

CABINET DECISIONS – 22 NOVEMBER 2013

1. Cabinet has taken note that, according to the African Report on Child Well-being 2013: Towards Greater Accountability to Africa's Children, issued by the Africa Child Policy Forum in November 2013, Mauritius ranks first in Africa on the Most Child-Friendly Index. The Report analyses and ranks the performance of 52 African countries in a child friendliness index comparing progress since the first ranking in 2008.

Cabinet has also taken note that, in the Map of Global Children Rights 2014 through the Realisation of Children's Rights Index, released by Humanium, an international child sponsorship NGO dedicated to stop violations of child rights in the world, Mauritius ranks first in Africa and 41st in the world. The Report takes into account mortality rate of children under 5 years; life expectancy at birth; schooling; poverty; underweight at birth; HIV; child labour; child marriage; female genital mutilation; birth registration; ecological impact on the future of children; the right to freedom; the sense of life satisfaction; and war and other situation of violence.

2. Cabinet has agreed to the introduction of the Sports Bill in the National Assembly. The main objects of the Bill are to repeal the Sports Act 2001, and replace it by a modern and appropriate legislative framework to promote better management and organization of sports in Mauritius in line with the Olympic Charter. The Bill, amongst others, -

- (a) abolishes the Regional Sports Coordinating Committee;
- (b) makes provision to prevent the proliferation of fictitious federations and sports clubs;
- (c) provides for the autonomy of National Sports Federations;
- (d) establishes the National Women's Sports Commission to encourage and promote the practice of sports by women and in particular, schoolgirls, and the National Institute of Sports to promote and develop capacity building and sports leadership; and
- (e) provides for the appointment of an Ombudsperson for Sports to encourage voluntary and amicable settlement of disputes relating to sports.

3. Cabinet has agreed to the introduction of the Additional Remuneration (2014) Bill in the National Assembly. The Bill provides for the payment of an additional remuneration to employees of the private sector with effect from 01 January 2014 as follows -

- (a) Up to Rs8,100 per month - Rs300; and
- (b) Rs8,100 up to Rs20,000 per month - 3.7% rounded up to the next rupee.

Part-time employees whose basic wage or salary is Rs20,000 or less per month, would be paid a salary compensation of 3.7% rounded to the next rupee.

4. Cabinet has taken note that the Eighth Edition of the Festival International Kreol would be held from 27 to 30 November 2013. The objective of the festival is to showcase, *inter alia*, the richness and authenticity of the Kreol Culture within our cultural diversity, through its language, tradition, cuisine, music and dance. The theme for this year is ***Nu Pei Nu Kiltir Nu Kreolite***. The official opening, followed by a conference on the theme “**Moris dan lemond kreol**”, would be held on 30 November at the Grand Baie International Conference Centre. A Poetry Recital Night cum musical performances would be held on 27 November in Port Louis; a “*Sware Tipik*” and a “*Matine Tipik pou Zanfan*” on 29 November at Le Morne Public Beach and an All Night Concert, with the participation of the world renowned artists, such as the “*Zouk Machine Group*” from France, as well as artists from the Seychelles, Reunion Island, would be held at Domaine les Pailles on 30 November.

5. Cabinet has agreed to the quarantine period for imported dogs and cats being reduced from 30 to 5 working days as diseases are now detected within 12 to 24 hours through the latest technology available, and it is scientifically accepted that the incubation period for almost all infectious diseases of animals could last for about 5 days. In cases where certificates from accredited and competent laboratories/Competent Authority of the country of origin are to the satisfaction of the Division of Veterinary Services, or the Polymerase Chain Reaction tests show negative results, the animals would be released earlier. However, for cases where animals originate from countries where, according to the World Organisation for Animal Health, rabies are prevalent, the quarantine period of one month would be maintained.

6. Cabinet has taken note that the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security would promulgate regulations under the Animal Welfare Act 2013 to regulate the transportation and movement of animals in a humane manner, provide for a specific time frame for the movement of animals, and define the responsibilities of animal handlers, the type of vehicles to be used, loading and unloading facilities, and the use of goads and other devices to encourage or direct movement of animals.

7. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade to Sri Lanka where he participated in the 23rd Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM 2013). The theme of CHOGM 2013 was "**Growth with Equity: Inclusive development**".

Cabinet has also taken note that the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade had informed the Secretary General that since the Prime Minister had decided, on a principled stand, not to proceed to Colombo, he would, therefore, not personally invite the Heads of Government to CHOGM 2015. Since Mauritius did not wish to depart from the established practice and decorum, Mauritius had decided to withdraw as host country for CHOGM 2015. An *aide mémoire* was handed over to the Secretary General outlining the stand of Mauritius. Mauritius, however, reaffirmed its commitment to the values of the Commonwealth as enshrined in the Commonwealth Charter.

The issues that were raised during the Executive Sessions and the Retreat of Heads of Government included -

- (a) growth with equity: inclusive development;
- (b) terrorism, piracy, cybercrime and small arms and light weapons trade;
- (c) challenges facing SIDS;
- (d) promotion of fundamental Political Values of Commonwealth; and
- (e) the Global Economic Situation.

The Heads of Government welcomed the offer of Mauritius to host a Commonwealth Climate Finance skills hub. CHOGM 2015 would be held in Malta. Vanuatu and Malaysia would host CHOGM 2017 and 2019 respectively.

In the margins of CHOGM 2013, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade had bilateral meetings with –

- (a) the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Rwanda, Mrs Louise Mushikiwabo, on the possibility of employing Mauritian nationals in Rwanda;
- (b) the Prime Minister of St Kitts and Nevis for assistance to develop a cruise terminal; and
- (c) Mr Deepak Obhrai, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Human Rights of Canada on the possibility of expanding the Mauritius Circular Migration Programme.

8. Cabinet has taken note of activities that would be organised in the context of the celebrations marking the 60th Anniversary of the Mauritius Sugarcane Industry Research Institute, namely –

- (a) a talk on the theme **The World Sugar Market and Related Products – an outlook** by Dr Leonardo Bichara Rocha, Senior Economist from the International Sugar Organization;

- (b) launching of a DVD containing MSIRI Annual Reports 1953-2011, followed by an exhibition highlighting research and development activities, such as biomass cane, bio-plastics, bio-fertilizers, DNA technology and GIS applications;
- (c) a brainstorming session on the sugarcane industry;
- (d) an Open Day on research activities undertaken by MSIRI to increase productivity, profitability and sustainability of the cane industry; and
- (e) a workshop on Management of Weeds and Vines in Sugarcane.

9. Cabinet has taken note that the Minister of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection would promulgate the Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Petroleum Products) (Amendment) Regulations to include a new item “Contribution to Build Mauritius Fund” and remove the existing item “any contribution made for hedging purposes” in the price structure of petroleum products (Mogas and Gas Oil), and to review the existing critical limits used by the Petroleum Pricing Committee to calculate the retail price of Mogas and Gas Oil to a single range from 4% to 10% to trigger both decrease and increase in price.

10. Cabinet has agreed to the number of operating licences for microlight and small aircrafts being increased from 10 to 15 with a view to allowing the evolution of the aviation sector and promoting sightseeing activities, leisure flying and flight training. The operations of the aircrafts are limited to designated airspace and strictly controlled by the Department of Civil Aviation.

11. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the mission of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade to Geneva where he presented the Second Cycle Universal Periodic Review National Report for Mauritius before the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review of the Human Rights Council. During the interactive dialogue, the following recommendations were made regarding the Chagos Archipelago –

- (a) continue its current efforts aimed at improving the fate of the Chagossians; and
- (b) continue actions aimed at the return to the Chagos Archipelago of the Chagossians displaced from the island of Diego Garcia and the other islands of the Archipelago and to consider including in these actions processes for the reparation of victims.

In the margins of the Meeting, the Minister met, amongst others, the Director General of the World Intellectual Property Organisation and signed a Memorandum of Understanding on the Development of Intellectual Property Office Business Services providing for the modernization of the Intellectual Property Business Services in Mauritius, and assistance in the digitalizing of the system of the Intellectual Property Office.

