

CABINET DECISIONS – 22 MARCH 2013

1. Cabinet has agreed to the introduction into the National Assembly of the National Agricultural Products Regulatory Office Bill, which provides for the setting up of the National Agricultural Products Regulatory Office, operating under the aegis of the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security, to take over the functions and powers of the Tea Board and the Tobacco Board, and the regulatory functions and powers of the Mauritius Meat Authority. The Office shall be responsible, amongst others, for -

- (a) the licensing and registration of cultivators, producers, importers and exporters of regulated products; and
- (b) the effective administration, management and regulation of regulated products.

2. Cabinet has agreed to the setting up of a Task Force, under the chairmanship of the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security, to monitor the transfer and the utilization of lands acquired under the 2000A Government-MSPA Agreement signed in April 2008 following the conclusion of the deal on sugar reform led by the Prime Minister. To date, a total land area of 331.87A has been acquired by Government and transferred to the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security for agricultural projects. The Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security has made arrangements with the MSPA for the transfer of the remaining extent of land which would be used for food crop and livestock production and for micro-farming projects under the poverty alleviation scheme.

Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security has embarked on a land amelioration programme to improve productivity of all MSPA lands and is monitoring closely the utilization of lands acquired under the Scheme and allocated for agricultural projects.

3. Cabinet has taken note of the Master Plan Report for the development of water resources in Mauritius until the horizon 2050. The Plan provides, amongst others, an investment plan for the implementation of the associated water mobilisation infrastructure components, including direct river water intakes, exploitation of new boreholes, enlargement of existing dams, construction of new dams and re-use of wastewater. The Consultant has also recommended the development of the Water Resources Unit into a fully independent Water Resources Monitoring or Regulatory Agency which can objectively address the allocation of water and negotiate with all the main water users.

4. Cabinet has taken note of the proposed amendments to the Employment Relations (Amendment) Bill and the Employment Rights (Amendment) Bill to take on board concerns of stakeholders. The amendments have been discussed with ILO Experts, the Trade Union Confederations and the Mauritius Employers' Federation. The proposed amendments relate, amongst others, to reporting of labour dispute, recognition of Trade Unions, strike ballot, hours of work of shift workers, allowances and reduction in labour force.

5. Cabinet has taken note of the preparation of an Ecological Agriculture Action Plan in line with the concept of an 'Ile Maurice Durable'. The project aims at gradually reducing the use of conventional pesticides on food crop plantations and replacing them by bio-pesticides which are less toxic with a view to making Mauritius an agro-ecology country. In this context, a Committee has been set up to –

- (a) prepare a list of pesticides, chemical fertilizers, fungicides, insecticides and herbicides which can be withdrawn from the market either immediately or in a phased manner; and
- (b) prepare an Action Plan to promote ecological agriculture with emphasis on reduction of chemical pesticides and promotion of alternative methods of pest control, including an integrated pest management approach which are more sustainable.

6. Cabinet has taken note of the report of the Inter-Ministerial Committee set up to look into the problems of the five minors admitted to the Brown Sequard Mental Health Care Centre. Following the advice of the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life to the effect that they are stable and fit for discharge from the Brown Sequard Mental Health Care Centre, it has been agreed that the children would, immediately, be referred back to their respective Non-Governmental Organisations which would be provided with the required support.

Cabinet has also taken note that the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life would initiate immediate actions to improve the living conditions of children admitted to the Brown Sequard Mental Health Care Centre.

7. Cabinet has taken note of developments in the implementation of the Animal Hospital project. Dr Lynne Hill, Chief Executive of Langford Veterinary Services, University of Bristol, who has wide experience in the setting up of Veterinary Hospitals, would assist the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security in the design and construction of the Hospital.

8. Cabinet has agreed to the implementation of a Dog Sterilization Programme with a view to curbing the number of stray dogs. The Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security would carry out a survey of dog population in Mauritius to determine the density, the distribution/concentration per locality/area, and common disease in dogs.

9. Cabinet has taken note of the state of affairs at the Mauritius Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, and agreed to the Office of Public Sector Governance of the Prime Minister's Office carrying out an organizational and financial review of the Society.

10. Cabinet has taken note that the Second Session of the Zambia – Mauritius Joint Permanent Commission of Cooperation would be held in Mauritius on 27 and 28 March 2013. Dr the Hon Effron C. Lungu, Minister of Foreign Affairs, will lead the Zambian delegation. The areas of cooperation that would be discussed during the meeting are, amongst others, -

- (a) Facilitation of cross border trade and investment;
- (b) Financial Services;
- (c) Accelerated for Economic Integration;
- (d) Industry and Commerce;
- (e) Agriculture;
- (f) Fisheries Sector;
- (g) Tourism Sector; and
- (h) Medical Services.

