

CABINET DECISIONS – 16 OCTOBER 2009

1. With a view to alleviating difficulties experienced by small businesses, Cabinet has agreed to the Landlord and Tenant Act, which aims at deregulating the letting of business premises after 2012, being amended to provide for the yearly increase in the rental of business premises to be 10% instead of 15% of the difference between the market rent and the actual rent being paid and for the moratorium to be extended to 31 December 2017.

2. Cabinet has taken note of developments in the implementation of the Land-Based Oceanic Industry Project, which aims at harnessing deep seawater for commercial exploitation. In the first phase, which is expected to be implemented by December 2010, the coldness of the seawater at 1,000m would be exploited for the air-conditioning of a data centre infrastructure of 10,000 square metres.

3. Cabinet has agreed to the Committee, set up under the chairmanship of the Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping to look into Road Safety, to also consider the representations of heavy vehicles operators following the prohibition to use the motorway M1 northbound and southbound and other main roads in between 6 30 hours and 9 30 hours on weekdays.

4. Cabinet has agreed to the construction by the NHDC of 44 housing units at Military Road, Port Louis for the lower middle income group. The Mauritius Housing Company Ltd. would advertise and market the project.

5. Cabinet has taken note of the Intellectual Property Development Plan for Mauritius prepared by the World Intellectual Property Organisation, at the request of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, in view of the growing importance of Intellectual Property in promoting innovation, creativity and transfer of technology. The recommendations contained in the Plan, include –

- (a) the establishment of a National Intellectual Property Policy, a National Policy Forum and an Intellectual Property Office;
- (b) the revision of certain legislation to strengthen Intellectual Property laws and its enforcement;
- (c) the sensitization of the public on Intellectual Property; and
- (d) the computerisation of Registries for trademarks, industrial designs, patents and other forms of Intellectual Property.

6. Cabinet has taken note of the setting up of a Nutrition Task Force, under the chair of Dr (Mrs) Prity Pugo-Gunsam, Senior Lecturer at the University of Mauritius, to monitor the implementation of the National Plan of Action for Nutrition, which contains recommendations regarding new eating habits and consumption of healthy foods, as well as the launching of a Fruit and Vegetable Promotion Initiative. The Task Force would make recommendations on the current Plan, and submit a yearly review Report, taking into consideration progress in the field of nutrition and on the nutritional status of the Mauritian population.

7. Cabinet has taken note of the prevalence of a highly contagious respiratory disease affecting goats in Mauritius and of action initiated by the Ministry of Agro Industry, Food Production and Security to prevent the spread of the disease. The Division of Veterinary Services of that Ministry is currently administrating appropriate treatment and would shortly undertake a national vaccination programme.

8. Cabinet has taken note that, in the context of the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement with India, the Minister of Agro Industry, Food Production and Security and the High Commissioner of India have signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Plant Health Cooperation aiming at promoting regulatory and technical cooperation in the field of plant health, fostering cooperation on plant protection issues with a view to preventing the spread of quarantine pests and facilitating the bilateral trade in plants, fruits and planting materials.

9. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Agro Industry, Food Production and Security and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) would launch the Marine and Agricultural Resources Support (MARS) Programme on 20 October in Rodrigues and on 21 October 2009 in Mauritius. The Programme aims at implementing the pro-poor reform agenda of Government within the framework of the Medium Term Expenditure Framework and the Programme Based Budgeting by -

- (a) managing the fish resources to result in sustainable and profitable fisheries;
- (b) improving sustainably the livelihood of coastal communities threatened by over-exploitation of the marine environment; and
- (c) assisting rural households, including smallholders cane planters, to diversify their on-and-off farm-income-generating enterprises and improve their prospect for gainful employment.

About 20,500 households, particularly in rural regions, small scale fishermen including the octopus fisherwomen in Rodrigues, cane planters, retrenched textile workers, unemployed youth and women, and inmates of the low-security prison farm, would benefit directly from the MARS Programme.

10. Cabinet has taken note that, following the launching by Mrs Hillary Clinton, US Secretary of State, of negotiations on the Trade and Investment Framework Agreement with the US in August last, a first round of negotiations on the Bilateral Investment Treaty would be held in Washington in November 2009. The conclusion of the bilateral investment treaties would provide legal protection and security to investors, as well as create a more conducive environment for investment flows from the US into Mauritius.

11. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the Eighth Round of the Mauritius-Pakistan Joint Working Group, a mechanism for dialogue to dynamise trade and investment between the two countries, held from 5 to 7 October 2009 in Port Louis. The Joint Working Group -

- (a) took note of progress made in the implementation of the Preferential Trade Agreement;
- (b) agreed to look into ways and means of synergizing our positions, particularly in the textile and apparel sector, with a view to tapping third country markets, such as SADC, COMESA, EU, and US; and
- (c) discussed trade in services and on possible triangular cooperation.

The following documents were signed during the Meeting –

- (a) Agreement on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Customs Matters; and
- (b) A Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the Fisheries Sector.

