

CABINET DECISIONS - 20 DECEMBER 2013

1. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of Dr the Hon Navinchandra Ramgoolam, GCSK, FRCP, Prime Minister to France where, at the invitation of Mr François Hollande, French President, he participated in a Summit devoted to Peace and Security in the African Continent. The Summit registered the participation of 53 delegations, about 40 of which were represented at the level of Heads of State and Government. The Secretary General of the United Nations, the Chairperson of the African Union, the Chairperson of the European Union, as well as representatives of the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the African Development Bank, also attended the meeting. The Summit focused on the three issues, namely Peace and Security, Economic Partnership and Development and Climate Change.

In his address to the Summit, the Prime Minister, amongst others, -

- (a) expressed the solidarity of the Mauritian people with the people of Kenya, who were recently subject to terrorist attacks and underlined the need for the international community to act together to eradicate terrorism;
- (b) pointed out that Mauritius was following closely progress achieved in the establishment of the “Architecture Africaine de paix et de sécurité” and the adoption of instruments for the safeguard of democracy, human rights and good governance;
- (c) observed that peace and security cannot be attained without the rule of law, and good governance and protection of human rights, and that such a situation can only be attained through the consolidation of our institutions; and
- (d) pointed out that Mauritius was actively playing its role in the fight against piracy and expressed the wish that our international partners would continue to provide their support to this process.

After the Summit, the Prime Minister proceeded to South Africa where he attended the Memorial Service of Mr Nelson Mandela. During the Memorial Service, he met with several personalities, amongst others, President Obama; Mr Bill Clinton former US President and Mrs Clinton; Mr Nicholas Sarkozy, former French President; Mr John Major, former British Prime Minister; Mr François Hollande, French President; the Rt Hon D. Cameron, British Prime Minister; the Rt Hon T. Blair, former British Prime Minister; the Rt Hon Gordon Brown, former British Prime Minister, Mrs Sonia Gandhi and Minister Anand Sharma; Revd Desmond Tutu; Mr and Mrs George Bush; President Robert Mugabe and Mr Denis Nguesso. He also paid his respects to the deceased at Union Building, Pretoria where his body was lying in state.

2. Cabinet has agreed to the enlistment of the advisory services of the World Bank for the development of the legislative, regulatory and fiscal framework for the Hydrocarbon and the Deep Sea Mineral Mining Sector in the context of the implementation of the Roadmap of the Ocean Economy. The economic activities that have been identified in the Roadmap, as possible priority areas, include:

- (a) Seabed Exploration Hydrocarbon and Minerals;
- (b) Fishing, Seafood Processing and Aquaculture;
- (c) Deep Ocean Water Applications;
- (d) Marine Services, including Marine Biotechnology;
- (e) Marine Renewable Energies;
- (f) Seaport-related Activities; and
- (g) Ocean Knowledge.

Besides hydrocarbon exploitation within the Mauritius Maritime Zone, there are unexplored opportunities for deep mineral mining in waters beyond our national jurisdiction under the framework of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Since mineral resources are administered by the International Seabed Authority, under a Common Heritage of Mankind approach, it is important for Mauritius to position itself to take advantage of the opportunity.

3. Cabinet has agreed to the introduction of the Intellectual Property (Institutional Arrangements) Bill in the National Assembly. The Bill provides, amongst others, for a new reinforced institutional arrangement for the administration of intellectual property legislation and assist in the intellectual property formulation of Government, and the Intellectual Property Office to engage in sensitization and educational programmes to enhance knowledge of intellectual property in the development of new industries. Provision is also being made for a Council to assume advisory role and, at the same time, to ensure proper coordination amongst public and private institutions on intellectual property formulation and enforcement.

4. Cabinet has taken note of the activities that would be organized by the Ministry of Arts and Culture in the context of the celebration of Spring Festival 2014 at national level, viz., -

- (a) cultural shows with the participation of the Liaoning Art Troupe from the People's Republic of China and other artists from the Chinese Cultural Centre; and
- (b) a defilé, comprising Chinese Dragon and Lion Dance Groups, the Police Band, the Martial Arts Demonstrators and other artistic groups, from the Municipal City Council of Port Louis, through China Town, to Port Louis Waterfront.

Cabinet has further taken note that the Spring Festival Celebration Committee would hold a cultural show on 15 February 2014 at the Auditorium of the Mahatma Gandhi Institute, Moka to mark the Lantern Festival.

