

## SECONDARY

### **LIBRARY FACILITIES/CAREERS GUIDANCE**

9/14/08

(20)

#### **NATIONAL LIBRARY – NEW BUILDING**

(No. B/1444) Mrs M. Martin (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Education, Culture & Human Resources whether, in regard to the project for the construction of a new building to house the National Library, he will state where matters stand.

*(Withdrawn)*

#### **GLOBAL SCHOOL-BASED STUDENT HEALTH SURVEY - RECOMMENDATIONS**

(21)  
30/3/10

(No. B/88) Mrs S. Hanoomanjee (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the Global School-Based Student Health Survey, he will state the –

- (a) outcome thereof, and
- (b) recommendations, indicating the measures taken for their implementation.

**Dr. Jeetah:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I wish to inform the House that the Global School-based Student Health Survey (GSHS) was initiated in 2001 by the World Health Organisation in collaboration with UNAIDS, UNESCO and UNICEF and with technical assistance from the US Centre for Disease Control. The survey was meant to generate data on important health risk behaviours and protective factors amongst students.

I wish to highlight, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that some countries had already started the Survey as from 2003. In Mauritius, this Survey was conducted by my Ministry for the first time in 2007 among students aged 13 to 15 years. The final report was available in 2009. The survey has provided us with data and other important information on critical health behaviours and protective factors established during adolescence and which are related to significant causes of morbidity and mortality during youth and adulthood.

The detailed findings of the survey are available on the web site of the World Health Organisation since January 2009 and are now also available on the website of my Ministry.

The data generated will now serve as a baseline to evaluate interventions and health promotion activities focused on changing behaviours for reducing the burden of non communicable diseases in Mauritius.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regards part (b) of the question, the main recommendations of this survey and the measures being taken are as follows –

- (a) Firstly, it is recommended that intersectoral collaboration between the Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources and my Ministry be established so as to develop a comprehensive and integrated approach to health promotion in schools. In this respect, Education and Health Councils, comprising representatives of both Ministries and other stakeholders have already been set up and are operational.
- (b) Secondly, the survey recommends the preparation of an Action Plan against violence and injuries in children and adolescents. A workshop with all stakeholders concerned was held on 25 March, 2010 to prepare good practice guidelines against violence and injuries in children and adolescents.
- (c) Thirdly, the survey proposes an increase in the number of physical education classes in all schools. I am informed that this has already been initiated by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources. In addition, my Ministry is currently finalising a National Action Plan on Physical Activity and one of its components will address physical activity in adolescents.
- (d) Lastly, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the other recommendations concern actions to reduce the use of tobacco, alcohol and drugs in schools. In fact, the Public Health (Restrictions on Tobacco Products) and Public Health (Prohibition on Advertisement, Sponsorship and Restriction on Sale and Consumption in Public Places of Alcoholic Drinks) Regulations 2008 have been promulgated and are being enforced as from last year with a view to addressing problems of tobacco and alcohol use on school premises amongst other things. I have to inform the House, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that following the enforcement of these Regulations, the consumption of –

- (i) Spirits (i.e. whisky, rum and compounded spirits) have decreased from 17.758,092 litres, that is, 17.7 million litres in 2008 - a few more if you will allow me, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir - to 13.4 million litres in 2009;
- (ii) Fruit Wine has decreased from 6.083 million litres in 2008 to 5.28 million litres in 2009, and
- (iii) Beer has decreased from 36.1 million litres in 2008 to 36.09 million litres in 2009, that is, it has stabilised, at least, it has not increased.

Furthermore, the import of cigarettes for the months of January and February 2010 has decreased to 166 million sticks as compared to 290 million sticks for January and February, that is from a high of 290 million sticks, it has come down to 166 million sticks over the period January to February 2010.

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me say that the carrying out of this survey itself is a very laudable initiative. Can the hon. Minister say whether mobile clinics still go to primary and secondary schools to detect cases in secondary schools alcoholism, in primary schools of serious handicaps for children and at what frequency do they do so?

**Dr. Jeetah:** I am afraid not, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Mobile clinics are here for *dépistage*, for early detection of NCDs as well as breast and cervical cancer in women. We are also enforcing good eating practices and we are encouraging people to have a healthy lifestyle. We have also initiated another dental mobile clinic where we carry out dental check up. But I take the point, once again, a very valid point and we will try to see in what way we can collaborate with the Ministry of Education to try to enforce this further.

**Mrs Labelle:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether there was a particular reason why the core questionnaire which contains nine questions relating to the sexual behaviours that contribute to HIV infection, other STI and unintended pregnancy module have been reduced to only two? There was nothing regarding questions which could have helped us to collect the database regarding the sexual activity of our adolescents.

**Dr. Jeetah:** I do not have an answer to that question, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, but I think the good thing is that, at least, now we have a basis for policy making. I am sure with the next survey we can consider all these issues.

**Mrs Labelle:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am sure the hon. Minister is aware of the problem of teenage pregnancy in our country which is on the increasing trend. So, we have missed an opportunity to collect data regarding this activity of our youth. Is he prepared to look into that? Is there something else that is going to be done so that we can have such data, so that we can implement measures to help decreasing this problem that we are facing?

**Dr. Jeetah:** There are two points, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. This survey was initiated in 2001. It is my predecessor who initiated this study in 2007. So, I think we have to congratulate my predecessor who has started the work. I am informed now that hon. Mrs Seebun who is in charge of the Ministry of Women's Rights, Child Development, Family Welfare & Consumer Protection is looking into the subject.

**Mr Jhugroo:** Can I ask the hon. Minister whether he will consider undertaking a systematic screening exercise in view of detecting any medical abnormalities at the level of primary and secondary students?

**Dr. Jeetah:** I think that my colleague is going to answer that question. My colleague, the Minister in charge of Education, Culture and Human Resources, has some very ideas in order to tackle this, being a medical practitioner himself. But, once again, these are very valid suggestions that we are working on.

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23/11/10

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### SCHOOL CAREER GUIDANCE – COUNSELLING

(No. 1A/164) Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the school career guidance, he will state the measures taken by his Ministry to assist students and parents in making subject choices.

**Reply:** The main functions of the Careers Guidance Service are the following-

- To offer Careers Guidance to young people.
- To provide careers information.
- To encourage and support careers education activities in schools.

A new orientation is being given to Careers Guidance. In order to be pro-active, Educare, the website of Careers Guidance, has been developed to offer comprehensive information on education and Careers Guidance. Counselling is being given to parents and students on choice of subjects and careers guidance. The aim is to provide career advice at an early stage on subjects which must be taken to pursue the right course for a career in a chosen field. Training programmes will be organised for the benefit of Educators to ensure that in different schools, there are trained Educators to guide students on choice of subjects. Steps are being taken to reinforce the Career Guidance Service to enable it to operate effectively to offer Career Guidance to students in general.

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