

CABINET DECISIONS – 13 NOVEMBER 2009

1. Cabinet has agreed to the implementation of the Cyclone and Other Natural Disasters Scheme for 2009–2010, that has been prepared in collaboration with all stakeholders and incorporates the recommendations of the Fact Finding Committee on Ex-Lola Flooding chaired by Judge S. B. Domah. The Scheme sets out the roles and responsibilities of each organization involved in general preparedness, as well as during and in the aftermath of a cyclone, landslide, tsunami and torrential rains.

Cabinet has taken note that, following the personal intervention of Dr the Hon Navinchandra Ramgoolam, GCSK, FRCP, Prime Minister, vis-à-vis former President Clinton, an amount of US\$ 332,463 has been disbursed for the acquisition of equipment for the setting up of a Tsunami Early Warning and Response System. Cabinet has further taken note that a tsunami simulation exercise - *Indian Ocean Wave 09 Exercise* -, organized on 14 October 2009, by the Intergovernmental Coordination Group for the Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System for 18 countries around the Indian Ocean Rim, revealed that all stakeholders in Mauritius responded in a timely manner to the warnings issued by the Meteorological Services.

Cabinet has further taken note that, following the recommendations of the Ministerial Committee, set up to monitor the implementation of the Fact Finding Committee on Ex-Lola Flooding and chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Renewable Energy and Public Utilities, a Drains Management Committee has been put in place under the aegis of the Ministry of Local Government, Rodrigues and Outer Islands to, inter alia, monitor progress in the construction and maintenance of drains, ensure the effectiveness of land drainage projects and recommend preventive measures to mitigate flooding. The Drains Management Committee has already established a programme of work for the timely maintenance of drains in view of the forthcoming rainy season.

Cabinet has also taken note that, in assessing conditions for the issue of flood warnings, the Cyclone and Other Natural Disasters Committee has recommended that the 100 mm criterion would continue to be observed for torrential rains. However, flood warnings would be subject to the following, as appropriate, :-

- (a) the nature of the preceding rainfall;
- (b) the state of the rivers;
- (c) the underground water level;
- (d) the permeability of the soil;
- (e) the evacuation rate of accumulating water;
- (f) the prevailing weather conditions in the vicinity of Mauritius; and
- (g) any other such relevant factor.

2. Cabinet has taken note that, as recommended by the Fact Finding Committee on the Ex-Lola Flooding, a National Disaster Management Centre would be set up under the aegis of the Prime Minister's Office to take overall responsibility for the management of natural disasters in Mauritius. The Centre would be operational on a 24-hour basis and would be responsible, inter alia, for -

- (a) hazard mapping and risk assessment;
- (b) information management;
- (c) forecasting, early warning and information dissemination;
- (d) preparedness to respond to disasters;
- (e) emergency operations management;
- (f) long term disaster mitigation; and
- (g) management of post-disaster activities.

The existing Central Cyclone and Other Natural Disasters Committee would, however, continue to constitute the central system to supervise, monitor and coordinate the activities of other authorities and take critical decisions, as appropriate.

3. Cabinet has taken note of the list of names of cyclones, adopted by the World Meteorological Organisation, for use in the South-West Indian Ocean during the 2009-2010 Cyclone Season, viz.-

ANJA
BONGANI
CLEO
DAVID
EDZANI
FAMI
GELANE
HUBERT
IMANI
JOEL
KANJA
LUNDA
MOHONO
NIGEL
OLYMPE
PAMELA
QUENTIN
RAHIM
SAVANA
THEMBA
UYAPO
VIVIANE
WALTER
XANGY
YEMURAI
ZANELE

4. Cabinet has taken note that an electronic filing system and a case management system, also known as The e-Judiciary, would be implemented at the Judiciary aiming, inter alia, at –

- (a) improving case management;
- (b) speeding up dispute settling with a view to having commercial and civil cases heard and disposed of within 100 days;
- (c) improving investment climate and country image as an attractive destination to do business;
- (d) reducing considerably the time spent on court premises by court users and freeing court space and man hours that may be devoted to trial;
- (e) decreasing the backlog of cases; and
- (f) decreasing the cost of claims associated with disputes.

5. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the Third Meeting at Senior Officials' level between Mauritius and France on the co-management of Tromelin held on 27 and 28 October 2009 in Reunion Island. The Meeting finalised an agreement providing for the establishment of a regime of economic, scientific and environmental co-management of Tromelin Island, as well as its territorial sea and exclusive economic zone. The co-management regime would initially cover –

- (a) protection of the marine environment, conservation and promotion of terrestrial and marine biodiversity;
- (b) fisheries;
- (c) monitoring of natural phenomena in the region; and
- (d) archaeological research.

6. Cabinet has taken note that Mr Ben Buntipilly, former Assistant Superintendent of Police, has been appointed Special Adviser to the Prime Minister on Road Safety Matters. He would be responsible for the implementation of new rigorous measures in order to improve safety on our roads.

7. Cabinet has taken note that a national sensitization campaign to promote the utilization of nets to protect fruit trees against bats, was launched on 18 October 2009. Cabinet has further taken note that with a view to encouraging the use of such nets, the Ministry of Agro Industry, Food Production and Security would introduce a scheme to assist fruit tree growers (backyard and small orchards) to purchase nets for the protection of fruits against bats. A grant, representing 75% of the cost of nets for a maximum of five trees, would be given to them for the purchase of the nets.

