

CABINET DECISIONS – 30 AUGUST 2013

1. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of Dr the Hon Navinchandra Ramgoolam, GCSK, FRCP, Prime Minister, to Lilongwe, Malawi, where he participated in the 33rd Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the Southern African Development Community (SADC). The Prime Minister led the Mauritius delegation which comprised, amongst others, Dr the Hon Arvin Boolell, GOSK, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade. The main issues on the Agenda of the Summit were:

- (a) the political situation in Madagascar, Zimbabwe and the Democratic Republic of Congo;
- (b) the economic performance of the region;
- (c) HIV/AIDS; and
- (d) Food Security.

The Summit welcomed the recent developments in Madagascar, especially the decision of the newly-formed Special Electoral Court to withdraw nine candidatures for the presidential elections and urged the Court to speed up the process of holding elections in Madagascar. In his intervention, the Prime Minister highlighted that Mauritius was fully supportive of a democratic solution to the political crisis in Madagascar and had, in this regard, pledged to contribute US\$500,000 through the Indian Ocean Commission for the organization of elections in the country.

On the issue of economic performance of the region, the Mauritius delegation drew the attention of the Summit to the specificities of small island States of SADC and requested that the needs for national infrastructure development of such States be taken on board. The proposal was supported by the delegation of the Seychelles.

The Summit noted the progress made in containing the scourge of HIV/AIDS in the region. SADC Member States were urged to intensify their efforts in mobilizing additional resources with a view to reducing new infections. The Prime Minister recalled the measures that Mauritius has taken to fight HIV/AIDS, including the setting up of a National AIDS Committee under his chairmanship, to implement the national strategic plan to combat HIV/AIDS and the establishment of a National AIDS Secretariat attached to his Office. He pointed out that Government remains the major source of funding for combating the scourge, accounting for 72% of expenditure in 2012. He also highlighted the significant progress achieved by Mauritius in all priority areas, particularly the drop in transmission through drug use from 92% in 2005 to 47.2% in 2012 and the near elimination of HIV transmission from mother to child.

2. Pending the enactment by the National Assembly of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Bill and, with a view to making timely and effective arrangements for the forthcoming cyclonic and rainy seasons, Cabinet has agreed, as a matter of priority, to the setting up of –

- (i) a National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council that would oversee disaster management activities in Mauritius and the outer islands;
- (ii) a National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Centre that would act as the main institution for the State of Mauritius for the planning, organizing, coordinating and monitoring of disaster risk reduction and management activities at all levels;
- (iii) a Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Committee in the Municipal City Council, the Municipal Town Councils and the District Councils to manage disaster risk reduction in the respective localities;
- (iv) a Rodrigues Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Committee to assist in the preparedness, response, rehabilitation and recovery operations before, during and after the occurrence of a disaster or an emergency in Rodrigues; and
- (v) a Rodrigues Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Centre which would be responsible for the planning, coordinating and monitoring of disaster risk reduction and management activities in Rodrigues.

Since 2005, a series of measures have been taken to address issues relating to disaster management, including -

- (a) the Central Cyclone and Other Natural Disasters Committee, under the chairmanship of the Secretary to Cabinet and Head of the Civil Service, in close collaboration with all stakeholders, has regularly updated the Cyclone and Other Natural Disasters Scheme;
- (b) following a recommendation made by Justice Domah, a Drains Management Committee has been set up at the level of the Ministry of Local Government and Outer Islands to, inter alia, monitor progress in the construction and maintenance of drains, to ensure the effectiveness of land drainage projects and to recommend preventive measures to mitigate flooding; and
- (c) a National Disaster and Operations Coordination Centre has been set up at the Police Headquarters, Line Barracks to take charge of the management of disasters in Mauritius.

3. Cabinet has taken note that, with a view to improving care of pregnant women and new borns and to reducing the incidence of stillbirth/intrauterine, neonatal deaths and maternal deaths, the Minister of Health and Quality of Life has set up a Standing Technical Committee on Obstetrics and Neonatal Services with the following terms of reference:

- (a) to carry out an audit of all cases of stillbirth and intrauterine, neonatal and maternal deaths over the last two years; and
- (b) to make recommendations for the improvement of clinical care and service provision to avoid such deaths.

4. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Arts and Culture would organise the following activities to commemorate the 113th Birth Anniversary of Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam on 18 September 2013:-

- (a) wreath laying ceremonies at the Samadhi of Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam at SSR Botanical Garden, Pamplemousses; in front of the statue of SSR at Port Louis Waterfront; and in front of the bust of SSR at Kewal Nagar;
- (b) an exhibition on “**SSR – The Visionary**” and a cultural gathering at Kewal Nagar;
- (c) an exhibition of the drawings/paintings of the competition on the theme “**Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam – The Visionary**” at the SSR Memorial Centre for Culture, Port Louis;
- (d) prize giving ceremony at SSR Memorial Centre for Culture to the best students who participated in the drawing/painting and poem writing competitions;
- (e) an exhibition of large panels on the theme “**Memories of SSR**” on the fence of the Natural History Museum, Port Louis;
- (f) launching of an Essay Competition by the President’s Fund for Creative Writing on the theme “**How Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam has influenced the lives of Mauritians**”;
- (g) organisation of an elocution contest by the National Library on the theme “**SSR’s contribution towards the establishment of a Welfare State in Mauritius**” for Lower VI students of Secondary Schools in the Port Louis region; and
- (h) talks by the Senior Citizens Council.

5. Cabinet has taken note of developments in the setting up of Private Motor Vehicle Examination Stations at Forest Side, Plaine Lauzun and Laventure in accordance with international standards, to assess and certify the road-worthiness of motor vehicles. The project is in line with the vision of the Prime Minister to modernize motor vehicle examinations and enhance road safety. The National Transport Authority would have a regulatory function and supervise the work processes, counter examine vehicles and consider appeal cases against refusal to issue a certificate of fitness to a vehicle.

6. Cabinet has agreed to the implementation of a Special Incentive Scheme to develop and promote the Meeting, Incentive, Conference, Event (MICE) segment as a niche market for Mauritius. The Scheme aims at encouraging planners to choose Mauritius as a venue for the celebration of high profile Indian weddings from amongst other competing destinations such as Malaysia, Thailand and Singapore. Various facilities would be offered under the Scheme, amongst others special arrangements for welcome at airport; issue of visa upon arrival and expedient clearance of imported material for weddings.

7. Cabinet has taken note that, following the decision of the then Government in April 1992 to rescind the lease agreement of South Seas Development Company Limited, the said company made a claim against the unlawful acts of the then Government before the Supreme Court of Mauritius. On 15 September 2010, the Supreme Court ordered Government to pay a total sum of Rs170,554,631.50 which, as at 30 June 2013, accrued with interest to Rs211,021,779. With a view to reducing the financial burden of the judgment on the State, Government has embarked on strenuous negotiations with the company for the payment of a reduced compensation and the grant of a lease of a plot of State Land for development in lieu and instead of the State paying Rs211,021,779.

8. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade to Addis Ababa where he participated in the 12th African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) Forum. The US authorities were requested to reauthorize AGOA for another 15 years upon its expiry in September 2015 so as to ensure that trade with the US takes place on a predictable, legally secure and reliable basis. AGOA beneficiary countries also called upon Congress to have the reauthorization adopted during the current 113th Session of Congress. The US Trade Representative confirmed that President Obama is committed to reauthorize AGOA as announced by him during his recent trip to Africa; and a session on the future of AGOA was also held with members from the US Congress and the Senate. They confirmed that there is general support for the reauthorization of AGOA in the US.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade also had a bilateral meeting with Ambassador Forman, United States Trade Representative with whom he exchanged views on Mauritius – US bilateral relations.

9. Cabinet has taken note of the status in the implementation of the project for the construction of campuses at Réduit, Montagne Blanche and Pamplémousses. Works are scheduled to start in January 2014.

10. Cabinet has taken note that the Open University of Mauritius has offered 20 scholarships to students from 13 Commonwealth countries. The students have been enrolled on the course leading to the award of the Commonwealth Master of Business Administration. This scholarship is an important means to promote Mauritius as a centre of higher education.

