

Minister's Statements and Speeches

PUBLIC BILL

THE APPROPRIATION (2022-2023) BILL 2022

(NO. IX OF 2022)

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

(20.06.2022)

Vote 4-1 Vice-Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology was called.

The Chairperson: Hon Dr. Gungapersad!

Dr. Gungapersad: Page 141, Item 21110.005 - *Extra Assistance*. I will request the hon. Vice Prime Minister to give complete details as to who the beneficiaries are and the pay package for each one of them.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Chairperson, Extra Assistance refers to payment of salaries, passage benefits and gratuity of 5 advisors, increase is due to revision in salaries following implementation of the PRB Report. For the advisers, they are –

- (a) Mr Hiranand Boolchand Dansinghani;
- (b) Mrs Savitri Dookhee;
- (c) Mr Suresh Munbodh;
- (d) Mr Elvissen Adaken, and
- (e) Mrs Lucinda Roberts - Holmes

And the sum that we have for each one of them –

- (a) Mr Dansinghani – the basic salary is Rs103,875;
- (b) Mrs Savitri Dookhee – Rs73,800;
- (c) Mr Munbodh – Rs103,875;

(d) Mrs Holmes – Rs110,125; (e) Mr Adaken – Rs66,200.

The Chairperson: Page 141, hon. Ms Tour!

Ms Tour: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. *Sub Head 4-107- Scholarships and Capacity Building-*
There is an increase in the amount. Can I have some details on same?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Can I have the number of the Vote, please?

Ms Tour: The Sub Head 4-107.

The Chairperson: Make sure your question is appropriate hon. Ms Tour!

So, we move on page 141, hon. Dr. Boolell?

Dr. Boolell: Yes, thank you very much, Mr Chairperson. Item 20 – *Allowance to Minister*. Not that the Minister does not deserve her allowance but can I call upon the hon. Minister...?

The Chairperson: No, this is not, we are on ...

Dr. Boolell: I have the right to.

The Chairperson: No, Committee of Supply *sa*.

Dr. Boolell: Oh, but still you know, allowance to Minister. I have a right to put the specific question to the hon. Minister in relation to alleged leakage of exams. Yes of exams paper. No it is relevant.

The Chairperson: Let us agree.

Dr. Boolell: I will ask the hon. Minister to give us, enlighten us and to be focus in relation to the specific question I have asked on the alleged...

The Chairperson: You are taking the time of the House!

Dr. Boolell: On the alleged leakage of exam papers.

The Chairperson: Come with a PQ! Let me take somebody else. Page 142, hon. Bhagwan!

(Interruptions)

Let us agree to disagree!

Mr Bhagwan: Item 22900.999 – *Expenses icw National Examination Board - Rs5 m.* Can we have some indication whether the Board has been set up and who are the members chairing that Board? Are we paying them?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: The Board has not been set up yet.

The Chairperson: You have the reply?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: *J'ai répondu.* The National Examination Board has not been set up yet, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson: So, we move on. Hon. Lobine!

Mr Lobine: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 142, Item 22120.008 - *Fees to Consultant (Transaction Advisor for PPP Projects).* There is a budgeted amount of Rs30 m. May we have more details please as to the Transaction Adviser?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: The provision has been made for the recruitment of Consultants, Transaction Advisers for six Public-Private Partnership projects. I will tell you which projects we are talking about. It is the University of Technology. An agreement has already been signed with Landscape for 10 arpents on 05 November. It is for the project of coming up with an auditorium and students hostel, national research and education network, research centre for students, one stop shop centre and a resource centre for student enterprise and innovation centre, a language centre, amongst others. Construction is tentatively expected to be completed in May 2026. Not yet recruited.

The Chairperson: Page 142, hon. Mrs Luchmun Roy!

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under *Item 22130 - Studies and Surveys*, can the hon. Minister provide further details about which studies and surveys? Thank you.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: So far, Mr Chairperson, the surveys are for four studies that have been carried out on around Grade 6 pupils. And then, we are talking about studies and surveys for consultations for the SACMEQ Project and the final study of the SACMEQ Project is expected to be over by June 2022.

The Chairperson: Page 142, hon. Quirin!

