

## **PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION PROGRAMME - IMPLEMENTATION (08/07/08)**

**(No. B/817) Mr J.R. Spéville (Second Member for Rodrigues)** asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the implementation of the pre-primary education programme, he will state where matters stand.

**Mr Gokhool:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, under the Elimination of Absolute Poverty Programme (EAP), it is provided that at the initial phase, the EAP could focus on some 25 to 30 pockets/clusters of poverty. However, with respect to support to children from absolutely poor families not attending pre-primary schools, the actions to be taken would have to touch all the pockets. In this respect, urgent action should be taken to identify those children not going to pre-primary schools and to map them with the nearest school or arrange for transport facilities where schools do not exist.

A committee to implement the objectives of the EAP programme has now been set up, and it will work out its implementation plan.

With regard to the implementation of an *ad hoc* measure taken by the Commission for Education and Training in Rodrigues to subsidise the school fees for pre primary students aged 3+ whose families are in receipt of social aid or unemployment relief or basic pension, I need to remind the House that in terms of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act, the Commission for Education and Training in Rodrigues is statutorily responsible for the administration of education and as such it takes decisions without reference to my Ministry.

I am informed by the Commission for Education and Training in Rodrigues that the decision to subsidise the fees for pre-primary schools students aged 3+ whose families are in hardship situation was meant to increase access to pre-primary schools and to alleviate the burden of needy parents and would be implemented in the weeks to come and will take effect as from 01 July 2008.

**Mr Spéville:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. out of 1,076 pre-primary schools, 826 are private institutions and Government caters for only 17% of pre-primary schools. Can I ask the hon. Minister how does he envisage to ensure that these private institutions cope and respond to the new implementation process?

**Mr Gokhool:** I think the pre-primary sector has always been in partnership with the private and public sector, be it in Mauritius or

Rodrigues. The private schools receive a certain support and it is not envisaged to change this policy which is working well. However, as it has been announced in the EAP programme, there will be access of children to both schools in the Government sector as well as the private sector.

**Mr Spéville:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister as regards the SIWF teachers who were private teachers and have been converted as permanent, how can he envisage for the preprimary schools in Rodrigues to have these preprimary school teachers posted as same as the SIWF teachers?

**Mr Gokhool:** I don't think this is correct, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. There was a group of employers working in the pre-school sector in the Government schools and with regard to these employees, the situation was regularized. But it is not envisaged to regularize the situation of teachers in the private sector.