, a registered NGO in Mauritius and one officer from my Ministry.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the new planned sinking position was determined following a meeting held on 19 August 2020, chaired by the Director of the Department for Continental Shelf, Maritime Zones Administration and Exploration and the designated position was agreed by all parties, including the French experts present.

The decision to carry out the planned sinking of the forward section of MV Wakashio was approved during the National Crisis Committee held on 19 August 2020, after consultation with all members present.

On 21 August 2020, the owners of the Vessel gave SMIT Salvage orders to carry out the planned sinking of the forward section at the designated position. The planned sinking of the forward section was completed on 24 August 2020 at 15 00 hours local time.

Mr Uteem: The hon. Minister has just mentioned that no expert advised the Government on the handling of the wreck. So, may I know from the hon. Minister how does he reconcile what he has just said and what the hon. Prime Minister said on BBC that they have not intervened and evacuated oil because they had been acting on expert advice?

Mr Maudhoo: As I mentioned in my answer, the National Crisis Committee, chaired by the hon. Vice-Prime Minister consists of so many authorities and in that Crisis Committee the Japanese experts were there, the French experts were there to give advice. The experts were not paid any money. They were just in the Committee. We recall here the visit of the French Minister following which the French experts came.

Mr Uteem: My question is very simple, hon. Minister. For 12 days, we did not do anything until 06 August when there was the oil spill. So, I am just asking a very simple question: on whose advice did Government act, not to act in this matter?

Mr Maudhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, there was a PNQ and I have already answered this question.

Mr Uteem: In respect to the sinking of the front, the forward of the ship, may I know from the hon. Minister whether his Ministry or the Director of Shipping had received advice that instead of sinking the forward of the ship, the ship should be sold as a wreck whether locally or in India because there were tonnes of steel that were worth millions of dollars?

Mr Maudhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, there has been request, but being given the risk, nobody will allow such a wreck to be shipped, you know, to sail to India and we, here, the Government, we also decided not to allow to bring such a wreck for dismantling and bring ashore because it will be a big pollution. So, all the decisions have been taken in the Crisis Committee and the best option was to go for that sinking option.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Speaker, can I ask the hon. Minister what was the rationale and the urgency for the sinking of the MV Wakashio wreck? What was the urgency?

Mr Maudhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, again, I would recall to the PNQ that was put to me. There was outcry everywhere, but that's the way it is. The rationale is that the notice was served and most urgently the wreck should be removed. The most rapid method was to take it out from here. That was the rationale; it had to be taken out. It had to leave our sea here.

Mr Speaker: Last supplementary!

Mr Uteem: If this is the rationale that there is urgency, then can the hon. Minister explain why is it that, up to now, the remainder of the MV Wakashio is still on the coral barrier?

Mr Maudhoo: Let me explain. Mr Speaker, Sir, let me explain that also. The Aft part is still here, it is the scrap handling operation plan which is still here. I think the brand marine consultant has been appointed. They have appointed one – let me see. The contract for the wreck removal of the Aft section of MV Wakashio has already been awarded to Liangyungang Dali Underwater Engineering on 21 October 2020. The contractor has started mobilisation of resources on 21 October 2020.

So, the operation is scheduled to start by mid-December 2020 and will be dependent obviously on the Ministry of Health and Wellness for COVID-19 protocol. This is there and the complete removal and final survey is planned for end of February 2020...

So, this is for the Aft.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Juman!

Mr Maudhoo: Oh, sorry, 2021.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Juman, withdraw that sentence!

Mr Juman: I withdraw.

Mr Maudhoo: 2021, sorry.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Members, the Table had been advised that PQ B/891 and B/892 have been withdrawn.

Next question!

FISHERMEN REGISTRATION CARDS – ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

(No. B/868) Dr. M. Gungapersad (Second Member for Grand'Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to Fishermen Registration Cards, he will state the number of fishers who have been issued therewith, indicating –

- (a) eligibility criteria therefor, and
- (b) number of pending applications therefor.

(Withdrawn)

SOUTHERN REGION & POINTE D'ESNY - SEAFOOD CONTAMINATION

(No. B/894) Mr R. Duval (Fourth Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to seafood contamination in the southern region and at Pointe d'Esny, he will state if an assessment of the safety of seafood from the said regions has been conducted and, if so, when was the last test carried out.

(Withdrawn)