

## CABINET DECISIONS – 5 SEPTEMBER 2014

1. Cabinet has taken note that, at the request of the Prime Minister, a Committee was set up to examine issues relating to the payment of a basic pension to religiously married widows.

Cabinet has agreed to the recommendations of the Committee for the introduction of the payment of a surviving partner's allowance, equivalent to the rate of widow's basic pension, to any applicant who had started living with their partner as the latter's wife at any time between the period 13 November 1987 to 22 December 1990 but could not contract a religious marriage without being civilly married during that period, and an additional allowance equivalent to the rate of the child's allowance for each dependent child, not exceeding three, under the National Pensions Act. The grant of the allowance would be subject to certain conditions, including -

- (a) the applicant has not subsequently contracted any civil or religious marriage after the death of her partner;
- (b) the applicant is under the age of 60; and
- (c) the applicant is not in receipt of social aid, widow's basic pension, invalid's basic pension or survivor's pension.

-----

2. Cabinet has agreed to the correction of the anomalous situation whereby Educator (Primary), a grade created following the PRB Report 2008, obtained a higher salary scale than Teacher/Senior Teachers who were serving prior to 2008, and reckoning more experience, as well as possessing the Teacher's Diploma. The Ministry of Education and Human Resources strongly considered that this anomaly should be corrected on the principle of an "Equal Pay for Equal Qualification".

-----

3. Cabinet has taken note of the situation regarding the sale of State lands to holders of building site leases. As at date, some 8,400 applications have been received, out of which some 4,000 applications have already been processed, and some 2,500 Letters of Intent issued. Government will bear the stamp duty and registration fees amounting to Rs2,000/- under this Scheme.

As regards the sale of land on which stand ex-CHA houses, Cabinet has taken note that, as at date, 10,252 owners have already acquired their plot of land and some 236 additional applications are being processed.

-----

4. Cabinet has agreed to the National Strategy and Action Plan on Disability 2014-2024, - "Towards a Disability-Inclusive and Barrier-Free Society". The new disability policy aims, amongst others, at addressing the emerging challenges and constraints in the Disability Sector, in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It further empowers persons with disabilities in the mainstream society and enhances incentives for employers to recruit persons with disabilities. The Action Plan provides, *inter alia*, for a new Disability Bill to reinforce the rights of persons with disabilities, setting up of an Integrated National Structure to assess persons with disabilities at a single point for eligibility to different benefits and facilities available, extension of the provisions of the Training and Employment of Disabled Persons (Amendment) Act 2012 to the civil service, and provision of all facilities for the education and emancipation of persons with disabilities.

-----

5. Cabinet has taken note of developments in the project for the improvement in sea and air transportation facilities in Agalega in order to promote the development of the island.

-----

6. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the International Cardiovascular Meeting and the Third Meeting of the International Advisory Committee on Diabetes and Cardiovascular Diseases held in Mauritius in August 2014. During the International Cardiovascular Meeting, presentations on topics, such as Strategies for Tackling Cardiovascular Disease, Prevention of Cardiovascular Disease Starts Before Birth, Exercise as Therapy in Cardiovascular Disease, New Concepts in Protecting the Heart and Recent Advances in Diabetes, were made by eminent faculty Speakers/Professors in the fields of cardiology and diabetes from the UK, Wales, the USA and Sweden.

In the margins of the Cardiovascular Meeting, the International Advisory Committee on Diabetes and Cardiovascular Diseases reviewed the implementation of the National Service Frameworks for Diabetes and Cardiovascular Diseases and made recommendations, amongst others, on -

- (a) the reinforcement of the Primary Health Care System to improve diabetes care;
- (b) the introduction of plain-packaging of tobacco and further raising of taxes on tobacco products;
- (c) the need to regulate the use of salt and trans-fats;
- (d) the development of a Cardiovascular Risk Calculator for Mauritius with the support of Professor J. Tuomilehto, Professor of Public Health, University of Helsinki, Finland and Professor S. Soderberg, Department of Public Health and Clinical Medicine, Umea University Hospital, Sweden; and
- (e) the establishment of Nurse-led clinics to expand the delivery of evidence-based diabetes care.

-----

7. Cabinet has taken note that the National Women's Council Act 1985 is being reviewed and would be replaced by a new enactment to –

- (a) make better provision for the functioning, powers and membership of the National Women's Council, and provide a platform for women to voice out their needs, concerns and aspirations;
- (b) promote women's empowerment and achieve gender equality in all sectors of development in Mauritius through, *inter alia*, the active participation of women in the social, economic and political fields; and
- (c) make better provision for the regulation and registration of Women Associations, and for a more effective management of the Regional Committees responsible for the activities of Women Associations.

