

## **CABINET DECISIONS – 15 NOVEMBER 2013**

1. Cabinet has taken note that the procedures for the enrolment of foreign students in higher education institutions in Mauritius would be reviewed following problems encountered recently by a number of foreign students enrolled in institutions registered by the Mauritius Qualifications Authority. All tertiary education institutions, and the technical and vocational training institutions should, as from 1 March 2014, obtain a licence to enrol foreign students. The licence would be suspended in case, after obtaining the licence, the standard of the institution declines or the institution does not comply with the approved guidelines and regulations of the Tertiary Education Commission or the Mauritius Qualifications Authority. The Tertiary Education Commission Act and the Mauritius Qualifications Authority Act would be amended to substantially increase the current penalty for non-compliance to the conditions attached to the registration of institutions. Moreover, a foreign student would have to apply direct to the institution without going through an agent.

Cabinet has also taken note that the Minister of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology would promulgate Regulations to prohibit misleading advertisements by tertiary education institutions on, amongst others, courses offered or qualifications awarded by the institution, any partnership agreement between a local and a foreign institution, and the registration status of the institution or the accreditation status of its programmes. The regulations also prohibit the use of the logo or the name of the Tertiary Education Commission in any advertisement without the latter's authorization.

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2. Cabinet has taken note that coastal adaptation works would be carried out for the protection of the vulnerable coastal sites at Mon Choisy, Rivière des Galets and Quatre Soeurs, with a view to increasing the resilience of the local community to climate change and enhancing their livelihoods. An early warning system for incoming storm surges would be developed, and knowledge on climate change effects in the coastal zone disseminated. The works would be carried out under the Climate Change Adaptation Programme in the coastal zone of Mauritius.

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3. Cabinet has agreed to the implementation of a project for the construction of the runway and the jetty at Agalega. The existing airstrip would be completely rebuilt to allow the landing of the Dornier, ATR 72 and aircrafts of similar types. A new jetty of 150 metres long would also be constructed to provide for berthing to cargo ships and Offshore Patrol Vessels.

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4. Cabinet has agreed to the introduction of the Local Government (Amendment) Bill in the National Assembly. The Bill provides –

- (a) for the filling, by means of a by-election, of the vacancy which has occurred in the office of a Village Councillor following the declaration by the Supreme Court that, at the Village Council election held in 2012, a Councillor was unduly elected and his election was invalid; and

- (b) that, where, in future, a vacancy occurs for the same reason in the office of a Municipal City Councillor, Municipal Town Councillor or Village Councillor, as the case may be, the vacancy shall be filled by the unreturned candidate who obtained the highest number of votes after the elected candidates at the election.

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5. Cabinet has taken note that Christmas 2013 would be celebrated at national level on Saturday 14 December 2013 at Super U, Grand Bay; Trianon Shopping Park; London Way, Black River; Boulet Rouge Commercial Centre, Flacq; and Centre Commercial Vieux Moulin, Rose Belle. The programme would comprise a Nativity Show, Choir singing and Christmas songs, and tying of ribbons symbolising 'Christmas wishes'. The theme for this year will be **Unity**. With a view to enabling Mauritians to share their feelings and good wishes, the public would be invited to tie a ribbon to Christmas trees put up at the five sites.

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6. Cabinet has taken note that Mauritius has been elected as member of the Executive Board of UNESCO at the 37th Session of the General Conference of UNESCO currently being held in Paris. The membership on the UNESCO Executive Board would provide Mauritius with the ideal platform to deal with strategic issues pertaining to education at the international level.

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7. Cabinet has taken note that the Mauritius Research Council and the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi would sign a Memorandum of Understanding for the setting up of an IIT Research Academy in Mauritius. The Memorandum provides for cooperation with focus on the provision of a world class research based educational platform for postgraduate research leading to MSc(R)/MPhil and PhD degree awards in identified areas, attracting foreign researchers and foreign students to Mauritius and building core research infrastructure including faculty and facilities. The Memorandum of Understanding would be signed during the forthcoming visit of the Minister of Human Resource Development of the Republic of India at the head of a delegation comprising, amongst others, the Director of the IIT Delhi.

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8. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions and Autisme Maurice, an NGO that promotes the welfare and quality of life of autistic children and their families, would sign a Memorandum of Understanding to facilitate the development of an integrated approach to empower NGOs in promoting the well-being and enhancing the quality of life of persons with autism. The main areas of collaboration relate to the elaboration of a Strategic Plan on Autism for Mauritius, raising awareness, and supporting in the screening and assessment of Autism, as well as monitoring progress and rehabilitation of persons with autism.

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9. Cabinet has taken note that the National Computer Board would organize the 20<sup>th</sup> Edition of Infotech from 21 to 24 November 2013. The objectives of Infotech are, amongst others, to –

- (a) provide information on development and achievements in the ICT sector in Mauritius;
- (b) create awareness on emerging technologies;
- (c) promote local ICT talents, expertise, know-how and export potential; and
- (d) sensitize on potential applications of ICT and choice of technology for effective business and individual solutions.

