

CABINET DECISIONS – 4 OCTOBER 2013

1. Cabinet has taken note that Mauritius ranks 33 out of 91 countries assessed, and first in Africa, in the Global Age Watch Index 2013. It ranks 7 for income security in view of the universal non-contributory pension for people over 60 since 1958. Mauritius also ranks the highest in Africa for its enabling environment and over feeling satisfied with their civil freedom. The Index measures the quality of life and well-being of elderly persons in terms of income security, health status, work and education opportunities, and enabling social environment.

2. Taking into consideration the successful implementation of the Fruit Protection Scheme, and that the number of bats is likely to increase, Cabinet has agreed to the Fruit Protection Scheme for the fruit seasons 2013-2015 being amended to allow fruit growers to purchase up to 10 nets at 25% of the cost price and to extend the Scheme to Rodrigues. Moreover, the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security is implementing additional measures to protect fruit trees against damages caused by bats, namely restoration of native forests to provide native fruits to bats in their roosting sites, and planting of trees, such as 'jackfruit' and other fruit trees, to act as bat trap crops at Bras d'Eau National Park, along river reserves, mountain reserves, and around commercial orchards.

3. Cabinet has taken note of shortcomings identified in the original design of Bagatelle Dam and agreed to proceed with the construction of the Dam with changes in the design and structure to improve and consolidate its safety. Government would declare dispute against the Consultant as it considers that there has been *faute lourde* on his part and that he should be held liable for costs and claims by the Contractor.

In the course of a meeting which Dr the Hon A. Boolell, GOSK, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, had with his Chinese counterpart in the margins of the United Nations General Assembly, he has requested the Chinese Government to consider the request of the Government of Mauritius for additional concessionary loans to complete the Bagatelle Dam Project within the agreed time line. The construction of the Dam is expected to be completed in 2016.

4. Cabinet has agreed to the introduction of the Food and Agricultural Research and Extension Institute Bill in the National Assembly. The object of the Bill is to provide for the establishment of the Food and Agricultural Research and Extension Institute that would take over the functions and powers of the Food and Agricultural Research Council, as well as the Agricultural Research and Extension Unit. The Institute would be responsible, amongst others, for –

- (a) introducing, developing and promoting novel technologies in the food and non-sugar agricultural sector;
- (b) conducting research in non-sugar agriculture, food production and forestry;
- (c) promoting dissemination and practical application of the results of researches;
and

- (d) setting up and managing research stations, model farms, greenhouses, hydroponic centres and other infrastructure for the purposes of promoting food and non-sugar agricultural technologies.

5. Cabinet has taken note that, in accordance with the initiative of the Government of UAE to provide school uniforms to 1 million needy children around the world, and in view of the excellent interpersonal relationship between Dr the Hon Navinchandra Ramgoolam, GCSK, FRCP, Prime Minister, and His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed, President of the UAE and Ruler of Abu Dhabi, and His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Abu Dhabi, the UAE Red Crescent would launch the charity initiative through the distribution of 50,000 school uniforms to needy children in Mauritius.

6. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a Cooperation Agreement between the Republic of Mauritius and the Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of St. John of Jerusalem of Rhodes and of Malta. The Cooperation Agreement would provide, *inter alia*, for –

- (a) strengthening of the friendly relations between the Republic of Mauritius and the Sovereign Order of Malta;
- (b) facilitating the humanitarian work effected by the Order of Malta in Mauritius;
- (c) general assistance to improve public health service; and
- (d) opening of a Chancery in Mauritius.

7. Cabinet has agreed to the introduction of the Supplementary Appropriation (2012) Bill in the National Assembly. The object of the Bill is to provide for the supplementary appropriation, by programmes, of the expenditure of Mauritius, in respect of the financial year 2012, in excess of the expenditure appropriated for certain programmes by the Appropriation (2012) Act 2011.

8. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding in the field of Tourism between the Government of the Republic of Mauritius and the Government of the Republic of Gabon. The Memorandum of Understanding would provide, *inter alia*, for cooperation in -

- (a) developing common projects aiming at promoting international tourism, and tourism between both countries through the organisation of promotional campaigns, participation in tourism fairs and forums;
- (b) identifying and preserving tourist attractions, including cultural heritage and other natural sites, flora and fauna in the respective countries;
- (c) capacity building in the tourism sector through study tours and exchange programmes; and

- (d) collaboration between tour operators and professionals of the tourism sector for the promotion of tourism products in both countries.

The Memorandum of Understanding would be signed during the forthcoming visit of the President of the Republic of Gabon.

9. Cabinet has agreed to the preparation of a new planning legislation to replace the Planning and Development Act 2004 to, amongst others, address new concerns and challenges relating to planning and land development issues, rationalize the plan making, approval and review process, and establish new provisions to pave the way for innovative planning practices to answer important concerns around spatial planning.

10. Cabinet has taken note that the Minister of Health and Quality of Life would make Regulations under the Dangerous Drugs Act 2000 to include Synthetic Cannabinoids and their derivatives, i.e., Magic Dragon also known as Black Mamba, in the list of prohibited substances and preparations.