Mr Quirin: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 142 Item 22900.801 - *Health and Wellness Activities (a) Drug Use Prevention (Rebound) Programme*, a sum of Rs4 m. is

earmarked for 2022-2023. Can the hon. Minister give us some details regarding this programme?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Chairperson, we have got the Drug Use Prevention (Rebound) Programme. The provision will cover the fees for Consultants, accommodation costs, contextualisation of the Programme, drafting workshop, validation workshop, Training for Trainers workshop, and printing of materials and resources. We have a number of projects coming under this. This is the Drug Use Prevention (Rebound) Programme. We are other programmes for health information, education and communication materials as well.

The Chairperson: Page 142, hon. Nagalingum!

Mr Nagalingum: Items 22900.955 – *Gender Mainstreaming* and 22900.995 – *Expenses icw Akademi Kreol Repiblik Moris*. Can I have some details about these two items please?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Chairperson, we are referring to the development of a gender policy at the Ministry and studies to determine factors that should be addressed to increase performance of boys at schools with a view to come up with appropriate interventions. Universities and institutions of higher learning and other training institutions also to develop their own gender policy statements.

The Chairperson: Page 142, hon. Dr. Gungapersad!

Dr. Gungapersad: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 142, Item 22900.922 *Conferences/Seminars/Workshops (a) Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) 2022 Triennale Conference*. Will the Minister give more details regarding this item?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Chairperson, Government has agreed to the request of ADEA to host the ADEA Triennale 2022 on education and training in October 2022. The Association for the Development of Education in Africa, a Pan-African Organisation regrouping 54 Ministers of Education in Africa will be holding a global event in October this year. It is going to be a three-day conference which will be held in hybrid mode targeting around 600 participants; 300 in person and 300 virtually.

The Chairperson: Page 142, hon. Assirvaden!

Mr Assirvaden: A la page 142, Madame, à l’item 22900.995 – *Expenses icw Akademi Kreol Repiblik Moris*. Est-ce qu’on peut avoir des renseignements sur ce *Akademi Kreol Repiblik Moris* pour R 1.2 millions ?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: We are talking about the setting up an operationalisation of a *Commission terminologie* with the aim to develop further autography, grammar, lexicon usage and norms of the *Kreol Morisien* as a standard language.

The Chairperson: Page 142, hon. Ms Tour!

Ms Tour: Item 22120.024 – *Capacity Building Programme*. Can we have some details on the Rs4 m. earmarked?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: We are talking of a provision made for the Academy for Educational Professional. It is, in fact, for the Resource Persons to be recruited for the process and we have Training Coordinators as well and Conveners. Other costs are related to logistics and the use of technology for blended approach.

The Chairperson: Page 143, hon. Dhunoo!

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 31112.402 - *Upgrading of Schools - Multipurpose Halls and Playfields in Secondary Schools*, can the hon. Vice-Prime Minister provide more details on this?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: We are referring to projects to be carried out at Pailles SSS, Rivière du Rempart SSS, GMD Atchia SSS, John Kennedy College, Bon Accueil SSS and Quartier Militaire SSS.

The Chairperson: Page 143, Mr Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under the Item 26313.071 -*Early Childhood Care and Education Authority (c) Private Pre-Primary Schools*. With respect to grants to private pre-primary schools, may I obtain from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister a list of the pre-primary schools that will benefit from this grant and confirmation that all of them have the necessary licences and fire clearances?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Chairperson, the grants are provided solely to registered pre-primary schools and we have 518 pre-primary schools and they are all covered.

The Chairperson: Page 143, Mr Lobine!

Mr Lobine: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under Item 31112.002 - *Construction and Extension of Schools*, may we have more details as to the number of schools that would be involved in this construction and extension programme?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: We are referring here to construction and extension of schools at Mount Ory Government School for a pre-primary unit, Sir Anerood Jugnauth Government School, again for a pre-primary unit; construction of a pre-primary school in M. Bérenger Government School for which the bidding documents are ready for launching.

The Chairperson: Page 143, Mr Quirin!

Mr Quirin: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. At page 143, Item *31112.002 Construction and Extension of Schools*, can we know if the schools have already been identified and can we have the names of these schools?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: The hon. Member would note that I have just given the names of the schools and the last one is Burrenchobay Government School.

The Chairperson: Page 143, Ms J. Bérenger!

Ms J. Bérenger: Already canvassed. Thank you.

The Chairperson: Page 143, Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha!

Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha: Thank you, Chairperson. Item *31112.401 -Upgrading of Office Buildings*, can we know what office buildings are being upgraded?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: It is, in fact, the upgrading of office buildings and we are talking about the buildings of the ...

