

CABINET DECISIONS - 17 MARCH 2017

1. Cabinet has taken note that, with a view to stimulating economic growth and job creation through tourism and business investment, the Passport Regulations 1969 would be amended to provide for -

- (a) nationals of Benin, Georgia and Ukraine to be exempted from visa to enter Mauritius, on a reciprocal basis, provided they meet the usual immigration requirements; and
- (b) nationals of Indonesia, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Taiwan and Vietnam to be issued a 60-day visa on arrival. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade would approach the authorities of those countries to extend the same facilities, on a reciprocal basis, to Mauritians.

2. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the Inaugural Meeting of the Mauritius-Ghana Permanent Joint Commission on Bilateral Cooperation held in Mauritius on 11 March 2017. Both countries have agreed, among others, to -

- (a) amendments being brought to the Framework Agreement for the establishment of the Special Economic Zone in Dawa, Ghana;
- (b) collaboration between the Utility Regulatory Authority of Mauritius and the Public Utilities Regulatory Commission of Ghana;
- (c) the recruitment of Mauritian health practitioners to complement the human resources in the Ghanaian health sector; and
- (d) collaboration in the development of a Slave Museum and new areas, such as e-Government, handicraft, water, health, arts and culture, financial services and sugar production.

Cabinet has agreed to the organisation of Permanent Joint Economic Commissions with, among others, Kenya, Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, and the IOC countries.

3. Cabinet has taken note of the impacts of cyclone Enowa on Madagascar, and agreed to Government making a contribution of Rs10m towards the reconstruction process.

4. Cabinet has agreed to the Ministry of Housing and Lands and the National Housing Development Co. Ltd signing an agreement with the NBCC (India) Limited for project management services for the construction of some 700 social housing units at Dagotièrè and Mare Tabac.

5. Cabinet has agreed to the Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities signing a *Convention de Partenariat Tripartite* under the *Fonds d'Expertise Technique et d'Echanges d'Expériences (FEXTE)* with *l'Agence Française de Développement* and *l'Agence de l'Environnement et de la Maîtrise de l'Énergie, Réunion* for a grant of 100,000 Euros to support capacity building in renewable energy and energy efficiency.

6. Cabinet has agreed to the Ministry of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives launching an SME Innovation Award competition. The main objective of the Award is to stimulate Small and Medium Enterprises to adopt innovative approaches and practices leading to business transformation, new markets, productivity improvement and increased investment. The competition would be launched by the end of March 2017, and the Award Ceremony is scheduled for October/November 2017.

7. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping, in collaboration with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, would host the inter-regional training and capacity building workshop on fisheries trade, management and development for selected least developed countries in April 2017. The workshop would focus on food safety and quality standard, fishery resources management, and environmental and social sustainability of fisheries. Some 30 participants from Cambodia, Myanmar, Comoros, Mozambique and Uganda would attend the workshop.

8. Cabinet has taken note that a Sub-Regional Workshop on Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas would be organised by the International Maritime Organisation in Mauritius in April 2017. The main aim of the Workshop is to assist stakeholders from the maritime administration, as well as relevant Ministries of beneficiary countries, in initiating a Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas assessment process. A Particularly Sensitive Sea Area is an area of the marine environment that needs special protection through action by the International Maritime Organisation because of its significance for recognised ecological, socio-economic, cultural heritage or scientific attributes that may be at risk of damage from international shipping activities.

9. Cabinet has taken note that, in the context of the World Water Day, commemorated on 22 March, the Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities and the Central Water Authority would -

- (a) organise an exhibition on the theme of the year “**Water and Wastewater**” at La Marie Water Treatment Plant;
- (b) hold open days at La Marie and Les Pailles Water Treatment Plants and Midlands Dam;
- (c) plant trees at Arnaud Dam;
- (d) launch photography competitions; and
- (e) organise a workshop for planters and livestock breeders on water conservation and use of recycled water.

10. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade to Reunion Island where he participated in the 32nd Meeting of the Council of Ministers of the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC). The Meeting reviewed cooperation among Member States in various areas, including political stability, peace, security, environment, connectivity, food security, and progress in the implementation of various projects, and discussed new strategic orientations of the organisation.

In the margins of the Meeting, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade had a meeting with the Managing Director of Services of *Région Réunion* to discuss the possibility of funding the following two projects under INTERREG V, which could be based on a triangular cooperation among Mauritius, Madagascar and Reunion Island -

- (a) the production of maize in Madagascar; and
- (b) the Melting Pot Indian-Oceanic Submarine System project, the new submarine cable linking the three islands.

11. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade to Indonesia, where he participated in the First Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) Leaders’ Summit. The theme of the Summit was “*Strengthening Maritime Cooperation for a peaceful, stable and prosperous Indian Ocean*”. The Summit endorsed -

- (a) the Declaration on preventing and countering of extreme terrorism in the Indian Ocean;
- (b) the Jakarta Concord; and
- (c) the IORA Action Plan for the period 2017-2021.

12. Cabinet has taken note of the recent mission of the Minister of Technology, Communication and Innovation to Spain where he participated in the Mobile World Congress Conference, the largest annual worldwide mobile event. The Conference focused on emerging policy issues owing to the evolution in mobile technology and digital services.

In the margins of the Conference, the Minister of Technology, Communication and Innovation had meetings with -

- (a) Mr Woody Sessoms, Senior Vice-President of CISCO, on the evolution of CISCO and the refocus on Big Video, Artificial Intelligence, Internet of Things, and Learning Machines; and
- (b) Mr Li Peng, President Southern Africa Region of Huawei, who expressed the wish to develop a strategic partnership in the field of e-Government with respect to education, health, agriculture, Internet of Things solutions, and Desk Cloud.

13. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Tourism to France and Germany. In France, the Minister reviewed the French market with the management of the AVIAREPS and the French representative of the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority (MTPA). He also discussed a joint promotion programme with the MTPA to target Chinese tourists with the representatives of French Tour Operators, the Director of Air Mauritius in France, and Mr Henri Giscard d'Estaing, PDG of the Club Med.

In Germany, the Minister of Tourism attended the ITB Fair, the leading travel trade show, and the foremost business platform for global tourism networking. The Minister met Mr Yehia Rashed, Minister of Tourism of Egypt and had a working session with Mr Haitham Mattar, CEO of Ras Al Khiamah Tourism Development Authority, UAE on areas of cooperation.

14. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Attorney General to the Kingdom of Swaziland where he attended the meeting of the Committee of SADC Ministers of Justice/Attorneys General. The purpose of the meeting was to consider the selection of Judges for the SADC Administrative Tribunal (SADCAT) for recommendation to the Council.

15. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Youth and Sports to India. The main purpose of the mission was to -

- (a) formalise the working relationship between the New Vision Badminton Academy, Chennai and the Mauritius Badminton Association; and

- (b) prepare a joint technical plan for the preparation of players and the training of coaches for the Indian Ocean Islands Games 2019.

The New Vision Badminton Academy and the Mauritius Badminton Association signed an Agreement providing, among others, for training of Mauritian players and coaches.

16. Cabinet has agreed to pay day for the month of May 2017 being rescheduled for 26 May 2017 in view of Mothers' Day that will be celebrated on 28 May 2017.

17. Cabinet has taken note of the appointment of Dr Jimmy Harmon as Director of the Board of the Civil Service College, Mauritius in replacement of Mr Ramesh Woochit, who has resigned.
