

CABINET DECISIONS – 13 SEPTEMBER 2013

1. Cabinet has taken note that the first Tripartite Meeting for the determination of the quantum of salary compensation to be paid to workers of the private sector for the year 2014, would be held under the chairmanship of the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development on 18 September 2013.

2. Cabinet has agreed to the Cooperatives Act being amended to reinforce business ethics in the conduct of the activities of cooperative societies. Various loopholes and practical impediments have been noted in the implementation of the Cooperatives Act, which was promulgated in 2005, to provide for a legal framework conducive for cooperative societies to adapt to changes in the socio-economic environment. The amendments to the Act would, inter alia, provide for -

- (a) the possibility of strategic alliance/tie ups between cooperative societies and business groups, local and international, for injection of matching capital and transfer of know-how;
- (b) the registration of a tertiary society as the apex body;
- (c) the consolidation of democratic control and good governance; and
- (d) the creation of an Education Fund to cater for the education and training of members and employees of cooperative societies.

3. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a Tax Information Exchange Agreement and an Inter-Governmental Agreement with the USA for the implementation of the Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act, enacted by the USA in March 2010, and to allow the Financial Services Sector to maintain its global competitiveness. The main objective of the Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act is to identify US citizens behind foreign financial holdings and communicate their investment information, i.e., name, address, account number, account balance and income derived from such investments, to the US Internal Revenue Service. According to the IMF 2011 Coordinated Portfolio Investment Survey and the Coordinated Direct Investment Survey, around USD 12 billion were invested from the USA through Mauritius, and around USD 4.2 billion into the USA through the local Global Business Sector.

4. Cabinet has taken note that the Commonwealth of Learning would assist the Open University of Mauritius in capacity building. In this context, three training workshops would be held and cover, amongst others, the following topics -

- (a) essential concepts of e-learning;
- (b) planning and designing/content creation for online learning;
- (c) authoring for online teaching and learning;
- (d) learning management and delivery; and
- (e) leveraging social networks.

5. Cabinet has taken note that the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions and the Prosecutor General's Office of the Russian Federation would sign a Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation and exchange of expertise in the field of crime combatting and human rights. The Memorandum of Understanding provides for cooperation, amongst others, in the following areas –

- (a) extradition and mutual legal assistance in criminal and other matters;
- (b) exchange of information on the Legal System and Legislation of their States, law making and law enforcement activities on issues of professional interest; and;
- (c) joint scientific research, organization of conferences and workshops on issues relevant to the activities of the two bodies.

The Memorandum of Understanding would help investigate into malpractices relating from the routing of fund from Russia through our Financial Sector.

6. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the 10th Session of the Seychelles-Mauritius Joint Commission on Bilateral Cooperation held in Mauritius on 4 and 5 September 2013. Agreement has been reached, amongst others, on the following areas of cooperation –

- (a) employment of Mauritian professionals in sectors where the Seychelles is experiencing human power shortages, particularly, in the medical field (doctors, nurses), the financial sector (accountants), the legal field (lawyers) and education (teachers);
- (b) connecting Mauritius to the SEAS Submarine Cable (linking South-East Asia, Middle East, Western Europe);
- (c) signing of an Investment Promotion Protection Agreement in the context of an effort to create an appropriate environment conducive across border flows of trade and investments;
- (d) collaboration on the blue economy initiative by promoting the creation of a privately owned Seychelles-Mauritius tuna fishing fleet; and
- (e) collaboration on joint patrol of our marine mass to reduce illegal fishing.

7. Cabinet has taken note that FDI inflows for the first Semester of 2013 amounted to Rs4.736 billion as compared to Rs4.077 billion for the same period of 2012, i.e., an increase of 16%.

8. Cabinet has taken note that 73,454 tourists visited Mauritius in the month of August 2013 as compared to 65,896 in August 2012, i.e, an increase of 11.5%. Arrivals for the period January to August 2013 were 622,492 as compared to 609,215 in 2012, i.e., an increase of 2.2%.

9. Cabinet has agreed, in the context of the COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite Free Trade Area (FTA) negotiations, to the extension of the 90% reduction in duty, subject to reciprocity, to Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea and Ethiopia, which are not yet party to the COMESA FTA or the SADC FTA.

10. Cabinet has taken note that GML Mauritius, along with six other companies on the African continent, has been shortlisted for this year's African Business Awards in the category African Business of the Year.

11. Cabinet has taken note that the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands would promulgate the Local Government (Registration of Recyclers and Exporters) Regulations, to provide for the licensing and regulation of private operators in the field of waste management, including hazardous waste management. The exercise would enable the Ministry of Local Government and Outer Islands to keep a register of recyclers and exporters, build up a database on the types and quantities of wastes dismantled and recycled, either locally or abroad, formulate appropriate policies and strategies to enhance recycling activities in Mauritius, and ensure that the activities are carried out in environmentally safe conditions. Any person failing to comply with the provisions of the regulations shall, on conviction, be liable to a fine not exceeding Rs25,000.

12. Cabinet has agreed to the setting up of a Post Graduate Medical Education Board and a Post Graduate Education Board for Dental Specialists with a view to ensuring that only those professionals with adequate knowledge, skills and experience are registered as specialists by the Medical Council and the Dental Council. The main functions of the two Boards would be, amongst others, to consider and advise the Medical Council and the Dental Council on the registration of specialists, and pronounce on matters relating to recognition and equivalence to post graduate medical/dental qualifications.