The Chairperson: Maybe you can circulate the reply.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: I will circulate.

The Chairperson: Page 143, Dr. Gungapersad!

Dr. Gungapersad: At page 143, Item *26313.201 - Current Grant icw Nine-Year Continuous Basic Education*, will the hon. Vice-Prime Minister explain how this Rs10 m. will be used for that purpose?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Chairperson, yesterday I have mentioned while we have reached another step in our educational reform and we are coming up now with the technical and technology stream and we will be working towards this.

The Chairperson: Page 143, hon. Mrs Mayotte!

Mrs Mayotte: Thank you, Chairperson. Item *28211.042 - Transfer Youth Club*, can the hon. Vice-Prime Minister give us more details about the Transfer Youth Club? Thank you.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: The transfers to non-profit institutions refer to health clubs, youth clubs and other clubs as well as a transfer grant to secondary schools for UNESCO clubs and the amount of Rs210,000 for Financial Year 2021-2022 has not been spent because of COVID-19 and the amount has been reduced this year for only Rs100,000.

The Chairperson: Page 143, hon. Wochit!

Mr Wochit: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 26313.099 - *World Hindi Secretariat*, can we know why this budget has been decreased compared to last year?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Again, Mr Chairperson, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, less activities have been carried out and there are savings. There is a slight decrease in the budget and this can be explained by most of the activities being carried out online due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

The Chairperson: Page 143, Mrs Luchmun Roy!

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Already canvassed.

The Chairperson: Page 143, Mr Dhunoo!

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Chairperson. Under Item 26313.071 - *Early Childhood Care and Education Authority (d) Continuous Capacity Development Programme*, can the hon. VicePrime Minister inform the House how many people have been trained under this programme?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Chairperson, most of the officers in the various schools go for training; we do not have the exact figure but as and when required, depending upon the requirements of the school, training is carried out.

The Chairperson: Page 144, hon. Dr. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson. Item 22090 – *Security*, there is always controversy of allocation of tender to security companies; can we be enlightened as to which companies have been allocated this contract, please?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Chairperson, the security services are RSL Security Services Ltd and the funds will be used for the provision of night security services in 216 primary schools, and 180 schools by RSL and the other schools will be covered by Rapid Security Services Ltd.

So, the name of the contractors, I have just mentioned, RSL and Rapid Security Services; there are two of them. The contract value for the schools is Rs1.9 m. for 23 primary schools and Rs5.1 m. for 43 primary schools.

The Chairperson: Page 144, hon. Lobine!

Mr Lobine: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. At page 144, under Item 22120.025 - *Fees to Oriental Language Teachers*, may we be provided with the number of Oriental language teachers currently and if the Vice-Prime Minister could table the number of teachers per Oriental language?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: We have, Mr Chairperson, 731 evening schools and 1,579 teachers. The breakdown for Teachers of Oriental Languages –

- Hindi – 703;
- Urdu – 417;
- Tamil – 118;
- Telegu – 47;
- Modern Chinese – 12;
- Marathi – 34;
- Arabic – 247;
- Sanskrit – 1.

The Chairperson: Page144. Hon. Nagalingum!

Mr Nagalingum: Already canvassed.

The Chairperson: Page 144. Hon Quirin!

Mr Quirin: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22900.996 - *Natation Scolaire Programme*, an amount of Rs8 m. is earmarked for 2022-2023. Can we know what are the schools concerned with this programme and how is this amount of Rs8 m. going to be spent?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Chairperson, as from this year, all schools will be concerned, all primary schools. The amount is disbursed for the transport of students as well as for the coaches, who are helping out, coaches from the Mauritius Sports Council.

The Chairperson: Page 144. Ms Tour!

Ms Tour: Already canvassed.

The Chairperson: Page 144. Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: Page 144, last line, Item 26313.034 - *Mauritius Examinations Syndicate*, we are being asked to vote Rs125 m. Can we have an idea of the composition of the Board, who is chairing the Board, the amount paid to them, and whether, it is the same Board which is responsible for the PSAC; whether it is that institution and the composition of the Board?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Yes, Mr Chairperson, I will table the composition of the Board. The payment is as per the PRB, Rs934.

Mr Bhagwan: Who is chairing the Board?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: It is the SCE of the Ministry of Education.