5. Cabinet has agreed to viewpoints being set up at a couple of locations along the Terre Rouge-Verdun Link Road and to new planning guidelines being defined to preserve the pristine landscape. No street vendors would be authorized to operate along the Road.

6. Cabinet has agreed to expedite procedures for the construction of the Wolmar-Tamarin Link Road.

7. Cabinet has taken note that Dr Mustapha Mekideche, Member of the APR Panel of Eminent Persons and Lead Member for the Mauritius Review Process, and Mr Jama, Coordinator for Mauritius at the APR Secretariat, had, on 12 December 2013, officially handed over the Mauritius Country Report by the African Peer Review Mechanism to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade. The Report focuses on four thematic areas, namely democracy and good governance; economic governance and management; corporate governance; and socio-economic development. Mauritius is the 13th country to be peer reviewed at the 13th APR Forum of Heads of State and Government in Kampala in July 2010. Since then many issues raised in the Report have already been addressed. A National Implementation Committee, comprising representatives of the public and private sectors, the civil society, the parastatal bodies and the local bodies, would be set up to follow up on the implementation of the recommendations of the Report, and prepare a progress report for submission to the Africa Peer Review Mechanism Secretariat within the deadline of one year.

8. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the visit of HE Mr Dou Youpei, Vice-Minister of Civil Affairs, People's Republic of China from 16 to 19 December 2013. In the light of discussions that the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions had with the Vice-Minister of Civil Affairs, the Chinese delegation has agreed to provide support for the setting up of a university for elders; equipment for the Lady Sushil Ramgoolam Recreation Centre at Pointe aux Piments; special wheelchairs to facilitate elderly persons with disabilities to take shower; technical assistance in the economic empowerment of disabled persons through social entrepreneurship; and the empowerment of NGOs in line with the NGO Policy in order to improve their efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of their services. The Chinese delegation has also agreed to renew the Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation in the field of elderly care signed in 2009 and extend its terms of reference to include the empowerment of persons with disabilities and the development of NGOs.

9. Cabinet has taken note that the value of export of the Export-Oriented Enterprises for the period from January to November 2013, as compared to the same period in 2012, has increased by 3.9%. Increase has also been recorded in the value of exports of textiles and clothing (+2.0%), shirts (+11.7%), fish and fish preparations (+8.4%), jewellery and precious and semi-precious stones (+12.1%), and medical devices (+4.2%).

10. Cabinet has taken note that Mauritius is amongst the five top emerging economies globally in the Internet Affordability Index compiled by the Alliance for Affordable Internet. The other countries are Malaysia, Brazil, Peru and Columbia. The report presents the results of a new Affordability Index, that ranks nations across communications infrastructure and access and affordable Internet. The Index covers 46 emerging and developing countries.

Cabinet has also taken note that Mauritius is ranked 55th in the Network Readiness Index of the World Economic Forum. The Internet penetration rate in Mauritius is 41.4% and the Broadband Internet on mobile technologies is 44%.

11. Cabinet has agreed to the recommendations of the Office of Public Sector Governance on the restructuring of the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA). The recommendations include, amongst others, –

- (a) creation of a dedicated division to boost the Handicraft Sector, as well as to be responsible for shops and marketing activities;
- (b) reorganization of SMEDA to a leaner and more flexible structure;
- (c) preparation of a strategic plan for the SME's Sector;
- (d) introduction of an Annual Performance Agreement with the parent Ministry to make SMEDA more performance-oriented;
- (e) setting up of a Research Unit to identify new business opportunities sector-wise and advise entrepreneurs on innovative business opportunities; and
- (f) setting up of "Club des Entrepreneurs" or "Entrepreneur Café" on regional basis to promote experience sharing and mentoring among entrepreneurs.

12. Cabinet has agreed to the release of a draft White Paper on Arts and Culture entitled "Creative Mauritius - Vision 2025", the first cultural policy framework, that addresses major policy issues in the Arts and Culture Sector through a new awareness of the economic potential of the Sector, along with the safeguard and promotion of our rich cultural heritage and cultural tourism. The White Paper is available on the website of the Ministry of Arts and Culture for consultation.

13. Cabinet has taken note of the promulgation of the Civil Aviation (Global Navigation Satellite System) Regulations to allow aircrafts equipped with the satellite navigation systems to use the Global Navigation Satellite System to navigate in our Flight Information Region. The System, that allows aircrafts to receive information directly from satellites for the purpose of navigation, would provide aircraft operators with the necessary tools to increase their operational efficiency through flying the optimum flight path for en-route navigation, i.e., during cruise, as well as during approaches and landings, thus leading to fuel savings, reduced flying time, and lesser emission of greenhouse gases.

