

PRIMARY & SECONDARY

SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS (SEN)

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS AUTHORITY - MR I. S. - SEXUAL ABUSE

(18.10.2022)

(No. B/1023) Ms J. Bérenger (First Member for Vacoas & Floréal) asked the VicePrime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology whether, in regard to the Special Education Needs Authority, she will state the reasons why it was not informed of the recruitment of Mr I. S., Speech Therapist, who is being accused of sexual abuse on several children in a specialised school.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology (Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun): Mr Speaker, Sir, one the core functions of the Special Education Needs Authority is to register special education needs institutions, their teaching and non-teaching staff, as well as any other resource persons working thereat.

In this context, a call for registration of all SEN institutions and their staff was launched on 16 December 2021. The Special Education Needs Authority (SENA) also constantly reminds all SEN institutions that they need to get all their staff duly registered with the authority in accordance with Regulation 3 of the SENA (Registration of Special Education Needs Institutions) Regulations 2021 (GN No 28 of 2021).

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the Society for the Welfare of the Deaf had recruited the *orthophoniste* on 02 May 2022, but did not inform SENA about this recruitment. It is only after the occurrence of the deplorable incident which was reported at the School for the Deaf that the authority was made aware of this recruitment. The onus for informing the Special Education Needs Authority of any recruitment and to seek registration thereof rests upon the NGO or institutions as per the regulation referred.

Ms J. Bérenger: Sachant que la *Special Education Needs Authority Act* a été proclamé depuis 2018, l'honorable ministre peut-elle nous dire quand est-ce que le directeur a été recruté et quelle est son expérience dans l'éducation spécialisée ?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: The director was recruited in September 2022.

Ms J. Bérenger: Quelle est son expérience s'il-vous plaît dans l'éducation spécialisée ?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: He was a Senior Lecturer at the Mauritius Institute of Education and has a qualification in special education needs.

Ms J. Bérenger: L'honorable ministre peut-elle nous donner la garantie que depuis cet évènement malheureux, elle s'est assurée que tous les professionnels exerçant dans les écoles spécialisées sont effectivement enregistrés aujourd'hui ?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Speaker, Sir, this has already been done and we have also organised workshops to inform and train all Teachers and Carers in the special education needs school as well as their Managers. So, as soon as we came to know about this sad incident, a number of actions have been taken at the level of the authority to ensure that we enable and empower these NGOs to better cater and help our children.