



No. 08 of 2025

EIGHTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

**TUESDAY 18 MARCH 2025**

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

**PUBLIC SCHOOLS – AUTISTIC CHILDREN – FACILITIES PROVIDED**

**(No. B/150) Mr A. Savabaddy (First Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue)** asked the Minister of Education and Human Resource whether, in regard to children with Autism, he will state the facilities provided thereto in public schools, indicating the –

**(a) age group thereof;**

**(b) logistic support provided to these children, indicating the conveyance facilities put in place, if any, and**

**(c) number of specialized institutions catering for same, giving details thereof.**

**Dr. Gungapersad:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to thank the hon. First Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue for this question. I wish to inform the House that presently, there are 64 public schools in Mauritius that provide facilities to some 225 children with autism.

With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that the 225 children with autism who attend these 64 public schools are between the age of 5 years to 20 years old.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that the logistics supports that are being provided to children with special needs including children with autism are as follows –

(i) Payments of grants and aids to NGOs and RCEAs registered with the Special Education Needs Authority (SENA) to cover the following items –

- (a) Salary of managers, teachers, assistant teachers, carers, handy workers and drivers;
- (b) Per capita expenditure which includes basic grant, teaching aids and other school requirement, utilities, furniture and equipment for specialist support services;
- (c) Hot meals, and
- (d) Special support services, occupational, speech and physiotherapists on sessional basis.

(ii) Transport facilities for the pick-up and drop-off of the children are provided by my Ministry, free of charge for those attending the SENRDCs. Children attending the SENIUs are given free bus pass to attend school. Refund of bus fares is also provided by the Ministry of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity to parents who accompany their children to specialized schools, integrated units and main stream schools;

(iii) Provision of occupational speech and physiotherapy services to children who attend the SENIU, SENRDC primary and secondary schools;

(iv) Provision of ICT classes and the Sankoré Programme, and

(v) Children with severe autism and orthopaedic impairments are entitled to 100% excise duty concession on motor vehicle by the Ministry of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, allow me to pay tribute to one and all who are daily involved and looking after our children with autism, be it at home or at schools. With your permission, I am tabling details of the specialised institutions, NGOs, SENRDC, SENIU and RCEA catering for children with autism in Mauritius.

As regards to children with autism who attend public primary and secondary schools, they are accommodated in the main stream inclusive setup and are provided with the services of assistant teachers and carers for their daily learning support and living skills respectively.

Thank you.

**Mrs Savabaddy:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Will the hon. Minister state the current protocols and frameworks in place for the assessment and diagnosis of learners with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in Mauritius including the role of educational and paramedical professional in the process? Thank you.

**Dr. Gungapersad:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will come with an elaborated answer for this particular question.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Yes, hon. Apollon!

**Mr Apollon:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as the hon. Minister is aware for these types of schools, we also have private schools, can the hon. Minister indicate to the House, is the same logistic and control and facilities being given by his Ministry to those private schools?

**Dr. Gungapersad:** Definitely, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the same provision because we treat all our children in the same way.