8. Cabinet has taken note of arrangements being made by the Minister for Consumer Protection and Citizens Charter to ensure that toys imported during the end-of-the-year festive period complied with the Toys (Safety) Regulations in order not to compromise the safety and health of children.

9. Cabinet has agreed to the introduction into the National Assembly of the Mauritius Blood Service Bill, providing for the establishment of the Mauritius Blood Service which would, inter alia, –

- (a) establish and operate an effective and sustainable national blood service;
- (b) promote blood donation and recruit and retain blood donors;
- (c) collect, test and process blood and blood products;
- (d) ensure a safe and adequate supply of blood and blood products;
- (e) promote research and training in the field of transfusion medicine; and
- (f) establish a stem cell bank.

10. Cabinet has taken note of the National Plan of Action to prevent, deter and eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing, prepared by the Ministry of Agro Industry, Food Production and Security in line with the FAO International Plan of Action, with a view to strengthening fisheries governance at national and regional levels. The Plan of Action addresses, among others, the following –

- (a) responsibility to ensure that Mauritian nationals do not support or engage in Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing;
- (b) the responsibility of the Flag State, Coastal State and Port State to ensure an effective monitoring, control and surveillance system; and
- (c) trade-related measures, such as Catch Documentation Schemes and preventing fish caught by vessels engaged in Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing being landed in or imported by Mauritius.

11. Cabinet has taken note that, in line with the commitment of Government to reinforce the institution of the family, the Ministry of Women's Rights, Child Development and Family Welfare has developed a National Action Plan on the Family for the implementation of programmes and activities enunciated in the National Policy Paper on the Family with a view to achieving improved and sustainable conditions conducive to the development and protection of children and the elderly based on principles of democracy, human rights, gender equality and the elimination of violence in the family.

12. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the second round of negotiations on the Free Trade Agreement between Mauritius and Turkey held in Ankara on 02 and 03 November 2009. The list of concessions to be granted by both countries in the context of the Free Trade Agreement was reviewed and the requests of Mauritius to include products, such as fabrics, cut flowers, prepared and preserved fish, pasta, jewellery and sugar, were discussed.

13. Cabinet has taken note that, in line with measures announced in Budget Speech 2009, the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare & Reform Institutions would promulgate the Social Aid (Amendment No. 4) Regulations, the Social Aid (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations and the Unemployment Hardship Relief (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations to provide for an increase in the rates of Social Aid and Unemployment Hardship Relief as from July 2009.

14. Cabinet has taken note of the 2009 Report on "Statistics in Mauritius: A Gender Approach". The main findings are as follows –

- (a) The major cause of death among women and men in 2008 was diabetes. Heart diseases accounted for 19.5% of deaths among men and 19.4% among women.
- (b) Diseases specific to women, such as "breast cancer", "cervical cancer" and "complication of pregnancy and childbirth", resulted in 4.3% of deaths among women. On the other hand, "prostate cancer" was the cause of 1.2% of deaths among the males.
- (c) Divorce increased from 1,302 in 2007 to 1,569 in 2008.

- (d) As regards performance in examinations, girls do better than boys. In 2008, the pass rates for the Certificate of Primary Education were 73.2% for girls as compared to 62.1% for boys. For the School Certificate Examinations, girls recorded a higher pass rate, i.e., 80.9% against 71.5% for boys. The pass rate for girls at the Higher School Certificate was 82.2% against 74.4% for boys.
- (e) Statistics show that women are less economically active compared to men. In 2008, only 42% of women aged 16 years and above were active against 76% among men of the same age.
- (f) The total number of cases (new and follow up) registered at the Family Support Bureaux has decreased from 17,366 in 2007 to 16,743 in 2008, i.e., by 3.6%. The main cause of family problems identified in new adult cases reported in 2008 was physical assault followed by verbal assault, alcoholism, extra martial affairs and interference of in-laws.

15. Cabinet has taken note that the UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training would hold an Expert Validation Meeting in Mauritius on 14 and 15 December 2009 with a view to imparting experiences and practices on technical and vocational education and training. The Centre assists Member States of UNESCO to strengthen, upgrade and integrate Technical and Vocational Education and Training Systems as part of the Global Education for All Campaign, as well as to align Technical and Vocational Education and Training with sustainable development. Participants from 20 African countries would attend the Meeting.

16. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the visit of the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare & Reform Institutions to Reunion Island on 04 and 05 November 2009 in the context of an exchange programme in the disability sector. The Minister visited institutions as well as educational and cultural centres using specialised equipment in the provision of services to disabled persons. She also held discussions with institutions providing socio-medical care to disabled persons and training to personnel operating in the disability sector. A cooperation programme in the field of disability has also been finalised between the "Mairie" of St Pierre and the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare & Reform Institutions.

17. Cabinet has taken note that Dr Mervyn Druian, BDS, DGD, RCS, would visit Mauritius from 21 to 27 November 2009. Dr Druian, a well-known dentist in the United Kingdom with more than 30 years experience in dentistry, would hold lectures/workshops, followed by hands-on training in tooth whitening, for the benefit of Dental Surgeons and Dental Assistants from the public and private sectors.