11. Cabinet has taken note of developments in the setting up of the integrated Human Resource Management Information System in the Civil Service. The System provides for the digitization of Human Resource Management functions in the Civil Service for a speedier and more efficient service, automate Human Resource functions and facilitate interface amongst the various Ministries/Departments/Service Commissions.

12. Cabinet has taken note of the findings of a Study on Salt Intake in Rodrigues carried out in February/March 2013. The main findings of the Study were, inter alia, as follows –

- (a) the mean salt intake in men aged between 30 to 59 is 8.8 grams daily as compared to 7.6 grams for women;
- (b) 23.9% of adults aged between 30 to 59 years consumed 10 or more grams of salt everyday; and
- (c) 79.5% of adults in the same group consumed 5 or more grams of salt each day.

The World Health Organisation recommends salt intake of less than 5 grams daily. The Ministry of Health and Quality of Life will conduct a workshop with all relevant stakeholders to devise a Salt Reduction Strategy for the island.

13. Cabinet has taken note of the recent mission of the Minister of Health and Quality of Life to the People's Republic of China where he attended the Ministerial Forum on China-Africa Health Development. The theme of the Forum was "**Priorities of China – Africa Health Cooperation in the New Era**". The Forum adopted the Beijing Declaration which reaffirms the commitment of China and Africa to further strengthen cooperation in the health sector. The Forum also discussed, inter alia, on a roadmap for jointly addressing key health challenges across Africa, including malaria, HIV and AIDS, reproductive health, immunization and vaccine preventable diseases.

In the margin of the Ministerial Forum, the Minister of Health and Quality of Life met Dr the Hon Mrs Li Bin, Minister of China's National Health and Family Planning Commission, with whom he discussed, inter alia, assistance for the setting up of a Transplantation Centre at the SSRN Hospital and the Regional Centres. He also visited the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention in Zhejiang and the National Institute of Parasitic Diseases in Shanghai.

14. Cabinet has taken note of the activities that would be organised by the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions on the occasion of the International Day of the Elderly, which is celebrated on 1 October. The theme chosen for this year is: **Older People – a new power for development.**

The activities would include –

- (a) a national function at the Octave Wiehe Auditorium, Réduit comprising of drama, music and prize giving ceremony with the participation of members of Senior Citizens Associations; and
- (b) visits to residents of Bois Savon Residence, Roche Bois.

15. Cabinet has taken note that, to mark the World Suicide Prevention Day commemorated on 10 September, the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions, in collaboration with all stakeholders would organise -

- (a) an official function at the Octave Wiehe Auditorium, University of Mauritius, Reduit with focus on the youth; and
- (b) Community Outreach Programmes and sensitization campaigns across the country.

The theme chosen for this year is “**Stigma: A Major Barrier to Suicide Prevention**”.

16. Cabinet has taken note of the Annual Report of the Town and Country Planning Board for the year ended 31 December 2011. The Town and Country Planning Board, a statutory body operating under the aegis of the Ministry of Housing and Lands, is responsible for land use planning and land development matters and aims at improving economic, social and environmental wellbeing and the quality of life of inhabitants. The Board regularly reviews Outline Schemes to ensure that the Schemes continue to promote a sound basis for the development of a locality. It also hears appeals from parties aggrieved against the decisions of local authorities in respect of applications for Building and Land Use Permits.

17. Cabinet has taken note that, following the rebranding of the National Youth Achievement Award, the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Foundation has, after a successful validation exercise, granted a full licence to Mauritius. The Ministry of Youth and Sports has obtained exclusive use of the new name, logo and rebranded materials to run the Award Programme in Mauritius. The new name of the Award Programme shall be "The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award (Mauritius)". Mauritius is the first amongst African countries, and second in the world to have obtained the full licence.

18. Cabinet has taken note of the constitution of –

- (a) the Creole Speaking Union Board with Dr Arnaud Carpooran, OSK, as Chairperson; and
- (b) the Chinese Speaking Union Board with Mr Tang Yun Sing, GOSK, CSK, OSK, OBE, as Chairperson.

19. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of National Children's Council Board with Ms Jeanne Béatrice Christina Prèle as Chairperson.
