

CABINET DECISIONS – 14 JUNE 2013

1. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of Dr the Hon Navinchandra Ramgoolam, GCSK, FRCP, Prime Minister, to Addis Ababa where he participated in the Golden Jubilee of the OAU/AU and the 21st Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union. Several key dignitaries, including HE Mr Ban Ki-moon, Secretary General of the United Nations; HE Mr François Hollande, President of France; HE Mrs Dilma Rousseff, President of Brazil; HE Mr John Kerry, US Secretary of State; HE Mrs Portia Simpson Miller, Prime Minister of Jamaica and HE Mr Mohammad Hamid Ansari, Vice-President of India, participated in the 50th Anniversary celebrations of the OAU/AU. On the occasion of its Golden Jubilee, the African Union paid tribute to the Father of the Nation, Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, for his contribution to the promotion of Pan-Africanism and the decolonization process in Africa. Posthumous honorific award was also conferred on African leaders, including Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Julius Nyerere of Tanzania and Leopold Sedar Senghor of Senegal.

In his statement at the Opening Session to commemorate the Golden Jubilee of the OAU/AU, the Prime Minister highlighted that human capital development was essential for the economic success of Africa and he announced that the Mauritian Government would offer 50 scholarships to African nationals to pursue higher studies in Mauritius. He also commented on the deep economic transformations that were taking place in Africa.

A major outcome of the celebrations was the adoption of a Solemn Declaration on the 50th Anniversary of the OAU/AU, in which African leaders committed themselves to achieve the AU goals of an integrated and prosperous Africa. The Solemn Declaration further calls for the complete decolonization of the African Continent and reaffirms the call of the African Union for an expeditious end to unlawful occupation of the Chagos Archipelago with a view to enabling Mauritius to effectively exercise its sovereignty over the Archipelago.

The main theme of the 21st Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union was Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance. The Summit deliberated on peace and security in Africa, regional integration, the performance of the African continent on the international scenes and HIV/AIDS.

The Summit also adopted the Strategic Plan of the African Union Commission for the years 2014–2017 which includes the vulnerabilities of Small Island Developing States (SIDS), the Ocean Economy, Maritime Security, Piracy and Terrorism, Climate Change, Regional Integration, Food Security, among others.

The Chief Justice, the Hon Mr Yeung Sik Yuen, GOSK, was re-elected member of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights for a period of six years.

2. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent missions of Dr the Hon Navinchandra Ramgoolam, GCSK, FRCP, Prime Minister, to Japan and the United Kingdom.

In Japan, the Prime Minister attended the Fifth Tokyo International Conference on Africa Development (TICAD V). The theme of TICAD V was “**Hand in Hand with a More Dynamic Africa**”. The main objective of the participation of the Prime Minister in TICAD V was to raise the visibility of Mauritius in the TICAD process and our profile as a gateway linking Africa and Asia. The mission also aimed at further consolidating the diplomatic relations with a view to enhancing the supportive role of Japan as a development partner.

At the Conference, the address of the Prime Minister focused principally on the following themes -

- (i) A Robust and Sustainable Economy. On this issue, the Prime Minister highlighted a number of facts to show that Africa’s economy was on the upbeat, drawing upon the reforms undertaken by Mauritius, to explain how Government is trying to keep ahead in spite of the global downturn.
- (ii) Towards the Post-2015 Development Agenda. Under this theme, the Prime Minister emphasized on the need for an approach that Puts People First, and reported that Mauritius was on track to meeting almost all of its goals. He seized the occasion to recall that Mauritius had announced at the 50th anniversary of the OAU/AU that it would provide 50 scholarships annually to students from Africa for tertiary studies.
- (iii) Peace and Stability. Under this issue, the Prime Minister supported Japan’s initiative to give greater prominence on the international agenda to the issue of human security focusing on the vulnerable situation of Mauritius as a Small Island Developing State and the effects of climate change on the security of the people. The Prime Minister also addressed the issue of piracy, and peace and stability in the African region.

In the margins of the Conference, the Prime Minister had high level bilateral meetings with His Excellency Mr Shinzo Abe, Prime Minister of Japan, and His Excellency Mr Ban Ki-moon, Secretary General of the United Nations.

During the bilateral meeting with HE Mr Shinzo Abe, Prime Minister of Japan, the Prime Minister expressed his thanks to the Japanese Premier for the Doppler Radar given to Mauritius to improve the capacity of the Meteorological Services to make better weather forecast. The Japanese Prime Minister assured to assist Mauritius on environmental and climate change issues, as well as in the area of disaster risk management. He also agreed to give consideration to our request for a line of credit for the importation of Japanese buses for ferrying school children.

The Prime Minister also talked about our immense Exclusive Economic Zone and its huge economic potentials, and invited Japan’s assistance to develop the ocean economy. The Prime Minister also discussed on ways and means to further reinforcing the avenues of cooperation between Mauritius and Japan in several fields.

The Prime Minister took the opportunity to invite HE Mr Abe, Prime Minister, to effect a visit to Mauritius.