13. Cabinet has taken note of the modalities for the conduct of examinations for the registration of general medical practitioners and dental surgeons. Examinations, under the supervision of the National Board of Examinations of India, would be held twice a year, i.e., on the last Sunday of March and last Sunday of September, at the same material time that the examinations are being held in India. A general medical practitioner or a dental surgeon would be exempted from undergoing the examinations where he is registered with the regulatory body of the country where he was practising immediately before he applies for registration in Mauritius, and he has practised for the prescribed minimum number of years in that country.

14. Cabinet has taken note that the Minister of Health and Quality of Life would promulgate regulations under the Medical Council Act to exempt a non-citizen seeking temporary registration as general practitioner under the Medical Council Act and as dental surgeon under the Dental Council Act, from taking examinations as stipulated in the Act, provided he establishes, to the satisfaction of the Medical Council and the Dental Council, that –

- (a) he is duly registered as a general practitioner or dental surgeon with the regulatory body of the country where he has practised; and
- (b) he has practised as general practitioner or dental surgeon for the prescribed number of years.

15. Cabinet has taken note that, in the context of the International Day of the Preservation of the Ozone Layer, commemorated on 16 September, the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development would organise the following activities –

- (a) a march in collaboration with the Municipal Town Council of Vacoas/Phoenix to promote a “Chain of Friendship”;
- (b) a workshop on air conditioning and refrigeration to facilitate the smooth transition from the use of Hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs) to Hydrocarbon Technology;
- (c) production and distribution of a short film on ozone protection; and
- (d) an awareness campaign on the Protection of the Ozone layer.

16. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development is organising the following activities to mark the ‘Clean Up The World 2013’, –

- (a) a sensitization campaign on the importance of cleanliness;
- (b) a national ‘Clean Up Campaign’ with the support of the Ministry of Local Government and Outer Islands and the local authorities;
- (c) promotion of waste recycling at Shopping Malls; and
- (d) launching of the Waste Segregation Project.

The theme would be **“Our Place... Our Planet... Our Responsibility”**.

17. Cabinet has taken note that, in the context of World Heart Day 2013, the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life would mount a sensitization campaign, hold talks in Community Centres, Women Centres, Social Welfare Centres, Elderly Day Care Centres and at Schools on cardiovascular disease, and carry out screening for cardiovascular diseases on targeted high risk groups. The World Heart Day would be observed on 29 September, 2013, and to mark the event emphasis would be laid on the slogan **“a life-course approach to the prevention and control of cardiovascular disease with a focus on women and children”**.

According to the World Health Organization, cardiovascular disease accounts for about 17.3 million deaths annually in the world. It is expected that, by the year 2030, more than 23 million people would die from cardiovascular diseases annually. In Mauritius, following aggressive campaigns carried out by the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life, admissions due to cardiovascular diseases in Government hospitals have decreased from 10.4% in 2005 to 9.5% in 2012, and mortality due to heart diseases from 22.8% in 2005 to 18.1% in 2012.

18. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development to Barbados where he participated in the Inter-Regional Preparatory Meeting for the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS). The objects of the Meeting were, amongst others, to:

- (a) take stock of achievements made over the last 20 years and provide an opportunity to showcase SIDS' progress since 1994;
- (b) examine new and emerging challenges and opportunities for the sustainable development of SIDS; and
- (c) address and identify common objectives and priorities for SIDS that should be considered in the elaboration of the Post – 2015 UN development agenda.

In the margins of the Conference, the Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development had a bilateral meeting with Hon David C. Estwick, Minister of Agriculture, Food, Fisheries and Water Resource Management of Barbados on bilateral issues, and Mr Wu Hongbo, UN Under Secretary General for Economic and Social Affairs, on the MID Policy Strategy and Action Plan.

19. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Fisheries to Vietnam where a Tuna Purse Seiner was launched and he took stock of the Vietnamese fisheries management concepts, development of its fishery industry and its strategies relating to aquaculture practices. The Purse Seiner has been named “Belle Rive”, the birth place of the Father of the Nation, Sir Seewoosagar Ramgoolam. “Belle Rive” is expected in Port Louis on 20 September 2013 when she would embark fishermen and all associated logistics for its first fishing campaign.

She would be back to Port Louis on 20 November 2013 to unload its catch to the newly built processing plant “Tuna Processing Services Indian Ocean”, with an investment of Rs130 million. Another purse seiner called “Belle Ile” is expected in Port Louis by December 2013. Three additional purse seiners would join the fleet in the next two years.

20. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Health and Quality of Life to the Republic of Congo where he attended the 63rd Session of the World Health Organisation Regional Committee for Africa. The issues that were discussed, include the following :

- (a) Addressing the Challenges of Women’s Health in Africa;
- (b) Healthy Ageing in the African Region;
- (c) Utilising e-health Solutions to improve National Systems in the African Region;
- (d) Regional Strategy on Neglected Tropical Diseases in the WHO African Region;
- (e) The World Health Organisation Consolidated Guidelines on the use of antiretroviral drugs for treating and preventing HIV infection; and
- (f) Enhancing the role of Traditional Medicine in the Health Systems.

21. Cabinet has taken note that the second edition of the Mauritius International Trade Expo (MAITEX) was held from 22 to 24 August 2013 at the Swami Vivekananda International Convention Centre.

110 local companies exhibited a wide range of products from sectors, such as Textiles and Fashion, Agro-Industry, Light Engineering and Services.

Some 213 foreign visitors from 19 countries visited the exhibition and included high profile companies like Hilton International, Foschini, Fashion World, Puma and Guess, among others.

The value of orders from foreign buyers in the immediate wake of MAITEX 2013 is estimated to be Rs400 million.