14. Cabinet has taken note of developments in the implementation of the National e-Health System that would, amongst others, include -

- (a) a web-based application system, including clinical and para-clinical systems;
- (b) appropriate hardware and networking at the hospitals, Area Health Centres and the other data centres;
- (c) the gradual digitalisation of patients records;
- (d) the computerization of the Pharmacy and Stores Management; and
- (e) project management and change management strategies.

The project would be implemented in phases and the first phase would be implemented, on a pilot basis, at the J. Nehru Hospital, L'Escalier Mediclinic, Rose Belle Area Health Centre and Nouvelle France Community Health Centre.

15. Cabinet has agreed to Raphaël Fishing Co. Ltd implementing an eco-tourism project at Cargados Carajos Archipelago (St Brandon Group of Islands), subject to an in-depth Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) being carried out. The main objective of the project is to develop the Cargados Carajos Archipelago into an eco-friendly high-niche destination and one of the best fly fishing spots in the world. It is estimated that, for the first year, some 320 tourists would visit the islets and for the subsequent years, the number would increase to some 800 annually.

16. Cabinet has taken note that the Minister of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection would promulgate the Consumer Protection (Events) Regulations to provide for a new framework for the holding of trade fairs and exhibitions. The new regulations would prohibit, amongst others, a person to organize an event with a religious connotation; the holding of an event other than in the months of January, February, April, June, August and October; a person to hold an event more than twice a year; and Health related goods being displayed or put on sale without the prior written clearance from the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life.

17. Cabinet has taken note of the Civil Establishment Order No. 2 of 2013 and the Civil Establishment (Rodrigues Regional Assembly) Order No. 2 of 2013 that reflect changes on the approved establishment of Ministries/Departments, and the Rodrigues Regional Assembly for Financial Year 2014 respectively with regard to abolition, increase, reduction and restyling of offices and provide for new salary codes and salary scales, where appropriate.

18. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security to Brussels, Belgium where he participated in the 98th session of the ACP Council of Ministers. The ACP Council of Ministers comprised a Ministerial Consultation on commodities, including sugar, and considered the state of play of the national and regional programming of the Cotonou Agreement and the third revision of the Cotonou Agreement.

19. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology to USA and the UK. In USA, the Minister participated in the Inter-Sessional Panel of the UN Commission on Science and Technology for Development. The objectives of the Meeting were to take note of the contribution of the Commission to the Millennium Development Goals and consider science, technology and innovation prospects for the Post-2015 Development Agenda. In Washington, the Minister had discussions with representatives of the George Washington University, the University of Delaware and the Virginia Tech, College of Natural Resources and Environment, on collaboration in research and tertiary education.

In the UK, the Minister had meetings with representatives of universities in the UK and the Quality Assurance Agency on how to improve the quality of higher education in Mauritius.

20. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Health and Quality of Life to South Africa where he participated in the International Conference on AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Infections. The main objective of the Conference was to bring together Ministers of Health and Ministers of Education of the 21 countries of the Eastern and Southern Africa to affirm their commitment to strengthen HIV prevention efforts and foster health outcomes through improved access to quality, comprehensive sexuality education, as well as Sexual and Reproductive Health services for young people in the region.

21. Cabinet has taken note that the Minister of Health and Quality of Life would promulgate Regulations under the Medical Council Act and the Dental Council Act for the recognition and listing of the following medical and dental institutions –

- (a) Padmashree Dr D.Y. Patil University, Mumbai, India;
- (b) Royal Australasian College of Physicians, Australia; and
- (c) Wuhan University, People's Republic of China.

22. Cabinet has taken note that Mrs Sheila Thancanamootoo has been appointed Chairperson of the Mauritius Institute of Education.

23. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the following Council/Committees set up under the Clinical Trials Act -

- (a) the Clinical Research Regulatory Council with Dr S.K. Surrin, Consultant, as Chairperson;
- (b) the Ethics Committee with Justice Satyabhoosun Domah, as Chairperson; and
- (c) the Pharmacovigilance Committee with Dr Jayanandra Dusowath, Senior Specialist, as Chairperson.

24. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Dangerous Chemicals Advisory Council with Dr T.R. Nundlall, Acting Director Health Services, as Chairperson.