The Chairperson: Page 144. Hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Thank you. Item 22070 - *Cleaning Services*, there is, as we see, a drastic fall in the Budget, from Rs90 m. to Rs7.5 m. Will that not negatively impact on the quality of services and the health of the children?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Chairperson, in fact, the decrease is arising because the cleaning services will be provided by Mauri-Facilities Management Co. Ltd and the payment will be met under the Vote of the Ministry of Finance.

The Chairperson: Page 144. Hon. Juman!

Mr Juman: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 26313.034 - *Mauritius Examinations Syndicate*, can the hon. Vice Prime Minister tell us the number of staff attached to the MES. How many are suspended and if possible provide the reason?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Chairperson, I can say that for the time being there is one person suspended at the MES.

The Chairperson: Page 144. Hon. Dr. Gungapersad!

Dr. Gungapersad: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Hon. Vice Prime Minister, we have the

Item 21 - *Compensation of Employees*, may I know if the sum includes the item Discipline Assistant formerly known as *Surveillant* because provision was made to recruit 257 Discipline Assistants in 2021-2022, but we do not note in 2022-2023?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: The assistants have not been recruited yet, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson: Page 144. Hon. Mrs Mayotte!

Mrs Mayotte: Already canvassed.

The Chairperson: Page 144. Hon. Ms J. Bérenger!

Ms J. Bérenger: Item 22900.996 - *Natation Scolaire Programme*, peut-on savoir pourquoi il y a une baisse dans le budget alloué, s'il vous plait ?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Chairperson, the current school year has been extended till next year. So, we are providing for only part of the year.

The Chairperson: Page 144. Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under Item 22030.007 *Rent of which Rental of Line for Network Services*, there is an amount of Rs35 m. budgeted this year and there was Rs32 m. last year. May I know from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, whether today, all of our primary schools are fully equipped with Wi-Fi?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Yes, Mr Chairperson, this is so.

The Chairperson: Page 144. Hon. Dhunoo!

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22030 – *Rent*, can the hon. Vice Prime Minister provide the information as to which buildings are concerned and who are renting the buildings?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: It is provision for payment of rental for buildings, parking slots and other events required. We have the MITD Building for which rent is paid. Then, we have houses for the Chinese voluntary teachers who come over to Mauritius for primary schools. Then, we have Ken Lee Building, Port Louis, the Mutual Aid Building and Zone 1 Stores in Port Louis. We have as well in Zone 3, Gopal Building and in Zone 4 Ebène Heights.

The Chairperson: Page 145. Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Thank you. Item 28211.060 - *RCEA Schools (Operation Grant) of which Maintenance of Toilets & Classrooms*, can I ask the hon. Vice Prime Minister to provide the list of schools? Because for example, in my Constituency, in Raoul Rivet Government School, there is a serious problem in the toilets of that school having been reported time and again.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Chairperson, all our schools are included in this list. And we have here for RCEA Schools Rs7 m. which is provided for the cleaning of toilets.

The Chairperson: Page 145. Hon. Ms Tour!

Ms Tour: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 31122.823 - *Acquisition of Equipment for Early Digital Learning Programme*, there is an increase in the budget. May we know the reason for this increase?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Chairperson, this is for the provision of tablets to Grade 6 students next year.

The Chairperson: Page 145. Hon. Mr R. Duval!

Mr R. Duval: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. On page 145, Item 28212.004 - *Primary School Supplementary Feeding Project*, can the hon. Vice Prime Minister explain why there has been an increase of Rs8 m. on this item?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: It is because we have included more schools and the amount paid for the meals has increased also.

The Chairperson: Page 145. Hon. Dr. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson. On the same Item 28212.004 *Primary School Supplementary Feeding Project*, hon. Vice Prime Minister, do we get any support also from the World Food Programme in respect of cash and grant?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: No, Mr Chairperson, I do not think it is so.

Dr. Boolell: No support from the World Food Programme?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: No, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson: Page 145. Hon. Dr. Gungapersad!

Dr. Gungapersad: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 145, Item 31112.402 - *Upgrading of Schools*, will the hon. Vice Prime Minister table the complete list of schools and the nature of work for the upgrading of these different schools? Thank you.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: It will be done, Mr Chairperson. We shall table the list.

The Chairperson: Page 145. Hon. Dhunoo!

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under same Item 31112.002 - *Construction and Extension of Schools*, can the Minister give the list of schools and the contractors which have been allocated for these projects?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Certainly, Mr Chairperson. This will be tabled.

