

CABINET DECISIONS – 21 MARCH 2014

1. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security has introduced 17 Schemes in the Non-Sugar Sector to further boost local production of food crops, milk and meat, and improve the level of self-sufficiency in various food commodities. Under the various Schemes, beneficiaries would be eligible for a grant subject to their satisfying established criteria. The Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security has also introduced Family Farming Micro Project Schemes to encourage Mauritians to undertake scientific backyard small scale gardening for the production of vegetables, fruits, horticultural products, and small farm animal production for their own use.

2. Cabinet has taken note that, following the meeting the Prime Minister had with the Prime Minister of Japan, HE Shinzo Abe, during his visit to Japan in 2013, the Japanese Government has agreed to provide a grant of Rs345m for the construction of a state-of-the-art radar system and capacity building. The Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) would sign an Agreement for the provision of technical assistance for the implementation of a project on 'Capacity Development on Climate Change Measures in the Republic of Mauritius'.

The objectives of the project are, amongst others, to:

- (a) establish sectoral guidelines/policies on climate change adaptation, in particular on coastal protection; and
- (b) enhance climate change education and public awareness activities in the country.

Under the Africa Adaptation Programme on Climate Change, the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development has, amongst others, -

- (a) formulated a National Climate Change Adaptation Policy Framework;
- (b) developed a Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy Framework and Action Plan;
- (c) formulated a legislative framework on Climate Change; and
- (d) mounted awareness campaigns.

3. Cabinet has taken note that the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment, with the assistance of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), would commission a study for the introduction of a National Minimum Wage in the private sector, following the request made by the representatives of workers at the meeting of the Tripartite Committee on Salary Compensation held in September 2012.

4. Cabinet has taken note that, following representations made by private traders, the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security has set up a Committee to review the current quota allocation mechanism in place at the Agricultural Marketing Board for the importation of potatoes and onions by private traders. The Terms of Reference of the Committee will be, *inter alia*, to:

- (a) assess whether the partial liberalization of potatoes and onions has achieved its objectives and whether consumers have benefitted therefrom;
- (b) evaluate the mechanism for quota allocation and to propose a fair, equitable and transparent formula for future quota allocation; and
- (c) submit its recommendations on ways and means to formulate a new mechanism which will meet the requirements of the private importers in the light of their grievances.

5. Cabinet has taken note that the Lindau Nobel Laureates Meeting Council has selected Dr Dominique Arnaud l'Omelette, currently undertaking research at the University of Mauritius, to attend the Lindau Nobel Laureates Meeting on Medicine/Physiology scheduled to be held in Lindau, Germany in July 2014. The Lindau Nobel Laureates Meeting, set up in 1951, aims at bringing together young scientists from all over the world to meet and interact with Nobel Laureates. Every year, some 550 young scientists participate in the Meetings which are attended by some 30 Nobel Prize winners. The Meetings are inspired by the guiding principle **Educate. Inspire. Connect.**

6. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security, with the support of the Food and Agricultural Organization, would carry out a Census of Agriculture in Mauritius. The Census would provide, amongst others, structural data on the agricultural sector, a benchmark for the system of current agricultural statistics, a frame for agricultural sample surveys, and data to help monitor progress towards global development targets, in particular the Millennium Development Goals.

7. Cabinet has agreed to the closure of Deep River Beau Champ Sugar Factory with effect from the end of crop 2013. One of the performance indicators for the disbursement of funds under the European Development Fund to support the Mauritian sugar reform was the centralization of milling activities aiming at establishing cost effective and competitive sugar factories as outlined in the Multi-Annual Adaptation Strategy Action Plan 2006-2015. The number of sugar factories was targeted to be reduced from 11 to 4.

