

HIGHLIGHTS OF CABINET MEETING – FRIDAY 03 MAY 2024

1. Cabinet has agreed to the introduction of the Merchant Shipping (Liability and Compensation for Oil Pollution Damage) Bill into the National Assembly. The main object of the Bill is to give the force of law to the International Convention on Civil Liability for Oil Pollution Damage, 1992, to the International Convention on the Establishment of an International Fund for Compensation for Oil Pollution Damage, 1992, and to the Protocol of 2003 to the International Convention on the Establishment of an International Fund for Compensation for Oil Pollution Damage, 1992, which are maritime treaties dealing with pollution damage caused only by oil tankers which carry oil in bulk as cargo, and to which Mauritius is a party.

2. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Health and Wellness and the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi. The aim of the Memorandum of Understanding would be, inter alia, to develop areas of cooperation including tertiary medical care services, training and capacity building, research collaborations as well as the conduct of professional examinations in respect of medical and paramedical staff.

3. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Economic Development Board and the Qatar Financial Centre Authority to promote collaboration, cooperation for investment and trade promotion and facilitation. The objective of the Memorandum of Understanding would be to cover, among others, the following areas –

- (a) financial sector collaboration;
- (b) assistance with promotion and international development; and
- (c) capacity building and skills development to cooperate on technical assistance, knowledge transfer, skills and policy development.

4. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Industrial Development, SMEs and Cooperatives and the Department of Small Business Development of the Republic of South Africa. The objective of the Memorandum of Understanding would be to explore avenues of cooperation for -

- (a) collaboration between the respective support institutions for the development of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs);

- (b) technical assistance in the fields of food processing, smart agriculture, manufacturing, light engineering, robotics, light industry, IT applications and leather and leather products;
- (c) assistance in the development of incubators to support MSMEs start-ups;
- (d) exchange of lessons learnt on how to improve the business environment for MSMEs and entrepreneurs;
- (e) collaboration by MSMEs on investment projects; and
- (f) collaboration on the financial and non-financial support for MSMEs, especially those owned by women and youth.

5. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a Memorandum of Co-operation between the Ministry of Health and Wellness and the Forensic Science Laboratory for the collection and analysis of any suspected drug-containing sample. The aims of the Memorandum of Co-operation would be to –

- (a) allow diagnosis of patients in hospital settings suspected of being under the influence of substances or in a suspected state of intoxication;
- (b) investigate patients who were under follow up at addictology units or in methadone day care centres following assessment by treating specialist in a case of emerging new symptoms; and
- (c) check level of substances in substance abuse patients.

6. Cabinet has agreed to the signing a Memorandum of Understanding between the Mauritius Oceanography Institute and the Mauritius Meteorological Services with the aim of strengthening scientific capabilities in Mauritius, improving disaster preparedness, enhancing weather and climate forecasting, supporting sustainable management of marine resources and contributing to the country's overall development and resilience in the face of environmental challenges.

The objectives of the Memorandum of Understanding would be to collaborate in the fields of seismology, oceanography and ocean-atmosphere interaction to –

- (a) foster and promote research and development within the broad context of sustainable development;

- (b) establish cooperation in those fields; and
- (c) encourage application and utilisation of research and development results through mutual cooperation.

7. Cabinet has agreed to the holding of the 38th Council of Ministers of the Indian Ocean Commission on 16 May 2024, in Mauritius. The Council of Ministers would take stock of progress in the implementation of projects and address any bottlenecks.

8. Cabinet has agreed to the holding of the second Session of the Mauritius-Madagascar Joint Commission from 15 to 17 May 2024, in Mauritius. The Joint Commission is a crucial mechanism which enables Mauritius and Madagascar to meet at regular intervals to deliberate on issues of mutual interest. It would give direction and impetus to bilateral cooperation and solidify the willingness of the Governments of the two countries to agree on policy directions charting the way to build strategic partnership.

9. Cabinet has agreed to the Civil Aviation (Hadj 2024 Pilgrims) (Exemption) Order 2024 being made for the exemption from the payment of the Passenger Solidarity Fee and the Terminal Expansion Fee in respect of pilgrims proceeding on Hadj 2024.

