

CABINET DECISIONS – 11 DECEMBER 2009

1. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the mission of Dr the Hon Navinchandra Ramgoolam, GCSK, FRCP, Prime Minister, from 27 to 29 November 2009, to the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago where he attended the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM). He was accompanied, amongst others, by Dr the Hon Arvin Boolell, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade. The special theme of CHOGM 2009 was “**Partnering for a more Equitable and Sustainable Future**”.

CHOGM adopted The Port of Spain Communiqué which encompasses the promotion of Tolerance, Respect and Understanding, Disarmament and Arms Control, Terrorism, Combating Piracy and Corruption, Human Rights, World Economic Situation, Reform of International Institutions, Trade and Investment Issues, Sustainable Development, Energy and Food Security, Challenges facing Small States, Health, Education, Gender and Youth Issues and Bridging the Digital Divide.

The Meeting also adopted the Port of Spain Climate Change Consensus: The Commonwealth Climate Change Declaration. Mauritius played a leading role in the debates, as well as in the drafting of the Declaration on Climate Change.

In his intervention on the issue of Climate Change, the Prime Minister brought out the high vulnerability and specificities of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and the need for urgent action to enable them to build their resilience to be able to withstand the inevitable impacts of climate change and pursue sustainable development. He also highlighted that local initiatives could be nullified and achievements swept out if proper attention was not given to food, water, land and energy security.

On a proposal of the Prime Minister, the Meeting agreed to providing immediate, fast disbursing assistance, with a dedicated stream for SIDS and low-lying coastal States of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), of at least 10% of the Copenhagen Launch Fund starting in 2010 and building to a level of resources of US \$10 billion annually by 2012.

Mauritius also played a leading role in trying to find a consensus for Australia hosting CHOGM in 2011. The Meeting accepted the offer of the President of Sri Lanka and that of Mauritius to host the 2013 and 2015 CHOGMs respectively. However, should Sri Lanka not be able to host the Meeting in 2013, Mauritius will host the Summit.

The Prime Minister had bilateral meetings with –

- (a) the British Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon Gordon Brown, with whom he discussed the sovereignty of Mauritius over the Chagos Archipelago and the Marine Protected Area. The British Prime Minister assured that nothing would be done to undermine resettlement and the sovereignty claim of Mauritius over the Chagos Archipelago.
- (b) The Prime Minister of India, HE Dr Manmohan Singh, with whom he discussed -

- (i) Double Taxation Agreement (DTA);
 - (ii) Purchase of Petroleum Products; and
 - (iii) Signature of Memorandum of Understanding regarding Agaléga.
- (c) The Prime Minister of Bangladesh, HE Ms Sheikh Hasina, who agreed to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding on the employment of Bangladeshi workers in Mauritius.
- (d) The President of the Republic of South Africa, HE Mr Jacob Zuma, who agreed to a Joint Commission being held regularly between our two countries to monitor the early implementation of Agreements signed between our two countries.

2. Cabinet has taken note of the results of the 2009 Certificate of Primary Education Examinations. Out of a total of 22,620 candidates who sat for the Examinations, 15,411 have passed, i.e., 68.13% as compared to 67.43% in 2008. The pass rate in the 28 Zone d'Education Prioritaire (ZEP) Schools is 35.3%. However, six ZEP Schools have attained a pass rate of 50% and above, and 11 have performed better than last year.

Cabinet has also taken note that an enquiry is being carried out on the misprint of the Examination Result Slips to situate responsibility and appropriate action would be initiated against those responsible.

3. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources would publish the National Curriculum Framework for the secondary education, which advocates an inclusive, integrated and comprehensive approach to education and provides students with a strong foundation for lifelong learning while instilling the knowledge and skills required to adapt to an ever changing world. The Framework lays down the overarching learning outcomes for secondary education and the specific learning outcomes of each domain of learning. The Framework also recommends that both formal and informal assessments should be carried out on a regular and continuous basis. Regarding Special Educations Needs for needy students, the Framework recommends that those children should be provided with special attention so that they can fully integrate teaching and learning in the classroom.

4. Cabinet has taken note that, given the high rate of non-communicable diseases in Mauritius and the prevalence of obesity among school children due to low physical activity and bad eating habits, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources would, as from January 2010, implement a programme to enhance the teaching of health and physical education in primary schools in line with its strategic objectives to inculcate in school children the need to adopt a behaviour that would foster good health and promote lifelong wellness. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources has planned for January 2010 a webcasting session on the benefits of breathing and physical exercise.