Cabinet has further taken note that the next meeting of the Joint Working Group would be held in February 2010 in Islamabad, Pakistan.

12. Cabinet has taken note that the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Renewable Energy and Public Utilities would promulgate the Radiation Protection (Registration of Radiation Sources and Facilities) Regulations 2009 to consolidate and maintain an updated registry of all radiation sources and radiation facilities in the country. The proposed Regulations would require all owners of radiation sources or radiation facilities to apply for the registration of such sources or facilities within 30 days from the date of acquisition of the source or the date on which the facility becomes operational. The Regulations would come into force on 16 November 2009.

13. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Empowerment to -

- (a) Turkey, where he participated in the IMF/World Bank Annual Meetings, which discussed mainly the road to economic recovery; and
- (b) Cyprus, where he participated in the Commonwealth Finance Ministers Meeting, which discussed, *inter alia*, the economic and financial crisis, the role of the International Financial Centres and the review of the Bretton Woods institutions. Mauritius was commended for its achievements while keeping the fiscal deficit and the debt to GDP ratio at sustainable level.

In the margins of the Meetings, the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Empowerment had bilateral meetings with eminent personalities, including -

- (a) Mr Murilo Portugal, Deputy Managing Director of the IMF;
- (b) Mrs Okonjo-Iweala, Managing Director of the World Bank; and
- (c) Mr Thierry Tanoh, Vice-President at the International Finance Corporation.

Cabinet has further taken note that, after being selected to host the COMESA Infrastructure Fund, Mauritius has now been chosen by the International Monetary Fund to host the AFRITAC South, together with the Regional Multidisciplinary Centre of Excellence. These two international bodies would position Mauritius both as a Centre of Excellence and as a Knowledge Centre.

14. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the mission of the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare & Reform Institutions to the United Kingdom on 5 and 6 October 2009 in the context of the collaboration with the Leonard Cheshire Disability and her Ministry. During her mission, the Minister -

- (a) visited disability institutions dealing with Respite Care Programme;
- (b) held discussions with authorities/experts on the management of day-care services for disabled persons and the operation of Respite Care Services; and
- (c) explored possibilities for the development of partnership programmes in the field of disability.

Cabinet has further taken note that the Leonard Cheshire Disability has agreed to support Mauritius in the designing of a Respite Care Centre at La Marie, Vacoas, conducting training programmes for carers and the implementation of the database project for the disability sector.

15. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the mission of the Minister of Agro Industry, Food Production and Security to Morocco from 3 to 7 October 2009, where he participated in the World Seafood Congress which had as theme "**Towards Building Trust in International Seafood Trade and Market Access.**" The Congress focused on sustainability, social responsibility and profitability of the seafood industry and the main issues addressed included -

- (a) Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing;
- (b) EU Catch Document Scheme which would come into force on 01 January 2010;
- (c) Standards and Certification focusing on Sanitary and Phyto-sanitary requirements; and
- (d) Certification and eco-labelling.

In the margins of the mission, the Minister of Agro Industry, Food Production and Security discussed possibilities of cooperation in the field of fisheries with –

- (a) Mr Aziz Akhennouch, Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries of the Kingdom of Morocco; and
- (b) Mr Ahmidou Ouaouich, UNIDO representative based in Vienna, Austria.

16. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Information and Communication Technology to –

- (a) Geneva, where he participated in the International Telecommunication Union Telecom World 2009 Event, which discussed the reach and role of telecommunications and ICT in areas of societal change, such as the digital divide, climate change and disaster relief; and
- (b) Libya, where he participated in the 13th Ministerial Meeting of the Standing Commission on Afro-Arab Cooperation, which looked into ways and means to boost the Afro-Arab work 'demarche' and new cooperation frameworks facing the Afro-Arab world in the cultural, economic and political fields.

In the margins of the meetings, the Minister of Information and Communication Technology had bilateral meetings with his counterparts from Egypt, India, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Federal Republic of Nigeria and Azerbaijan.

17. Cabinet has taken note of the appointment of Mr Dhananjay Ramful, Barrister-at-Law, as Head of the Conciliation Service of the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms, set up under the Employment Relations Act 2008.

18. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life, in collaboration with the Baker IDI Heart and Diabetes Institute of Australia, the Department of Endocrinology and Metabolism, St Mary's Hospital, UK and the National Public Institute, Helsinki, Finland, would carry out a Non-Communicable Diseases Survey for Rodrigues in November/December 2009. The Survey would help determine the prevalence of diabetes and the other Non-Communicable Diseases in Rodrigues and ascertain whether the measures initiated over the past years to address the NCD-related problems have been effective. The Survey would target Rodriguans aged between 20 and 74 years and include a study on physical activity, sedentary behaviour and sleeping habits.

19. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Board of Trustees of the Mauritius Telugu Cultural Centre Trust with Mr Adinarain Hutchamah as Chairperson.