Cabinet has taken note that the canes from the factory areas of Deep River Beau Champ, Constance and Ferney would be milled at Alteo Milling Ltd, Union Flacq. The cane delivery quota in respect of planters and métayers (excluding corporate growers) of Deep River Beau Champ, Constance and Ferney, currently prevailing at Deep River Beau Champ sugar milling factory, would be maintained and calculated over 140 days and the quota shall be increased in the event of cane fires. All benefits and services provided to the community of planters by Deep River Beau Champ will be maintained and closely monitored by the Mauritius Cane Industry Authority. The services include provision for cane factory laboratories, weighbridge facilities, cane slings, scum, cane setts and cane supply quota.

8. Cabinet has agreed to the introduction of the Mauritius Research Council (Amendment) Bill into the National Assembly. The objects of the Bill are, amongst others, to –

- (a) strengthen the mandate of the Mauritius Research Council;
- (b) ensure more effective coordination, rationalization and greater coherence of research and development and innovation at national level, in line with the economic, technological and social needs of Mauritius; and
- (c) enhance private sector participation in research and development and innovation.

9. Cabinet has taken note that the “Festival du Poisson” would be held on 29 and 30 March 2014 at Maison des Pecheurs, Cap Malheureux. The objectives of the Festival are, amongst others, to –

- (a) sensitise the general public on the activities of the cooperative fish sector and its contribution to the economy;
- (b) provide fishermen cooperatives with the necessary information on various incentives, facilities and support services put at their disposal; and
- (c) create a platform for displaying and marketing of fish and value-added fish products.

Cabinet has also taken note of the implementation of the following new projects by cooperative societies:

- (a) the Smoked Fish Project by the Trou d’Eau Douce Fishermen Cooperative Society Ltd to create value addition in order to enable fishermen to fetch higher prices for their products on the local market;
- (b) the Solar Dryer Project by the Lyons Fishermen Cooperative Society Ltd to dry fish, vegetables for pickling and fruits. It has an output capacity of 50 kgs per day; and

- (c) the Small Scale Aquaculture Cage Project by the Trou d'Eau Douce Fishermen Cooperative Society and the St Pierre Fishermen Cooperative Society Ltd.

10. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the official visit of the Hon Dato Sri Mustapa Mohamed, Minister of International Trade and Industry of Malaysia, to Mauritius on 11 and 12 March 2014. The Hon Dato Sri Mustapa Mohamed paid courtesy calls on the President of the Republic, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade. The Malaysian Minister also had a working session with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, and co-chaired a Business Forum. During the working session with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, the following issues, were amongst others, discussed -

- (a) closer collaboration in the fields of education and human resource development;
- (b) cooperation in the fields of socio-economic transformation;
- (c) conclusion of a Bilateral General Cooperation Framework Agreement and a cooperation instrument with the Malaysian Industry-Government Group for High Technology;
- (d) cooperation in the field of Islamic Banking and related financial services;
- (e) renewal of student visa in respect of Mauritian nationals; and
- (f) establishment of a Malaysian High Commission in Mauritius.

11. Cabinet has taken note of the status of the coastal protection and beach rehabilitation works currently being undertaken by the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development to abate coastal erosion at Poudre d'Or, Cap Malheureux, Grand River South East, Quatre Soeurs, Baie du Cap, Bain Boeuf, Le Morne, La Prairie and La Preneuse. Coastal protection works, including hard structures such as rock revetment, beach recharge/reprofiling works at different eroded public beaches, are being carried out.

12. Cabinet has taken note that the Municipal Town Council of Curepipe, in collaboration with the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security, would upgrade the landscape of Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam Botanical Garden Curepipe. The project comprises the survey of all existing endemic plants, weeding, planting and maintenance of the vegetation, upgrading and maintenance of existing tracks linking the garden to the Arboretum and the Trou aux Cerfs crater, creation of spiritual corners, and maintenance and propagation of the unique endemic palm plant, *Hyophorbe amaricaulis*.

13. Cabinet has taken note that the IST-Africa Conference and Exhibition 2014 would be held in Mauritius in May 2014. The goals of the IST-Africa Conferences are –

- (a) community building to facilitate EU-African research;
- (b) stimulate take-up of RTD results by the industrial and the public sectors;
- (c) promote knowledge sharing and exchange experiences about the current state of eAdoption; and
- (d) support international cooperation and open up the European Research Area to Africa.