-----

8. Cabinet has taken note of the status in the deployment of Wireless Fidelity (WiFi) Network in public places around Mauritius under the Intelligent Mauritius Partnership Programme and with the assistance of private companies. As at date, free WiFi Internet connectivity is available at the University of Mauritius, the University of Technology, Mauritius, on the premises of local authorities, the Victoria Bus Terminal and some 264 computer clubs have been set up. It is proposed to provide free 150 WiFi zones on the premises of Village Halls, Youth Centres, Women Centres, Community Centres and Social Welfare Centres where computer clubs have been set up. On 17 September 2014, the WiFi Spot at l'Escalier would be launched.

-----

9. Cabinet has taken note of developments in the operationalization of the Oasis Residential Care/Drop-in Centre, situated at Grand River North West. The main objective of the Centre is to ensure protection and assistance to children, victims of commercial and sexual exploitation, in a more sustainable manner and in a conducive environment. The Centre, which would cater for 30 children aged between 9 to 18 years, comprises, *inter alia*, separate dormitories for different age groups, classrooms, a counselling room, an IT training room and six workshops.

-----

10. Cabinet has reviewed the evolution of the Ebola Virus Disease, and agreed to a Committee, under the chairmanship of the Secretary to Cabinet and Head of the Civil Service, being set up to examine all implications of allowing foreign nationals from countries affected by the disease to enter Mauritius, and make recommendations.

-----

11. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the Fourth Round of Political Consultations between the Republic of Mauritius and the Russian Federation held on 28 August 2014 in Mauritius. The issues discussed include -

- (a) the signing of a bilateral Visa Exemption Agreement;
- (b) finalization of a Memorandum of Understanding in the field of Tourism;
- (c) the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the aeronautical authorities of Mauritius and those of the Russian Federation;
- (d) the setting up of a Russian Cultural Centre in Mauritius; and
- (e) collaboration in the fields of sports and security.

-----

12. Cabinet has taken note that the International Competition Network would hold its next Advocacy Working Group Workshop in Mauritius in November 2014. The theme of the Workshop is “**Assessing Advocacy Effectiveness**”. The main objectives of the Workshop are to assess the impact of competition advocacy on the national economy of countries and provide training to competition agencies on advocacy issues, with particular emphasis on how to use advocacy to complement enforcement. Some 150 delegates from some 100 countries would attend the Workshop.

-----

13. Cabinet has taken note that a Regional Seminar on Drug Use Prevention would be held in Mauritius in September 2014. The main objective of the Seminar is to empower policymakers and implementers from Ministries, institutions and non-governmental institutions in the formulation and planning of a national drug prevention system, that is scientifically evidence-informed and health centred, with emphasis on young people.

-----

14. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent visit of Mrs Katherine Ichoya, Chief Executive Officer, FEMCOM Secretariat, in Mauritius. During her visit, Mrs Ichoya signed an Agreement with the National Women Entrepreneur Council providing for technical and advisory services as regards the Business Incubator for African Women Entrepreneurship Development, the implementation of the COMESA Cluster Development Initiative in Mauritius, capacity building for women entrepreneurship development, and the facilitation of intra-COMESA trade and investment. She also launched the Mauritius FEMCOM Chapter. The National Women Entrepreneur Council is the FEMCOM Chapter for Mauritius. Mrs Ichoya announced that FEMCOM would assist in the setting up of a virtual Trading House to enable women entrepreneurs to market their products.

-----

15. Cabinet has taken note of activities that would be organized in the context of the World Suicide Prevention Day commemorated on 10 September 2014, namely -

- (a) sensitization campaigns on suicide prevention;
- (b) distribution of yellow awareness ribbons;
- (c) "Cycle around the globe" activity on the World Suicide Prevention Day;
- (d) stress screening programme at the R. Seeneevassen Building, Port Louis; and
- (e) projection of the film on suicide "*La vie ène cadeau*".

This year's theme is "**Suicide Prevention: One World Connected**".

-----

16. Cabinet has taken note of the setting up of the UNESCO Regional Centre for Ocean Sciences and Innovation for Capacity Development and Research in Mauritius. The Centre would, in partnership with international stakeholders, undertake capacity building in ocean studies, research and technology, environmental, and marine health, and social impact assessments.

-----

17. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Jewellery Advisory Council with Mr Nundkesswar Dawooram as Chairperson.

-----