The Chairperson: Page 145, hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Thank you. Items 31122.802 and .823 - *Acquisition of IT Equipment and Acquisition of Equipment for Early Digital Learning Programme*, could we know the name of the supplier for the IT Equipment and whether any tender was launched?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Chairperson, for all IT equipment, tenders are normally launched, and I believe this must be the case for this as well. As for the acquisition of equipment for early Digital Learning Programme, we have an agreement with the Government of India through one organisation under the Ministry of Education in India EdCIL, they are the one providing. Now, I will find out for the name for the contractors that are supplying.

The Chairperson: Page 145, hon. Bodha!

Mr Bodha: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. On the same Item with regards to *Acquisition of Equipment for Early Digital Learning Programme*, may I ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister how many students are concerned by this programme?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: It concerns all primary school students. We have completed for Grades 1 to 5 and we are embarking on the project for Grade 6 this year.

The Chairperson: Page 145, hon. Dr. Gungapersad!

Dr. Gungapersad: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 145, Item 21110.005 - *Extra Assistance*, Rs85 m. has been earmarked. Will the hon. Minister give us the details regarding how this sum of money will be spent?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Chairperson, extra assistance refers to the payment of allowances made to Supply Teachers and to some General Workers who are on contract, those who are the ex-PTA General Workers, and for cash in lieu of leave, and also for the payment of end of year bonus. Increase is due to the revision of salaries.

The Chairperson: Page 146, hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 28212.012 - *S.C and H.S.C Examination Fees*, there is a sharp drop from Rs200 m. being provided for this financial year as compared to last year, it was Rs290 m. Can I ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister why is that so?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Chairperson, this year, the exams have been postponed to November. So, part of the students have been taking exams in June and the remaining amount for the next examinations. They already have savings.

The Chairperson: Page 146, hon. Lobine!

Mr Lobine: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 146, Item 26313.123 - *Mahatma Gandhi Institute*, can the hon. Vice-Prime Minister provide us details as to why there is such a big increase in the budgetary provision?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Chairperson, this would be due to the PRB, and the increase in salaries as a result of PRB.

The Chairperson: Page 146, hon. Nagalingum!

Mr Nagalingum: Under Items 22070 and 22090 - *Cleaning Services and Security*, this is quite a huge amount. Can the hon. Minister give us some details about it?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Chairperson, there is a decrease in provision, cleaning of schools will henceforth be provided by Mauri-Facilities which is an exempt organisation for the procurement of cleaning services. Payment for cleaning services provided by Mauri-Facilities will be under the vote of the Ministry of Finance.

The Chairperson: Page 146, hon. Ms Tour!

Ms Tour: Item 22120 – *Fees of which Healthy and Supportive School Environment Initiatives*, may we know the nature of those initiatives?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Chairperson, the provision has been made for the grant to school health clubs, Rs5,000 per school. We have 69 State Secondary Schools and 79 Private Secondary Schools. We have to develop the school health clubs and also for the promotion of the well-being of students.

The Chairperson: Page 146, hon. Dr. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson. Grants being allocated to Private Secondary School Education Authority, I refer to Item 26313.133 - *PSEA - Performance Grant to Private Secondary Schools*. If the Minister could enlighten us as to the specific criteria, how this grant is allocated which in itself is a good thing?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Chairperson, the performance grant aims at rewarding schools for achieving relevant performance targets and the performance grant is an element of

the comprehensive grant formula. It is for payment at rewarding academic performance and improving performance at SC and HSC Examinations, for achievement in sports competition and also participation in extra-curricular activities.

The Chairperson: Page 146, hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Last items on that page, Items 31112.002 and .402 - *Construction and Extension of Schools and Upgrading of Schools*, can the hon. Vice Prime Minister table a list of all the Secondary Schools which has been constructed or extended or upgraded and the amount spent on the schools?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: This will be done, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson: Page 146, hon. Dr. Gungapersad!

Dr. Gungapersad: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 146, Item 26323.073 – *Private Secondary Education Authority (PSEA)*, there is a sharp drop in the amount voted for this year and still more for next year, may we know why is it so?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Chairperson, the provision had been made for the upgrading of IT infrastructure, including upgrade of software, servers and security licenses. This has already been done and there is only a small amount left to be done. That is why.

The Chairperson: Page 146, hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: Last line, Item 31112 .402 – *Upgrading of Schools*, can the Minister inform the House whether schools in Constituency No. 20 is on the list of the coming financial year for upgrading, especially in the village of Petite Rivière and Albion?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: The list of schools will be tabled. I can see Constituency No.