In the course of his meeting with HE Mr Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary General, the Prime Minister spoke of the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda, the resilience of Small Island Developing States, climate change and poverty. The UN Secretary General highly commended Mauritius for its active role in combating piracy. The Prime Minister welcomed the Secretary General's initiative to convene world leaders to a High Level Meeting on climate change in 2014 to focus political attention to the issue.

In London, the Prime Minister had a meeting with HE Mr Kamallesh Sharma, Secretary General of the Commonwealth Secretariat. The Secretary General discussed the organization, logistics and other arrangements for the holding of CHOGM 2015 in Mauritius. They also talked of the political situation in Sri Lanka and arrangements for holding CHOGM 2013 in Sri Lanka. The Prime Minister and the Secretary General discussed about Zimbabwe and the Secretary General invited the Prime Minister to convey to President Mugabe the offer of the Commonwealth as regards assistance to Zimbabwe in conducting elections.

3. Cabinet has agreed to the introduction in the National Assembly of the President's Emoluments and Pension (Amendment) Bill which provides for an increase in the emoluments payable to the President of the Republic and the Vice-President; and the National Assembly Allowances (Amendment) Bill which provides for an increase in the allowances payable to Ministers and other Members of the National Assembly in the wake of the salary review recommended by the Pay Research Bureau in its Report of 2013.

4. Cabinet has agreed to the introduction of the Human Tissue (Removal, Preservation and Transplant) (Amendment) Bill in the National Assembly. The object of the Bill is to amend the Human Tissue (Removal, Preservation and Transplant) Act to provide for –

- (a) an authorized specialist to issue a certificate before a donation of non-regenerative tissue;
- (b) immunity, from civil or criminal proceedings, to be conferred on members of the Board or of any committee set up under the Act, or other persons or bodies, with respect to the execution of their duties, or the exercise of their powers, in good faith under the Act; and
- (c) a higher penalty for breach of regulations made under the Act.

5. In line with Government's vision to promote the ocean economy as one of the main pillars of development, Cabinet has agreed to the Prime Minister's Office, in collaboration with the Board of Investment, holding a National Dialogue on Ocean Economy on 22 and 23 July 2013. The Conference would enable stakeholders to express their views on the various components of the ocean economy and get the buy-in of the population for the integrated approach to ocean-related economic activities. The Conference would also pave the way for the adoption of a roadmap on the ocean economy and assess the commercial potential of traditional, emerging and new sectors of activity on the Ocean, the seabed, the subsoil, as well as, the Deep Ocean Water Applications Project.

6. Cabinet has taken note that the following personalities have been nominated member of the Permanent Court of Arbitration -

- (a) Justice Ariranga Govindasamy Pillay, GOSK, former Chief Justice and current Chairperson of the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;
- (b) Justice Dheerujlall Baramlall Seetulsingh, Chairperson of the National Human Rights Commission;
- (c) Justice Satyabhooshan Gupt Domah, Puisne Judge; and
- (d) Sir Hamid Moollan, QC.

7. Cabinet has agreed to the implementation of the Maurice Ile Durable (MID) Policy, and Strategy Action Plan, which consists of four MID Priority Programmes, namely Energy Conservation and Renewables; Cleaner, Greener and Pollution Free Mauritius; Green Economy; and Ocean Economy. Some 130 projects/activities have also been proposed across the 5Es, i.e., Energy, Environment, Employment, Education and Equity, which would be implemented in the short, medium and long terms to bring coherence and to enhance existing activities by introducing new ideas for better sustainable development.

8. Cabinet has taken note of the list of Public Holidays for the year 2014 as hereunder –

New Year	Wednesday 01 January
New Year	Thursday 02 January
Thaipooam Cavadee	Friday 17 January
Chinese Spring Festival	Friday 31 January
Abolition of Slavery	Saturday 01 February
Maha Shivaratree	Thursday 27 February
National Day	Wednesday 12 March
Ugaadi	Monday 31 March
Labour Day	Thursday 01 May
Eid-UI-Fitr*	Tuesday 29 July
Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary	Friday 15 August
Ganesh Chaturthi	Saturday 30 August
Divali	Thursday 23 October
Arrival of Indentured Labourers	Sunday 02 November
Christmas	Thursday 25 December

*The exact date of this festival is subject to confirmation as its celebration depends on the visibility of the moon.

9. Taking into consideration investment made by the MBC in capital projects in Mauritius, Rodrigues, and Agalega, mainly the digitization of channels, the improved quality of service and enhanced programming schedule both on the TV and radio, Cabinet has agreed to the television licence fees collected by the MBC being increased with effect from 1 July 2013 as follows –

Island of Mauritius

- (a) Domestic consuming more than 33 CEB units – Rs150 per month
- (b) Non-Domestic – Rs20,000 per month or Rs150 per set, whichever is the lesser.

Island of Rodrigues

- Non-Domestic – Rs1,000 per annum

Households with electricity consumption of 33 CEB units or less would be exempted from the increase, i.e., 12,469 households in Mauritius would continue to pay Rs20 MBC licence fee and 10,000 households in Rodrigues Rs25.

