

CABINET DECISIONS – 18 OCTOBER 2013

1. Cabinet has agreed to Government granting special dispensations to high-level athletes and to that effect, a Committee has been set up under the Chairmanship of the Minister of Youth and Sports. This Committee would shortly make proposals on an array of special dispensations to such athletes.

2. Cabinet has taken note that the Rotary Club of Phoenix would donate a Caravan to the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life to support the Cervical Cancer Screening Programme. According to latest statistics, nearly 58% of cancers in the female population occur in the age group of 15 to 60 years and cervical cancer has emerged as the second most common cancer in women after breast cancer. To address the problems of cervical cancer, the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life is implementing a National Cancer Control Programme and Action Plan which aims at reducing the incidence and mortality of cancers and improving the quality of life of cancer patients. Moreover, the Ministry is providing cytoscreening at the Laboratory and colposcopy services at Victoria Hospital, and the management of cervical cancer cases is carried out at the Radiotherapy Unit.

3. Taking into consideration major road developments in the region of Verdun, Cabinet has agreed to the following measures, proposed by the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit, in order to prevent the slowing down of the traffic flow -

- (a) removal of four existing humps along the road;
- (b) painting of yellow lines and a yellow box at the junction of Verdun Road [B50] and A7 Road;
- (c) the introduction of a fixed speed camera to deal with over-speeding vehicles from both directions; and
- (d) the introduction of a dedicated right turning lane on A7 Road with its junction to the B50 Road leading to Dagotière.

4. Cabinet has taken note that, following the recent cases of death at Le Waterpark & Leisure Village, Belle Mare, all the activities of the Village have been suspended and a Committee of Enquiry has been set up to –

- (a) determine the circumstances whereby two children have died at the Village;
- (b) carry out an audit in respect of all security measures at the Village; and
- (c) make recommendations in respect of the above.

The Committee of Enquiry will be presided by Mrs Hamuth-Laulloo, President, Intermediate Court.

5. Cabinet has taken note that the ICT Authority would, in collaboration with the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology and the Internet Watch Foundation, deploy an Online Child Sexual Abuse Reporting Portal in Mauritius, that would enable the online reporting of the child sexual abuse content for assessment by Internet Watch Foundation experts.

6. Cabinet has taken note of progress in the training and employment of persons with disabilities following amendments brought to the Training and Employment of Disabled Persons Act in July 2012. The main objectives of the amendments were to align the legislation with the provisions of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities that Mauritius has ratified in January 2010, and give a new impetus to the employment of persons with disabilities as stipulated in Government Programme 2012-2015.

Following an aggressive campaign carried out by the Training and Employment of Disabled Persons Board -

- (a) 1,022 employers have registered with the Board, of whom 37 are already compliant with the Training and Employment of Disabled Persons Act;
- (b) 1,050 persons with disabilities have registered with the Board as “able and willing to work”, 209 of them have already been assessed and their profiles worked out;
- (c) 68 persons with disabilities have been placed in employment; and
- (d) the Service to Mauritius Programme of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development has facilitated the placement of 13 graduates with disabilities in different Ministries.

The Training Centre at Calebasses is being converted into a Resource Centre to showcase the capabilities and potential of disabled persons through their involvement in such projects as Wheelchair Repair, Jewelry, Embroidery and Agriculture.

7. Cabinet has taken note of measures taken by the Lois Lagesse Trust Fund, which operates under the aegis of the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions, to rehabilitate visually impaired children and adults. The objective of the Fund is to provide a decent life to blind persons through education, training and employment. In line with Government's policy of inclusive education, the Fund, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, has made appropriate arrangements for some 21 adolescents with visual impairment to attend mainstream secondary and tertiary institutions. The Fund has elaborated a rehabilitation programme through training in ICT and other technologies for the benefit of highly educated and persons occupying important positions before the onset of blindness. It has also set up a women's wing that organizes regular activities to empower blind and partially-sighted women to effectively participate in the socio-economic development of the country.

8. Cabinet has taken note that the Project Plan Committee has recommended six projects to the tune of Rs865.89 million for inclusion in the Public Sector Investment Programme. The projects are, amongst others, –

- (a) construction of two wards at Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital and two blocks at Flacq Hospital;
- (b) construction of a Stand-Alone Planetarium at Pamplemousses;
- (c) extension of the galleries of the Rajiv Gandhi Science Centre, Bell Village; and
- (d) implementation of School Net II to provide high speed data connectivity in secondary schools and educational institutions.

9. Cabinet has agreed to a meeting of the Technical Working Group on Rules of Origin in the context of the COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite Free Trade Area (FTA) negotiations being held in Mauritius in November 2013. The main objective of the meeting would be to pursue discussions on outstanding issues in the draft Annex 4 of the Tripartite FTA Agreement on Rules of Origin and start discussions on the specific rules of origin for the Tripartite FTA. Some 50 delegates from the 26 Tripartite Member States would attend the meeting.

