



**PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE  
REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS**

PMO/PO/MOFED

07 June 2019

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am directed to acknowledge receipt of your email dated 29 May 2019, addressed to the Hon Prime Minister and to inform you that the matter has been referred to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'S. Mootien'.

**S. Mootien (Mrs)**  
*for Secretary to Cabinet and  
Head of the Civil Service*

Rajni Lallah  
LALIT 153 Main Road  
GRNW  
Port Louis

**lalit**

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**From:** lalit <lalitmail@intnet.mu>  
**Sent:** 29 May 2019 19:43  
**To:** privateoffice@govmu.org  
**Subject:** Request for a specific item in the national housing program's budget to start the demolition-reconstruction of asbestos houses

**LALIT** 153 Main Road, GRNW, Port Louis, email: [lalitmail@intnet.mu](mailto:lalitmail@intnet.mu), Tel: 208 5551, 208 2132

To **The Minister of Finance and Economic Development**  
c/o Prime Minister Office  
Treasury Building  
Port-Louis

**29th May 2019**

Dear Sir,

We are writing to you, this time, as Minister of Finance and Economic Development. We wrote to you on 21st February 2019, as Prime Minister, to request a centralized Government communiqué to formally and publicly explain how the State intends to respond to the on-going crisis of asbestos housing. The letter was copied to Minister of Health, Minister of Environment, Minister of Social Security, Minister of Housing, NEF and NSF.

On 14th March 2019, LALIT received a letter from the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Housing and Lands (ref: MHO/1001/5/EDC V6). We were informed that a survey was being carried out jointly by officials of the Ministry of Social Security and National Solidarity and Environment and Sustainable Development & the Ministry of Housing and Lands in the different Ex-EDC Housing Estates with houses containing the asbestos. The aim of the survey started since July 2018 still on-going, the letter explained, is "to gather information on the existing number of housing units containing asbestos materials and their conditions."

On the 1st of April, we were officially informed by the Ombudsman (with which we had registered a complaint regarding the release of the Addison Report) that the the Ag. Senior Chief Executive of the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life which Ministry of Health had formally informed him on the 29th of March 2019 that a comprehensive Paper would be submitted to Cabinet on the national asbestos plan, including asbestos housing. We quote from the Ombudsman letter to us: "[However] *we have been advised that, in the first instance, a comprehensive Paper be submitted to Cabinet highlighting actions/recommendations that have already been implemented as well as actions/recommendations that Ministries/Departments propose to implement along with time line and budget if possible ...*"

We are now at the end of May 2019 and we have not heard anything on the Government's "plan" which your Ministers have been promising in public.

Resident families of EDC asbestos houses individually petitioned you, as Prime Minister, during two national protest marches on 6th July, 2018 and 5th October 2018, organized by the Joint *Local Housing and Local LALIT Committees*, to explain on the urgency of addressing this serious health issue.

Your Government has failed to put into action its "grand projet d'envergure" which was announced in an Official Communiqué 22 July 2015 by the, then, Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Housing, stating clearly: "*L'amianté étant un matériau toxique, le Ministre du Logement a plaidé [with the then Minister of Finance] pour un plan de désamiantage. Le Ministre des Finances a agréé a cette demande et il déboursera le budget nécessaire pour enlever de l'amianté dans ces maisons EDC/Ex-CHA.*" Your Government has failed to deliver on its promise made in 2015 in successive budgets. We also recall that your Government's and previous governments' failure to follow the specific recommendations made in (1) the Addison Report - 2002 (2) Dr. Sibartie – "*Health Dimension of Asbestos in Mauritius*"- 2006, (3) *Truth and Justice Commission Report* – 2011, to replace asbestos houses.

As you are preparing for the 2019-2020 Budget, there is now, a pressing need to include an urgent housing plan to replace all asbestos houses in the country within a very much needed massive national housing program so as to speed up the building of 50,000 houses to cater for all those leaving in overcrowded houses, lakaz zeritye.

Asbestos is a toxic substance so it is a matter of public health. We request you, as Minister of Finance, to have a specific item in the national housing program's budget to start the demolition-reconstruction of asbestos houses. There are over two thousand families who are in the impossible situation of being forced to live in housing sold by the State which your Government knows is dangerous to health, and despite assurances from the State from 2006, 2011 and 2015 that this dangerous situation will be remedied by replacing the toxic housing sold to them by the State. It is the responsibility of

the State to remedy this urgently. And the State has admitted that it is its responsibility. We also call on you to publish a "time-frame" for the demolition-reconstruction work.

Rajni Lallah  
for LALIT  
Copy to the Press