11. Cabinet has taken note that Professor David Khayat, Professor of Oncology of Pierre and Marie Curie University and Head of the Department of Medical Oncology of the Groupe Hospitalier Pitié-Salpêtrière, Paris, France, would be on official visit to Mauritius from 11 to 13 October 2013. He will carry out an assessment of the situation of cancer in Mauritius and make recommendations with a view to upgrading cancer care in Mauritius.

12. Cabinet has agreed to the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities promulgating regulations under the Radiation Protection Act 2003 to prescribe fees for the issuance and renewal of licences by the Radiation Protection Authority to radiation users operating in Mauritius and to enable radiation users to have a common understanding of the term "owner of a facility".

13. Cabinet has taken note that the SADC Meeting of Ministers of Education and Training has approved of the University of Mauritius hosting the Pan-African University Institute of Space Sciences. The hosting of the Institute would further encourage research in the application of space technology in flora and fauna conservation, forestry, tourism, emergency management, land use and planning, and water resources management, as well as promote Mauritius as a centre of research and knowledge.

14. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology, in collaboration with Symantec and the National Computer Board, would organise a Cyber Security Awareness Campaign to position Mauritius as a role model on matters relating to computer misuse and cyber security. Activities would include -

- (a) the organization of a Conference on Cyber Security and Data Protection;
- (b) meetings with Parents Teachers Associations on Parental Control Technology, with emphasis on parental control on the use of computers;
- (c) mounting of awareness campaigns on computer misuse and best practices; and
- (d) the organization of a road show during the month of October.

15. Cabinet has taken note that Mrs Ayesha Jeewa, Chairperson of the Board of the Open University of Mauritius, has been elected President of the Distance Education Association of Southern Africa. The main objective of the Association is to enable members to share information, collaborate in obtaining and developing quality distance education courses in identified areas of need, and organize relevant professional development activities.

16. Cabinet has taken note that, for the period January to August 2013 as compared to the corresponding period in 2012, the value of exports of the Export Oriented Enterprises Sector has increased from Rs30.54 billion to Rs31.47 billion, i.e., by 3.0%. Increase has been recorded in yarn and fabrics (+20.9%), shirts (+7.0%), fish and fish preparations (+13.2%), precious and semi-precious stones (+47.3%), and medical devices (+4.8%).

Cabinet has also taken note that medical devices manufactured in Mauritius are exported around the world.

17. Cabinet has taken note of the activities that would be organized by the Ministry of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment, in collaboration with the National Empowerment Foundation, in the context of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty. The theme selected this year is **Working together towards a world without discrimination; Building on the experience and knowledge of people in extreme poverty.**

18. Cabinet has taken note that the Mauritius Accreditation Service (MAURITAS) has been admitted as a full Member of the African Accreditation Cooperation (AFRAC) and Mr Robin Gopee, Director of MAURITAS, has been elected as Vice-Chairperson of AFRAC for a second term of two years. The objective of AFRAC is to support trade in Africa and enhance global market access by removing Technical Barriers to Trade and operate and manage a Multilateral Mutual Recognition Arrangement that would be recognized by both the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation and the International Accreditation Forum.

19. Cabinet has taken note of the launching of the Public Service Excellence Award 2013 by the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms. The theme chosen for this year's edition is **Maurice Ile Durable - Adoption of modernised methods for a green Civil Service.**

20. Cabinet has taken note of the activities that would be organised by the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life to mark the World Mental Health Day, observed on 10 October, namely –

- (a) cultural programme by patients and staff of Brown Sequard Mental Health Care Centre;
- (b) exhibition of creative activities of patients by the Occupational Therapy Unit of Brown Sequard Mental Health Care Centre; and
- (c) organization of continuous medical and nursing education on the issue of healthy ageing in all regional hospitals.

21. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions to the UK. The main purpose of the mission was to sign a Memorandum of Understanding in the field of training and employment of Disabled Persons with Reemploy UK, and the Leonard Cheshire UK. Reemploy UK has agreed, amongst others, to support the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions to look at caseload management database for disabled people and strengthen resource and capacity building. She also had meetings with –

- (a) Mr Tom Wright, Chief Executive of Age UK on the updating of the National Policy Paper on Ageing;
- (b) Mr Jeremy Moore, Director of the Office for Disability Issues on the preparation of a National Strategy for the Disabled; and
- (c) Mr Shane Gallagher, Director General of the Social Care, Local Government and Care Partnership Division of the Ministry of Health on Social Care to ageing population.

22. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent missions of the Minister of Tourism and Leisure to Reunion Island and France. In Reunion Island, the Minister participated in the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) Conference on Sustainable Development of Tourism, jointly organized with the French Government. The Minister had discussions with the UNWTO Secretary General on avenues of collaboration especially in the field of training. The UNWTO has agreed to provide technical assistance to the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority to conduct a workshop on Chinese tourists on 17 October 2013.

In France, the Minister participated in the International French Travel Market Top Resa and had discussions with Mrs Sylvia Pinel, Minister of Crafts, Commerce and Tourism and meetings with Tour Operators/Travel Agencies.