10. Cabinet has taken note that the Fourth Advances in Hospitality and Tourism Marketing and Management Conference would be held in Mauritius in June 2014. The objective of the Conference is to examine contemporary hospitality and tourism issues, stimulate dialogue and develop new perspectives in the field of hospitality and tourism within a globalised environment. Some 100 foreign participants from around the world would attend the Conference.

11. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology and the Mauritius Post Ltd would sign a Memorandum of Understanding that provides for the use of post offices for Open Days, sensitisation campaigns on tertiary education, and creating awareness of research, science and technology.

12. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the mission of the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development to Washington D.C. where he participated in the Annual Meeting of the IMF/World Bank Group, the Commonwealth Finance Ministers Meeting, the 2013 Africa Investor CEO Investment Climate Summit and Investment and Business Leader Awards.

In the margins of the meetings, the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development had discussions with –

- (a) the Minister of Finance of India, Hon P. Chidambaram, on the Double Taxation Avoidance Convention between our two countries; and
- (b) the Ministers of Finance of Gabon and Togo on the conclusion of a Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement and with the Minister of São Tomé, amongst others, on the setting up of a cooperation programme through joint commissions.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development was awarded Africa Minister of Finance of the Year by the African Investor Magazine, which he received for the second year running.

13. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade to Brussels where he participated in the 17th Meeting of the African, Caribbean, Pacific Ministerial Trade Committee and the 12th Joint ACP-European Union Ministerial Trade Committee. The main issues discussed were -

- (a) Preparation for ACP participation in the 9th WTO Ministerial Conference;
- (b) Economic Partnership Agreement: State of play and future perspective;
- (c) ACP-EU trade regime issues, namely EU negotiations with third parties; Non Tariff Measures and commodities;
- (d) Enhancing intra-ACP trade relations; and
- (e) Trade Related Capacity Building.

14. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development to Japan where he participated in the Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Minamata Convention on Mercury. The objective of the Convention is to protect human health and the environment from release of mercury and mercury compounds resulting from human activities and promote the use of alternatives and best available techniques and environmental practices across a wide range of products, processes and industries where mercury is used, released or emitted and provides for the control and phasing out of mercury and mercury added products. The Conference, amongst others, adopted the Minamata Convention on Mercury Text and resolutions that would guide works to be undertaken before the Convention enters into force.

In the margins of the Conference, the Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development had a meeting with the Executive Director of UNEP, Mr Achim Steiner, who responded favourably to the request of the Minister for assistance to implement coastal protection and climate change adaptation projects.

15. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology to Japan and China.

In Japan, the Minister participated in the 10th Annual Meeting of the Science and Technology in Society Forum which addressed a number of issues, including future energy supply, global health problems, research into genomic and regenerative medicine, global rules for ICT, including cyber security and privacy measures, and coping with disasters through science and research.

In the margins of the Forum, the Minister of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology had meetings, amongst others, with Mr Ichita Yamamoto, Minister of State of Science and Technology Policy and Space Technology, Japan, Mrs Genevieve Fioraso, Minister of Higher Education and Research of France and Mr Mauro Dell'Ambrogio, State Secretary for Education, Research and Innovation of Switzerland on collaboration in the tertiary education field. He also met a number of Vice-Chancellors and Presidents of tertiary education institutions.

In China, the Minister had a meeting with Professor Yi Hong, President of Southeast University, Nanjing, who agreed to provide support for the setting up of a Confucius Institute at the Open University of Mauritius and for teaching and research in electronics, architecture and civil engineering.

16. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment to Canada and New York.

In New York, he participated in the High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development held in the margins of the 68th Session of the United Nations General Assembly. The main objective of the High Level Dialogue was to identify concrete measures to strengthen coherence and cooperation at all levels, with a view to enhancing the benefits of international migration while reducing its negative impacts.

In Canada, the Minister had meetings with Ministers and High Level Officers in the different provinces and the Federal Government in Canada. The objectives of the meetings were mainly to –

- (a) carry out a first evaluation of the project with Prudhomme International Inc in Saskatchewan;
- (b) expand employment opportunities for Mauritians in other sectors, with a special focus on the hospitality and tourism sectors;
- (c) strengthen bilateral relations at the provincial and federal levels, especially in the context of immigration reforms; and
- (d) initiate contacts with Mauritian diaspora in Canada.

17. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection in France. The main objectives of the mission were to:

- (a) learn from models of Bordeaux, Lyon and Besançon which can inspire the development of new growth poles;
- (b) establish contacts with prospective investors to encourage them to consider delocalising part of their activities to Mauritius; and
- (c) sensitize operators on the conducive business environment in Mauritius and encourage them to visit Mauritius to explore opportunities.