The Forum would provide an excellent platform for Mauritian researchers and academia to interact with other research institutions of Africa and Europe and to present their research projects.

14. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade to the Democratic Republic of Congo where he participated in the 17th COMESA Summit of Heads of State and Government. The Summit was held under the theme “*Consolidating Intra-COMESA Trade through Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise Development*”. The issues discussed were, amongst others,–

- (a) Natural Resources as an Anchor for Transformation;
- (b) Free Trade Area and Customs Union;
- (c) Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, Women in Business and Industrialization;
- (d) the COMESA-SADC-EAC Tripartite Process; and
- (e) Agriculture Development.

Cabinet has also taken note that Mrs Indira Boodhram of the Food and Agricultural Research Council had been awarded the COMESA Innovation Award for her project on Bread Fruit in Vitro Propagation for Food Security.

15. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Education and Human Resources to India. The Minister was the Guest of Honour at the City Montessori School on the occasion of Mother’s Day. The City Montessori School, the largest school in the world with more than 44,000 students, advocates education needs to address three fundamentals, namely material education, human education and divine education. The School was awarded the UNESCO Prize for Peace Education in 2002. The Minister visited some Special Education Needs Institutions, as the sector is undergoing significant changes that need to be sustained through overseas linkages and adoption of good practices. He also participated in the Global Ayurveda Festival organized in association with the Government of Kerala.

16. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology to India where he participated in the Mauritius International Knowledge Investment Forum. The Forum is organised annually to showcase investment opportunities for higher education providers in Mauritius and develop a network of contact with prestigious universities. The main areas of focus of the Forum were –

- (a) internationalisation of higher education and student mobility in Africa;
- (b) addressing the growing human resource requirements in Africa;
- (c) Mauritius – the higher education platform for Africa; and
- (d) developing meaningful collaborations.

Following a meeting the Minister had with Professor Derek Yellon, Head of Hatter Cardiovascular Institute, University College London, the latter has agreed to assist in the setting up of a Hatter Institute in Mauritius.

Cabinet has further taken note that the University of Aberdeen has also agreed to sign a Memorandum of Understanding to develop joint degrees in petroleum and energy, including engineering, geology and potentially law and business.

17. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Information and Communication Technology to the UK where he participated in the Commonwealth ICT Ministers Forum and the Cybersecurity Forum 2014 organised by the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation. The Commonwealth ICT Ministers Forum is designed to brief Ministers on a range of ICT thematic areas, solicit inputs on emerging national and international issues, and discuss the way forward to address those issues. The Cybersecurity Forum is a platform to exchange ideas, share knowledge to improve security, safety and resilience of cyberspace. The theme for this year's Cybersecurity Forum was "*Developing National Cybersecurity Frameworks*".

18. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Tourism and Lesiure to Germany where he participated in the International Tourism Borse (ITB) Fair 2014. During the Fair, several new marketing initiatives were taken, including the production of an innovative and romantic film of 7 minutes on Mauritius for German speaking countries, and advertising campaigns for the Honeymoon segment.

Cabinet has also taken note that Mauritius won recognition as follows-

- (a) Award for the development of sustainable tourism by UNISTER - The leading online gateway to German Travel Demand;
- (b) 2013 Reader's Choice Award - The World's Best Golf Travel. Destinations - Long Distance Travel presented by the magazine Golf Aktuell; and

- (c) The “Most Popular Destination in the Indian Ocean” by the Swiss Tour Operator Let’s Go Tours.

Following a meeting the Minister had with Mr Norbert Stiekema, Executive Vice-President Sales and Marketing, the cruise liner Costa Crocière would resume its cruise home-porting activities in the region as from January 2015.

- 19. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of –
 - (a) the Board of Trustees of the Trade Union Trust Fund; and
 - (b) the National Institute for Cooperative Entrepreneurship Council under the chairmanship of Mr Sunil Dev Gopaul, MSK.