20. So, I am tabling the list and you will be able to see.

The Chairperson: Page 146, hon. Dhunoo!

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under same item, since the hon. Vice-Prime Minister will be tabling the list, I wanted to know if it includes school from Curepipe?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: I am just tabling the list.

The Chairperson: Page 146, hon. Mrs Navarre Marie.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Yes, thank you! Item 26323.027 – *Mauritius Examination*

Syndicate, we are asked to vote a sum of Rs7 m., could we know what this amount is meant for?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Speaker, Sir, the amount is meant for consultancy services, consultancy fees for infrastructural works, servers at the MES and IT equipment, printing equipment and an MES vehicle.

The Chairperson: Page 146, hon. R. Duval!

Mr R. Duval: Item 28211.041 – *Mauritius Secondary Schools Sports Association (MSSSA)*, can the hon. Vice-Prime Minister give us a breakdown and indicate the activities organised by the MSSSA, during the last financial year?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: The MSSSA organises nine sports disciplines at regional and national level annually, and the promotion of individual sports competition like table tennis, badminton, athletics are also carried out. But, because of the sanitary measures this year, there was a reduction in the number of activities performed.

The Chairperson: Page 146, hon. Ms J. Bérenger.

Ms J. Bérenger: Item 22090 – *Security*, may we know who are the beneficiaries, please?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: So, again, the contracts are with existing providers and the providers are RSL Security Services and Top Security Services Ltd.

The Chairperson: Page 146, hon. Dhunoo!

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 22900.802 – *Other goods and services, Expenses in connection with Programme for International Students Assessment (PISA)*, can the hon. Vice-Prime Minister give more details on this programme?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: The OECD Programme for International Students Assessment is an international assessment that measures competencies in 3 major domains of study namely, reading, mathematics and science, with a focus on students' abilities to think critically, and apply their knowledge creatively in novel context. It is administered among 15year-old students every 3 years. Since 2000 when PISA was first introduced, more than 90 countries have participated in it, and we are planning to have the next edition and a pilot study will be undertaken in 2024, targeting around 2 000 sample students. The main study is targeting approximately 6 300 students and will take place in 2025.

The Chairperson: Page 147, hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 26313.157 – *Institute of Technical Education and Technology (ITET)*, for which we are being requested to vote for a first time here - because last year there was no provision - Rs50 m. Can I ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister what is it about?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: The ITET is an Institute of Technical Education and Technology. Now, it is going to regroup around 6 institutions which were previously at the MITD, and will be responsible for preparing students for diplomas and higher certificates and higher national diplomas in the technical *filière*.

The Chairperson: Page 147, hon. Lobine.

Mr Lobine: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 147, under the same item 26313.157 - *Institute of Technical Education and Technology (ITET)*, may we know from the hon. VicePrime Minister, who is the Chairperson of this institute, and also, who are the Board members.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: I would table the Board members. The Chairperson, is Mr Matabadul. I am tabling the list of all members.

The Chairperson: Page 147, hon. Dr. Gungapersad.

Dr. Gungapersad: Page 147, Item 31122.802 – *Acquisition of IT Equipment of which Online Digital Pedagogy (Virtual Classroom)*, may we have more details regarding same from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Certainly! We are referring here to funds that will be used to acquire IT Equipment for secondary schools. 200 PCs for replacement in computer labs as well as laptops and projectors; as well as boot camp for hands-on training of educators to use techno pedagogical strategies in teaching and learning; acquisition of IT equipment for online digital pedagogy for the virtual classroom. So, we will need touch screen laptops with projectors for each classroom, once-off Wi-Fi equipment and etc.

The Chairperson: Page 147, hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Yes, thank you! Item 26323.157 – *Institute of Technical Education and Technology (ITET)*, along with the composition of the Board, could the Minister provide us also with the composition of the council?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: It is the same thing. The council and the Board is the same. Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir, it is the same Board.

The Chairperson: Page 147, hon. Dhunoo!

Mr Dhunoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 31112 – *Non Residential Building .042*

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Construction of Building – Regional trading Centre at Beau Vallon, .442 – Upgrading of Building – Technical Education Centres, can the hon. Vice-Prime Minister provide details on both projects and who are the contractors who have been allocated these projects?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Now, for Beau-Vallon, the contract was awarded to the Tianli Construction Co. Ltd. So, the funds have been used for the payment of consultancy services for the project, for the design and build. And the project is a design and build and it is a turnkey project. I see that the Consultants are Lux Consult Mauritius and the contractor is Tianli Construction Co. Ltd.