10. Cabinet has agreed to the holding of a Regional Workshop on Dosimetry for Irradiation Facilities from 24 to 28 June 2024 in Mauritius, in the context of a Regional International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Project entitled 'Building Capacity for Food Irradiation by Facilitating the Commercial Application of Irradiation Technologies'.

The objective of the Regional Project would be to obtain information in order to assess the viability of establishing a government-owned irradiation facility for the phytosanitary and quarantine treatment of food and agricultural products, for which a feasibility study was being undertaken as part of the project. Consultations would be held to elaborate a preliminary strategic plan, an infrastructural assessment and a methodology to develop an appropriate business model for its operationalisation. Some 60 participants from member countries, representatives of IAEA and local stakeholders would attend the Regional Workshop.

11. Cabinet has taken note of the holding of a Capacity Building Workshop on “Digital Upskilling for Women and Girls in Africa” by the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family Welfare, in collaboration with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa from 06 to 09 May 2024, in Mauritius. The main objectives of the Workshop would be to –

- (a) develop the capacity of women and girls in gender and digitalisation in selected areas of focus; and
- (b) build a critical mass of women and girls in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), with particular focus on digital upskilling for addressing major development issues.

12. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping would carry out a collaborative project entitled “Measuring co-benefit values provided by blue carbon ecosystems in Mauritius”, with the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation based in Australia, in line with the schematic roadmap on blue carbon with a view to setting up a National Blue Carbon Task Force with the aim of developing a National Blue Carbon Inventory in Mauritius.

The aim of the project would be to address some of the critical knowledge gaps by collecting baseline data on blue carbon ecosystems so as to understand their socio-economic contribution to the country, which includes, inter alia, their support to coastal fisheries, ecological value in removing waste products and their potential to sequester excess atmospheric carbon contributing to climate change.

13. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation would organise the competition ‘*Zenes Montre To Talan*’ on the theme ‘*Les Métiers*’. The competition would start as from the first weekend of May 2024 and would aim at providing opportunities to youth to showcase their vocational and technical skills. The objectives of the competition would be to -

- (a) inspire the youth to develop a passion for vocational skills and pursue excellence as a high value initiative for youth empowerment;
- (b) promote the benefits of learning a vocational skill and encouraging the parity of esteem between vocational and academic qualifications; and
- (c) prepare and equip the youth to join and participate, in due course, in the WorldSkills competition, at regional and international level, which is the global hub for skills excellence and development in vocational, technological and service-oriented careers around the world.

14. Cabinet has taken note that the Mauritius Rugby Federation would host the 2024 edition of the Rugby Africa Men's Sevens tournament on 29 and 30 June 2024, and on 06 and 07 July 2024, at the Labourdonnais Sports Club, Mapou. The main objectives of the event would be to –

- (a) promote rugby in Mauritius;
- (b) provide an opportunity to local players to get regional exposure so as to benefit from foreign talents and skills; and
- (c) showcase the quality of sports infrastructure available in Mauritius.

Some 12 African countries, namely Algeria, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Namibia, Nigeria, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe were expected to participate in the tournament.

15. Cabinet has taken note that, as at 02 May 2024, there were 384 active cases of Dengue Fever in Mauritius, of which 62 persons had been hospitalised in both public and private hospitals. For Rodrigues, 99 active cases of Dengue Fever had been recorded of which 17 persons were hospitalised. Reinforced teams were being deployed for fogging, larviciding and mist blowing activities in various regions.

16. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development to Washington, DC, where he participated in the Spring Meetings of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank Group, the meeting of the Commonwealth Small States Advocacy Champions and other meetings organised in the margins of the Spring Meetings.

The Minister attended the African Consultative Group Meeting of the African Caucus on the theme "*Strengthening Africa's Resilience in a Shock-Prone World: The Role of the IMF*". He also attended a meeting on the Third Chair for Sub-Saharan Africa at the IMF Executive Board, the International Monetary and Financial Committee (IMFC) Introductory Session on Global Developments and Prospects as well as the IMFC Plenary Session, the IMF and World Bank Africa Group II Constituency Meeting. In the margins of the Spring Meetings, the Minister also held discussions with the IMF and the World Bank. Moreover, he participated in a Roundtable organised by the IMF African Department on "Climate Financing for African Small Developing States: Closing the Gap".