The MBC Licence Fee was last revised in January 2002.

10. Cabinet has taken note that, 74,596 tourists visited Mauritius in May 2013 as compared to 71,396 in May 2012, i.e, an increase of 4.5%. Tourist arrivals from Europe (+4.2%), China (+76.3%) and India (+7.8%) have increased.

For the period January to May 2013, tourist arrivals reached 416,657 as compared to 412,528 in the same period in 2012, i.e., an increase of 1.0%.

11. Cabinet has taken note of the status of the Schemes being implemented by the Mauritius Business Growth Scheme Unit, and their impact on the economy. The Mauritius Business Growth Scheme, which was set up in September 2010, facilitates maximum growth in private sector economic activity by supporting enterprise productivity and competitiveness, specifically in areas of skills and training, technology upgrading, innovation, quality standards, business development. The core services provided by the Mauritius Business Growth Scheme Unit are –

- (a) the 90:10 Payback Technical Assistance Scheme, under which the Loans Approval Committee has approved 168 projects to the tune of Rs207.5m;
- (b) the Start-ups Entrepreneurship Scheme, introduced in 2012, provides for a monthly salary replacement allowance of Rs20,000 for a maximum period of one year to creative entrepreneurs. 22 applications have been approved under the scheme; and
- (c) professional mentoring and handholding services to enterprises. The Entrepreneurship Forum, launched in March 2013, debates on key issues pertaining to the entrepreneurship/business community, to help shape policy for the rapid development of entrepreneurs and facilitate the rapid and sustainable growth of private-sector companies.

12. Cabinet has taken note that, in the context of the SADC Trade in Services negotiations, Mauritius would submit its initial offer of commitments in Trade in Services in the following sectors: Communications, Tourism, Transport, Financial Services and ICT.

13. Cabinet has taken note that the University of Mauritius, in collaboration with *l'Association des Amis d'Auguste Lacaussade de la Réunion* and of the Mahatma Gandhi Institute, would organize an International Conference on '*Auguste Lacaussade en Fraternité Mauricienne et les Questions de Son Temps*' in Mauritius from 25 to 27 September 2013. Mr Auguste Lacaussade, poet, was born in Reunion Island in 1815. He was closely associated with Leconte de Lisle. He advocated actively for the abolition of slavery and wrote in several journals. The main objectives of the Conference are to share new ideas about the life and works of Lacaussade and develop tools and means to fight racism in the contemporary world.

14. Cabinet has taken note that the National Computer Board, in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions, would organise a Digital Literacy Programme for Senior Citizens to empower them to use the digital tools in their daily life.

15. Cabinet has taken note of the activities that would be organized by the Ministry of Arts and Culture in the context of Music Day, celebrated on 21 June, viz. –

- (a) a special programme with the participation of artists and performers with disabilities at the Esplanade, Renganaden Seeneevassen Building, Port Louis;
- (b) a programme entitled 'A Reminiscence' to pay tribute to the famous Indian singers Mukesh and Mohammad Rafi, by the Mahatma Gandhi Institute;
- (c) performances by the *Conservatoire National de Musique François Mitterrand* and the Mahatma Gandhi Institute;
- (d) a concert by 'Opera Mauritius' at the Serge Constantin Theatre, Vacoas; and
- (e) performances by the Ministry's *Centres de Formation Artistique* at Paillotte, Goodlands, Plaine des Papayes and Mahebourg, and in the 16 Centres de Lecture et d'Animation Culturelle throughout the island.

16. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade to China where he participated in the Global Services Forum organized by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development in collaboration with the Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China. The Forum, a yearly event, provides a platform for advocating a development agenda connected to services. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade chaired a High Level Session on the theme "Services and Job Creation" and also intervened as one of the panelists on "Vision on Global Services Economy and Trade in Services in the 21st Century".

17. In line with Government's vision to modernize the country through the extensive use of ICT, particularly technologies, such as 4G/LTE, Cabinet has agreed to a moratorium period of three years being granted to network access providers to enable them to have sole use of their network in the local loop and facilitate the deployment of emerging technologies, given that they would be making substantial investment in optical fibre network to carpet the whole island with broadband connectivity.

18. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Youth and Sports to New York where he participated in the 3rd International Forum on Sport for Peace and Development, organized jointly by the International Olympic Committee, the UN Office on Support for Development and Peace, and the United States Olympic Committee. The theme of the Forum was **Creating a Common Vision**. Presentations and discussions during the Forum focused, amongst others, on -

- (a) Integrating and Mainstreaming Sport in Development and Peace – Moving from Communication to Organizational Objectives;
- (b) The Culture of Peace through Sport-Concrete Actions and Challenges; and
- (c) Sport and Social Integration.

19. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Board of Trustees of the Professor Basdeo Bissoondoyal Trust Fund with Mr Satterdeo Peerthum, CSK, OSK, as Chairperson.