The Chairperson: Page 147, hon. Ramful!

Mr Ramful: Under the same Item 31112.042 – *Construction of Building – Regional Training Centre at Beau Vallon*, can we know the expected completion date for the project?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: I see here that the site was handed over in January 2021, and expected completion date is November 2022.

The Chairperson: Page 147, hon. Woochit!

Mr Woochit: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Item 31122.999 – *Acquisition of Other Machinery and Equipment*, can we know what are the machinery and equipment and why the budget has been decreased by Rs5 m.?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: The funds decrease, it is because, I am told here, that the Act was proclaimed in January 2022 and the Council set up in February 2022. Once the ITET is fully operational, new requirements will be worked out for machinery and equipment in line with the new fields of curriculum. There are new fields of curriculum also being chosen, so, there is a difference.

The Chairperson: Page 148, hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Thank you, Item 26323.0149 – *Special Education Needs (SEN) Authority of which (a) Upgrading of SEN Schools run by NGOs/RCEA (b) Acquisition of Pedagogical tools and materials*. Can we have details on these two projects from the hon. Vice Prime Minister, please? Thank you.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Chairperson, the provision is here made for a one-off grant to SEN Schools run by NGOs – Rs2.7 m and the disbursement of the one-off grant to schools which have submitted new projects –

- (a) upgrading of SEN schools run by NGOs;
- (b) grant of Rs100,000 will be provided to SEN institutions run by NGOs and the 8 institutions run by SeDEC for repairs and renovation of buildings;
- (c) acquisition of pedagogical tools and materials;
- (d) grant of Rs50,000 will be given to 45 SEN institutions run by NGOs and 8 run by SeDEC; and then also we have
- (e) acquisition of vehicles, and
- (f) an adapted 16-seater high roof microbus and office equipment for CELA.

The Chairperson: Page 148, hon. Dr. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson. Item 28211.023 - *Special Education Needs Schools*. Will the hon. Vice Prime Minister can give us a better outlay as to how this money is spent because we are talking of other expenses. What does it entail, please? Thank you very much.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: We have other expense, transfers to Non-Profit Institutions, this is the point you have asked. The increased provision made is for the payment of grants that I have just explained right now for the upgrading of the Institutions as well as for the purchase of new equipment. We also have contribution to the monthly salaries of the staff, carers, psychologists, occupational therapist and speech therapist and also a basic per capita grant amounting to Rs6,000 per student.

A yearly per capita grant of Rs5,200 which covers teaching aids and utilities as well as hot meals provided to students on a daily basis.

The Chairperson: Page 148, hon. Lobine!

Mr Lobine: Already canvassed.

The Chairperson: Page 148, hon. Dr. Gungapersad!

Dr. Gungapersad: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 148, Item 22120.043 - *Fees for Adaptation of Textbooks*. The fees will be paid to whom and what adaptation will take place regarding the textbooks? By whom?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: In fact, Mr Chairperson, there are certain people at the level of the MIE also at the level of an NGO *Lizie Dan La Main*, or *Lois Lagesse* that who normally help in adapting schools. However, now fees for adaptation of textbooks, for the adaptation of activity books for grades one to six and for digitalisation of textbooks as I have said at the level of the MIE and two NGOs, *Lizie Dan La Main*, and if I am not mistaken, or *Lois Lagesse Trust Fund*.

The Chairperson: Page 148, hon. Nagalingum!

Mr Nagalingum: Just been canvassed by hon. Dr. Gungapersad.

The Chairperson: Page 149, hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Item 28212.020 - *Student Scholarship Schemes for Vulnerable Households*. I see the provision of Rs3 m. has remained the same as compared to last year. In view of the increase in cost of everything, didn't the Vice Prime Minister find it necessary to request for more funds because life has become so expensive now?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Chairperson, this should go to the Ministry of Finance I believe but we have already increased last year the amount two year's back if I am not mistaken, the amount given to students. I have just mentioned that we have paid the tuition fees, we gave the monthly stipend and a maximum of 100,000 to academic year and they have four academic years that are funded.

The Chairperson: Time over!

Vote 4-1 Vice-Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology (Rs18,300,000) was, on question put, agreed to.