12. Cabinet has taken note that the value of exports of Export-Oriented Enterprises for the period January to October 2013 as compared to the same period in 2012 has increased by 5%. Increase has been recorded in the export of textiles and clothing (+2.7%), fish and fish preparations (+12.2%), jewellery and precious and semi-precious stones (+10.8%), and medical devices (+9.2%). In spite of continuing difficulties in our traditional markets (Western Europe), our industrial exports are witnessing a healthy growth.

13. Cabinet has taken note of activities that would be organised in the context of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, namely-

- (a) visit to a severely disabled child and announcement of the project relating to home-based services for persons with severe disabilities;
- (b) a conference with the theme **Confidence Building for an Inclusive Society**;
- (c) cultural programme by persons with disabilities; and
- (d) award to winner of the 2nd Edition of the Yogesh Patroo Award.

14. Cabinet has taken note of the activities that would be organized to mark the International Volunteer Day on 05 December 2013, namely -

- (a) a handing over of cheque to NGOs for the implementation of micro-projects;
- (b) award of certificates to participants who followed training on First Aid and Communications;
- (c) holding of a workshop on **Strengthening Good Governance of NGOs**;
- (d) organization of a walk by MACOSS, in collaboration with the Ministry of Youth and Sports and the National Youth Council, from Rose Hill Football ground to Plaza; and
- (e) laying of a wreath at the *Stèle des Volontaires* at Plaza, Rose Hill.

15. Cabinet has taken note that the Minister of Fisheries would promulgate regulations, under the Fisheries and Marine Resources Act 2007, to prescribe fees for fishing licences issued by the Ministry of Fisheries and appropriate fees for Mauritian vessels and foreign handliners.

16. Cabinet has taken note that the Minister of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection would promulgate the Jewellery (Dealer's Registration and Transactions) (Amendment No. 2) Regulations to ban all forms of advertising, promotion and sponsorship associated with the purchase or sale of second-hand jewellery by dealers with a view to protecting the public against aggressive business practices. The Regulations would come into operation on 1 December 2013.

17. Cabinet has taken note of the new orientation proposed for the industry sector to enable the development of skill, technology and knowledge-based industries for its transition to a next level of development. The orientation would concern the development of new growth poles focusing on such industries as-

- (a) technical textiles and technical textiles-based garment;
- (b) medical devices;
- (c) pharmaceuticals;
- (d) high precision parts; and
- (e) high-end jewellery.

18. Cabinet has taken note that the Observatory on Ageing, operating under the aegis of the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions, would carry out action-oriented research on the socio-economic impact of Ageing with a view to elaborating appropriate policies for the elderly population. The Observatory would be assisted by the Tata Institute of Social Sciences of India.

19. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade to Australia where he participated in the 13th Session of the Council of Ministers of the Indian Ocean Rim Association, formerly known as Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC). Discussions centered on the six priority areas of cooperation, namely:

- (a) Maritime security and piracy;
- (b) Disaster risk reduction;
- (c) Trade and investment facilitation;

- (d) Fisheries management;
- (e) Academic and science and technology cooperation; and
- (f) Tourism and cultural exchanges.

In the margins of the Meeting, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade had discussions on bilateral issues with, amongst others, the Hon Ms Julie Bishop, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Australia and Chair of the Indian Ocean Rim Association, and HE Prof. G.L. Peiris, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka.

20. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Education and Human Resources to Paris where he participated in the 37th Session of the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and the 9th Session of the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality Assembly of Ministers. Mauritius was elected as member of the Executive Board of UNESCO and it topped the list of Group (Va), together with Guinea, by winning 166 votes out of 180.

In the margins of the Meeting, the Minister of Education and Human Resources had bilateral meetings with the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation of Cape Verde, Prof. Antonio Lead Correia e Silva, who agreed to the sharing of experiences in the field of ICT, Teachers Training and quality assurance. He also had a Working Session with a team of film producers and historians who are working on a Project to commemorate the 300th Anniversary of the arrival of the French to Mauritius.