11. Cabinet has agreed to the submission of the Nomination Files of Traditional Mauritian Sega and Bhojpuri Folk Songs for inscription in the UNESCO Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. With the listing of elements of Intangible Cultural Heritage, States Parties, with the collaboration of the community, NGOs, artists and other relevant stakeholders, are bound to implement measures to preserve and promote the elements and their visibility.

12. Cabinet has taken note of the launching of the Screening and Counselling Services at your Doorstep Programme, a new concept of health services relating to information, prevention and early detection of Non-Communicable Diseases at community level, work sites and in secondary schools for students of Form III and Lower VI to ensure a close follow up of the health status of each citizen. The Programme would comprise, amongst others, -

- (a) sensitization campaigns on Diabetes;
- (b) introduction of a new strategy for the screening of participants with increased risk of developing diabetes through a "Mauritius Diabetes Risk Score Form", which has been developed in collaboration with Professor J. Tuomilehto from the University of Finland;
- (c) screening services for diabetes, hypertension, vision and obesity;
- (d) breast and cervical cancer screening for sexually active women;
- (e) cooking demonstrations; and
- (f) physical activity demonstrations.

13. Cabinet has taken note that the Université des Mascareignes would, on 21 and 28 March 2013, hold an Open Day to sensitize the public on courses that are being offered during the academic year 2013/2014. The Université des Mascareignes, the first public university based on the French model, would provide opportunities to students from French secondary education systems and from the neighbouring countries to pursue higher studies in Mauritius. The Université des Mascareignes would work closely with the private sector to address labour market needs.

14. Cabinet has taken note of the status in the implementation of the Law Practitioners' Vocational Course by the Centre for Professional Legal Studies of the University of Mauritius. The objectives of the Law Practitioners' Vocational Course are to offer high-quality training in legal principles from a practical perspective with emphasis on legal techniques, reasoning and ethics, and to prepare candidates for any of the following three streams, namely Attorneys, Barristers and Notaries of legal practice. The course, which has been designed in compliance with the Law Practitioners (Amendment) Act 2011, started in February 2013 with 113 students.

15. Cabinet has taken note of activities organized in the context of the implementation of the project entitled **Reinforcing Veterinary Governance in Africa**, which is being implemented by the African Union-Interafrican Bureau for Animal Resources. The main objective of the project is to strengthen institutions providing livestock services at the national level. In this context, the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security would set up a Livestock Policy Hub to, amongst others, –

- (a) sensitize stakeholders on livestock's value and contributions to the national economy;
- (b) identify and discuss on livestock development options with a view to improving the performance of institutions providing livestock services; and
- (c) enhance marketing of livestock and livestock products.

16. Cabinet has taken note that the value of exports of the Export-Oriented Enterprises Sector increased from Rs6.43 billion for the period January to February 2012 to Rs6.98 billion for the period January to February 2013, i.e., an increase of 8.5%. An increase has been recorded in exports, in terms of value, to traditional markets, i.e., the UK (+10.1%) and France (+2.1%), and within the Euro zone, i.e., Spain (+10.8%), Germany (+22.9%) and Netherlands (+114.9%). Export to South Africa and Madagascar has also increased by 21.4% and 2.9% respectively.

17. Cabinet has taken note of developments in the implementation of projects and activities under the "Africa Adaptation Programme on Climate Change" which has been implemented by the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development. The key achievements under the Programme are –

- (a) the development of a Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy Framework containing national risk profiles and maps on inland flooding, landslide and coastal inundation and the Action Plan;
- (b) the formulation of a National Climate Change Adaptation Policy Framework, comprising a National Climate Change Adaptation Policy, a Climate Change Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan and a Climate Change Adaptation Investment Programme;

- (c) the finalization of a legislative framework on climate change to support and facilitate the development and implementation of policies, strategies and programmes to address climate change adaptation and greenhouse gas emission reduction; and
- (d) training of about 2,600 professionals and stakeholders.

18. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the support mission of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) in Mauritius from 11 to 13 March 2013. The Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme is a framework developed to guide Member States in implementing the Maputo Declaration (2003) of the Head of States and Government of the African Union in order to enhance private sector investment to achieve a minimum growth rate of 6% per annum. The goal of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme is to eliminate hunger, reduce poverty and enhance food and nutrition in Africa through agriculture. During its visit, the Mission:

- (i) sensitized stakeholders involved in agricultural development and the CAADP Framework and its processes;
- (ii) visited the University of Mauritius, the Food and Agricultural Research Council and the Food Technology Laboratory; and
- (iii) had discussions on the official launching of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme in Mauritius and establishment of a roadmap towards the signature of the National CAADP Compact.

