

CABINET DECISIONS – 13 SEPTEMBER 2018

1. Cabinet has taken note of the recent mission of Hon Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, Prime Minister, and his delegation to China and France. In China, he participated in the 3rd Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) Summit. During the Opening Ceremony, President Xi Jinping laid down the specific vision and strategic priorities and actions for building a China-Africa community with a shared future, and announced proposals and measures by the Chinese side to strengthen China-Africa cooperation. The FOCAC Beijing Declaration and Action Plan (2019-2021) were adopted at the Summit. The Prime Minister had meetings, among others, with –

- (a) President Xi Jinping and he expressed his appreciation to the President for China's inclusion of the proposals of Mauritius to improve the texts of the Beijing Declaration and Plan of Action, major outcomes of the 2018 FOCAC Summit regarding the inherent vulnerabilities and the need for special and differential treatment regarding SIDS, as well as proposals relating to innovative financing mechanisms, climate change amongst others. He also thanked the President for the grant of RMB150 Million for the Special Housing Project;
- (b) Premier Li Keqiang with whom he discussed practical areas of cooperation including innovative financing, artificial intelligence, research and development, tertiary education, capacity building and Chinese traditional medicine; and
- (c) investors along with representatives of the Economic Development Board to promote Mauritius as an investment and business destination.

Several Agreements/Memoranda of Understanding/Treaties were signed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Cooperation and International Trade during the visit, namely, –

- (a) Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance;
- (b) Extradition Treaty;
- (c) Agreement on Economic and Technical Cooperation;
- (d) Concluding the Negotiations for Mauritius-China Free Trade Agreement;
- (e) Addendum to the Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation between the China Academy of Chinese Medical Science and the Government of Mauritius; and
- (f) Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mauritius and the China Foreign Affairs University and China Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China.

In France, the Prime Minister attended the OECD Blockchain Conference and intervened in the high-level panel 'Blockchain for better policies'. He outlined the vision of the Government to embrace innovative technologies, namely fintech activities, artificial intelligence and blockchain, to develop a new growth pole and take the country to a new level of development.

The Prime Minister also had meetings with –

- (a) HE Angel Gurría, Secretary-General of the OECD and signed a Memorandum of Understanding for Cooperative activities between the Government of the Republic of Mauritius and the OECD;
- (b) the French Prime Minister, HE Edouard Philippe, with whom he reviewed the situation in the Indian Ocean, the existing collaboration between Mauritius and France in the fight against piracy, terrorism, and drug trafficking;
- (c) the Prime Minister of Serbia, Hon Mrs Ana Brnabic and the Prime Minister of Bermuda, Hon E. David Burt;
- (d) Dr Ramesh Caussy who briefed him, among others, on his robot Diya One which is the world first and only neuro-inspired mobile, intelligent and autonomous robot that improves the quality of air; and
- (e) Professor Joel de Rosnay, Director of *La Prospective et de l'Evaluation de la Cité des Sciences et de l'Industrie de la Villette*, with whom he discussed artificial intelligence and the use of smart phones in our immediate environment.

The Prime Minister also attended the public hearings of the International Court of Justice on 6 September 2018 in The Hague, Netherlands in the context of the request from the UN General Assembly for an advisory opinion of the ICJ on the legal consequences of the separation of the Chagos Archipelago from Mauritius in 1965.

2. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister Mentor, Minister of Defence, Minister for Rodrigues to The Hague, Netherlands where he participated in the public hearings held by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) from 3 to 6 September 2018 in the context of the request from the UN General Assembly for an advisory opinion of the ICJ on the legal consequences of the separation of the Chagos Archipelago from Mauritius in 1965. The Minister Mentor made the opening speech on behalf of Mauritius which was the first State to present an oral statement during the hearings.

3. Cabinet has agreed to the implementation of the key recommendations of the National Sport and Physical Activity Policy which has been prepared by Portas Consulting. The recommendations focus mainly on –

- (a) physical activity for all, for a fitter and healthier population, cutting across generations;
- (b) excellence in the sports arena at all levels, grassroot to elite. A well-structured development pathway for young talents under highly skilled mentors;
- (c) creating and developing a vibrant sports and physical activity economy, luring the private sector to increase their participation technically and financially;
- (d) increasing the ease and efficiency of access and usage of sports infrastructure across Mauritius and Rodrigues; and
- (e) providing a legal matrix to regulate and stimulate the sports and physical activity sector.

Portas Consulting would also assist in the implementation of the key recommendations relating to policy and on legislative changes required, whilst building internal capacity and capabilities.

4. Cabinet has taken note that the 13th Edition of the *Festival International Kreol* would be held from 16 to 25 November 2018 under the theme “*Kreolite nu Leritaz*”. The Festival, an annual event organised in the context of the International Creole Day, aims at showcasing the authenticity of the Creole culture through local music, arts, language and cuisine.

5. Cabinet has taken note of the findings of the National Health Accounts Study 2017 undertaken in the Republic of Mauritius. The National Health Accounts provide insights to the policymaking process on resource mobilisation and allocation. The Per Capita Total Health Expenditure in the mainland Mauritius was Rs20,327 while in Rodrigues Rs11,277. Total Health Expenditure, as a percentage of the Gross Domestic Product was 5.83% in 2016.

6. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the delegation led by the Minister of Tourism and comprising the Attorney General, Minister of Justice, Human Rights and Institutional Reforms and the Minister of Financial Services and Good Governance that attended the 18th ESAAMLG Council of Ministers Meeting in Seychelles. The delegation also attended the 4th ESAAMLG Anti-Money Laundering and Combating Financial Terrorism Public-Private Sector Dialogue. The President of the Council of Ministers publicly announced at the Plenary Session that in the light of the actions already taken by Mauritius in its Finance (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2018, as at date it could already be compliant to several Financial Action Task Force Recommendations. Mauritius was advised to apply for a re-rating of these Recommendations for consideration at the April 2019 Plenary Meeting of the ESAAMLG Task Force of Senior Officials.

7. Cabinet has taken note that, according to the last monthly report published by the Statistics Unit of the Ministry of Tourism, 109,471 tourists visited Mauritius in the month of August 2018 as compared to 100,191 in August 2017, i.e., an increase of 9.3%. During the period January to August 2018, 872,217 tourists visited Mauritius as compared to 838,397 for the same period in 2017, i.e., an increase of 4.0%. Growth has been registered in arrivals from Italy (+16.6%), Germany (+10.5%), United Kingdom (+0.2%), India (+18.2%), China (+10.7%), South Africa (+20.3%), Saudi Arabia (+411.8%), Czech Republic (+72.5%), Netherlands (+31.8%), Australia (+16.8%), Austria (+16.0%), Switzerland (+12.8%) and United Arab Emirates (+4.2%). Following the roadshow Mauritius conducted in Riyadh, Jeddah and Dammam in early April this year and the operation of three direct flights per week to Mauritius by Saudi Airlines, tourist arrivals from this market increased from 5,142 in 2017 to reach 12,906 during the period January to August 2018.

8. Cabinet has taken note of the constitution of the National Environment Fund with Mr Gerard Bussier, Deputy Financial Secretary as Chairperson.

9. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Advisory Council for Occupational Safety and Health with the Director, Occupational Safety and Health, Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training as Chairperson.