5. Cabinet has taken note of steps taken by the Ministry of Youth and Sports and of the recommendations of a Steering Committee to boost up football in Mauritius, viz -

- (a) allocation of a home ground and a permanent training ground with facilities, such as lighting, cloakroom, upgraded playing surfaces and buildings, as well as maintenance equipment to each of the 24 National First and Second Division Football teams;
- (b) setting up of a junior team and its youth structure in each football club;
- (c) review of the calendar of football competition to align with football competition in the region, namely Madagascar, Seychelles and Reunion; and
- (d) the detection of emerging talents under the "Fédération Internationale de Football Association" Grassroots project for children under 11 years.

6. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the mission of the Minister of Youth and Sports from 03 to 06 December 2009 to Cape Town, South Africa where, during the drawing of lots for the 2010 World Cup Football Competition, he carried out a lobbying campaign to attract foreign qualified football teams for pre-competition training camps in Mauritius. The Minister had meetings with representatives of teams from, inter alia, Italy, France, England, Chile and Australia with a view to canvassing them to hold their pre-competition training camps in Mauritius.

7. Cabinet has taken note that the Minister of Health and Quality of Life would promulgate regulations to amend regulation 23 and the Fifty-Second Schedule of the Food Regulations 1999 to enable the prompt processing of applications for pre-market approval permits and to make the regulations compliant to the current Codex Alimentarius, i.e., guidelines on food standard.

8. Cabinet has taken note of the Operational Plan for the Prevention and Control of Chikungunya and Dengue developed by the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life to enhance surveillance, detection and control of the two diseases. The Plan sets out national protocols and standard operating procedures and defines the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders during the inter-epidemic and overt epidemic periods.

9. Cabinet has taken note of measures taken by the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life to restructure the Customer Care Services in hospitals with a view to ensuring an improved and a timely service to patients: a new Customer Care Service has been introduced at Dr A. G. Jeetoo Hospital as from Monday 7 December 2009, the number of Customer Care Points in Regional Hospitals increased and the staffing reinforced; directional signs and boards are also being installed at strategic places. A Customer Care Point is responsible for welcoming patients and their relatives, directing them to their respective wards/ departments, explaining hospital procedures, ensuring health, safety and well-being of patients and attending to complaints.

10. Cabinet has taken note that the draft Clinical Trials Bill, providing for the legal framework for the conduct of clinical trials for the purpose of discovering and verifying the effects of investigational medicinal products, would be circulated to the general public for comments and proposals prior to its finalization. The Bill, also, provides for the setting up of a Clinical Research Regulatory Council to be responsible for the grant, refusal, extension, review, suspension or cancellation of trial licences; an Ethics Committee to give opinion on any proposal to start a clinical trial; and a Pharmacovigilance Committee to collect, analyse and classify information on adverse events and reactions in relation to subjects involved in clinical trials and advise the Regulatory Council and the Ethics Committee accordingly.

11. Cabinet has taken note of arrangements made by the Ministry of Women's Rights, Child Development and Family Welfare for the implementation of the recommendations of an audit carried out on the existing services and care provided by the Family Support Bureaux and Shelters to victims of domestic violence. The main recommendations are, inter alia, –

- (a) the development of a Victim and Abuser Empowerment Policy to ensure that victims of domestic violence, as well as abusers and communities affected by the violence, receive support and rehabilitation;
- (b) the development of a quality assurance tool, with indicators, to ensure effective delivery of services by Shelters; and
- (c) the provision of training and employment opportunities to victims of domestic violence.

12. Cabinet has taken note that, during their visit from 21 to 28 November 2009, Dr Mervyn Druian, BDS, DGD, RCS, member of the British Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry, and Mrs Bernita Shelley, Dental Hygienist, trained 40 Dental Surgeons and 40 Dental Assistants on tooth whitening and dental hygiene. Dr Druian has assisted in the setting up of a School of Dental Hygiene in Mauritius, which would be operational as from January 2010.

Cabinet has further taken note that a survey carried out in 2009 has revealed that 90% children aged six and 70% children aged 12 have caries in their milk teeth. About 94% of adults are also affected by caries and about 73% by gum diseases.

13. Cabinet has taken note that, in the context of bilateral cooperation between Mauritius and France in the field of education, the “Académie de la Réunion”, the French Embassy in Mauritius and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources would, on 14 December 2009, sign a “Convention-Cadre de Coopération Educative” and an “Avenant 2010-2011” providing for exchange programmes and the technical modalities for the implementation of the different programmes pertaining to education and training.

14. Cabinet has taken note of the “Family Planning and Demographic Yearbook 2008” which provides general information on population, in regard to family planning, fertility rate, mortality rate, marriage and divorce, as well as health service points in Mauritius and Rodrigues.

Cabinet has further taken note that the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life is currently implementing the National Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy and Plan of Action 2009 – 2015 to strengthen reproductive health services, including family planning, with a view to addressing emerging maternal health issues.

15. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Mental Health Commission with Dr G. Bauljeewon, Regional Health Director of the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life, as Chairperson.