19. Cabinet has taken note that the following services would continue to operate on Saturdays:

- (a) 14 Citizens Advice Bureaux of the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping;
- (b) the offices of the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions on the Saturday immediately preceding the 20th day of each month;
- (c) the Ministry of Housing and Lands during the peak months of June, July and August; and
- (d) the Tourism Authority only for the month of July, representing the peak period for renewal of licences.

20. Cabinet has taken note that the Africa Centre of Excellence would be established as a separate and dedicated entity to enhance the position of Mauritius as a gateway to Africa. The Centre conducts research work, collects information on Africa, partners with appropriate regional organisations both in the private sector and the public sector, and establishes networking in major African cities to provide expert assistance to persons investing in Africa. The new entity would complement the activities of the Board of Investment and Enterprise Mauritius, and enhance coordination amongst the various institutions.

21. Cabinet has taken note of the National Report of Mauritius on the Post-2015 UN Development Framework that would be submitted to the United Nations High Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda. Mauritius is amongst the 61 countries chosen to hold national consultations on the Framework and submit recommendations on the theme **The Future We Want** and on elements that should be included in a Post-2015 UN Development Agenda. The National Report has been prepared in consultation with the private sector and the civil society. The main recommendations made in the Report are –

- (a) the Post-2015 UN Development Framework should be built upon and should improve the current Millennium Development Goals recognizing the strengths and the rallying power of the Goals while addressing their weaknesses and gaps; and
- (b) the new Framework should include new goals to, *inter alia*, achieve sustainable economic growth, build resilience for vulnerable countries like the Small Island Developing States, the Least Developed Countries and African Countries, and consolidate good governance and Universal Human Rights.

22. Cabinet has taken note of the activities that would be organised in the context of the World Water Day 2013, observed on 22 March, namely –

- (a) seminars, exhibition and talks on the theme **Water Cooperation**;
- (b) Open Days at La Marie Treatment Plant for primary and secondary school students up to June 2013;
- (c) awareness campaigns in schools on the theme **water saving**; and
- (d) drawing and project competitions for primary and secondary school students.

The theme chosen by the United Nations for World Water Day 2013 is **Water Cooperation**.

23. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development to Cape Town, South Africa. The Vice-Prime Minister led an investment promotion campaign of the Board of Investment, had meetings with prospective investors of the film industry, and visited the ICT incubator project launched by the Government of Western Cape. In the margins of the mission, the Vice-Prime Minister met the Hon Alan Winde, Minister of Finance and Economic Development & Tourism from the Government of Western Cape, who has agreed to provide technical assistance for the setting up of an ICT incubator project which would enable young entrepreneurs, supported by business mentors, to enter into businesses by deploying new mobile IT technologies.

24. Cabinet has taken note that the Minister of Housing and Lands would promulgate the Land Surveyors (Diplomas) (Amendment) Regulations to provide for the degree of Bachelor of Surveying from the Curtin University of Technology, Australia, to be recognized as an appropriate qualification for the Land Surveyor's Commission.

25. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology to the United Republic of Tanzania and the Republic of Uganda, where the Board of Investment, in collaboration with the Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology, had organised an export promotion mission. The objectives of the mission were to showcase the Mauritian higher education sector, encourage students from the two countries to choose Mauritius for further studies, and get an increased market share of international students for Mauritius. The Minister had meetings with Dr the Hon Shukuru Kawambwa, Minister for Education and Vocational Training of the United Republic of Tanzania and the Hon Mrs Jessica Arupo, Minister of Education and Sports who agreed to sign a Memorandum of Understanding on collaboration in research and higher education during their forthcoming visits to Mauritius.

26. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Tourism and Leisure to Germany where he participated in the ITB Fair 2013. The Fair, one of the most important tourism events held in Europe, offers an exceptional platform for networking, as well as opportunities to intensify our promotional efforts to reinforce the visibility of our destination.

Cabinet has also taken note that Mauritius won the “Destination of 2013” from Design Reisen - the most prestigious and distinguished Tour Operators for the luxury segment in Germany; and the “Best Golf Destination Campaign 2012” from GOLF Aktuell.

27. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of -

- (a) the National Productivity and Competitiveness Council with Mr Kevin Chuttur as Chairperson; and
- (b) the Labour Advisory Council with the Director, Labour and Industrial Relations, Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment as Chairperson.

28. Cabinet has taken note of the appointment on contract of Mr Veerbhanoo Bhageerutty as General Manager of the Mauritius Meat Authority.