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10. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology would launch invitations for nominations to the Annual Science Conclave of IIT Allahabad scheduled for December 2013. The Conclave aims at providing a platform for free interaction between students, teachers, researchers and high profile scientists and Nobel Laureates, promoting scientific research/investigation, and motivating students to study science.

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11. Cabinet has taken note that the 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the Electoral Commissions Forum of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) would be held in Mauritius in August 2014. The objectives of the Forum are, *inter alia*, to:

- (a) develop and promote a democratic culture and environment conducive to the holding of peaceful elections;
- (b) facilitate access to technology and technological information to member Commissions;
- (c) encourage the development of electoral laws in SADC countries; and
- (d) develop principles for appropriate codes of conduct for Electoral Commissions, governments, political parties and the media.

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12. Cabinet has taken note that the “*Séminaire Sankoré de l’Océan Indien sur l’éducation numérique libre et ouverte*” would be held in Mauritius in December 2013. The objectives of the Seminar are to showcase the success of Mauritius in the implementation of the Sankoré Project to other Francophone countries in the region, further develop capacity in the application of latest technology and innovative practices, and train resource persons in the development of digital learning materials for the mainstream subjects along with Asian Languages and Arabic at primary school level in Mauritius. Participants and resource persons from Madagascar, the Seychelles, Reunion Island and the Comoros, would attend the Seminar.

The Ministry of Education and Human Resources has, since 2011, embarked on the Sankoré Project, a programme to modernize the teaching - learning process and improve exposure to digital technologies to students. It is expected that, by the end of this year, classes of Standards IV, V and VI would be equipped with interactive projectors, and the project extended to the technical and vocational education training sector and Asian Languages and Arabic.

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13. Cabinet has taken note that a Sub-Regional Training Programme on **Beyond Response: Better Preparedness for Environmental Emergencies** would be held in Mauritius from 18 to 22 November 2013. The Training Programme, which would be conducted by the Joint United Nations Environment Programme/Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Environment Unit, aims at developing basic knowledge and understanding of effective response to a variety of environmental emergencies, and introducing the concept of industrial hazards to support comprehensive disaster management planning.

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14. Cabinet has taken note of the activities that would be organized to commemorate the International Day Against Violence Against Women, viz., –

- (a) launching of a media campaign and DVD on domestic violence;
- (b) holding of a Capacity Building Programme; and
- (c) film shows on Gender-Based Violence.

The theme for this year is ***Angaz Twa Kont Laviolans***.

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15. Cabinet has taken note that, on the occasion of the Universal Children's Day 2013, the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare would organise a series of activities for children including, slam, sketches, songs and dances. This Day is used to promote the ideals and the welfare of the children of the world. The theme retained for this year is ***Nou Zenfan Nou Trezor***.

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16. Cabinet has taken note of the activities organized to mark World Diabetes Day 2013, namely an exhibition on diabetes and talks and workshops with focus on prevention of diabetes. According to the National Diabetes Register, there are about 420 persons with Type 1 diabetes, and about 83,000 persons, representing 6.4% of the total population, with Type 2 diabetes. According to the International Diabetes Federation Atlas 2012, Mauritius no longer forms part of the top 10 countries with the highest prevalence of diabetes.

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17. Cabinet has taken note that the Minister of Health and Quality of Life would promulgate Regulations for the setting up of the Postgraduate Medical Education Board and the Postgraduate Education Board for Dental Specialists. The Boards would, amongst others, assist the respective Councils in the determination of applications for registration as specialists and assess the knowledge, skills and experience of a general practitioner/dental surgeon who would apply for registration. The Postgraduate Medical Education Board would be chaired by Dr D. C. Bundhun and the Postgraduate Education Board for Dental Specialists by Dr I. Ramdin.

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18. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the National Workshop on Social Entrepreneurship organised by the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions and the Delegation of the European Union. The objectives of the Workshop were to promote the concept of social entrepreneurship and help potential participants identify opportunities that can be developed into innovative social projects. Some 50 representatives of the NGOs participated in the Workshop.

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19. Cabinet has agreed to the establishment of diplomatic relations with the Government of Mongolia. Mongolia joined the United Nations on 27 October 1961, and has since established diplomatic relations with 170 countries. Mongolia is classified by the World Bank as a middle-income country and its economy is mainly service-based. Mongolia's growing economy represents an opportunity for trade and cooperation in several sectors.

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20. Cabinet has taken note of the publication of a Report on Youth Unemployment: Improving Employment Prospects by the National Economic and Social Council. The Report analyses the main barriers faced by youths to secure employment opportunities and identifies the main causes of youth unemployment, viz. -

- (a) the limited scope of the economy to absorb young graduates;
- (b) the mismatch between the courses followed by graduates and the demands of the labour market; and
- (c) the lack of employability skills by young graduates.

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21. Cabinet has taken note that Mr Pratab Dave Udhin has been appointed Chairperson of the National Transport Corporation.

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