

## CABINET DECISIONS – 26 SEPTEMBER 2014

1. Cabinet has taken note that, on an invitation of the Honourable Society of the Inner Temple, Dr the Hon Navinchandra Ramgoolam, GCSK, FRCP, Prime Minister, would deliver the Gandhi Foundation Annual Lecture 2014 on 1 October. The title of the lecture will be “The Rule of Law and Nation Building”.

Cabinet has also taken note that the Prime Minister will have a bilateral meeting with Mr François Hollande, President of the Republic of France, in Paris. The Prime Minister will also have a meeting with the French Interior Minister, Mr Bernard Cazeneuve, to discuss matters of security.

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2. Cabinet has taken note that the Commission of Inquiry on Horse Racing in Mauritius has been set up with Mr Richard Nicholas Parry as Chairperson, and Mr Dennis George Gunn and Mr John Paul Scotney as Assessors. They are UK nationals. The Commission will be assisted in its work by other experts from overseas. The Commissioners have, on 25 September 2014, taken oath before the President of the Republic. The Commission has already started its work and formal hearings are scheduled as from mid-November 2014. The proceedings will be held in camera.

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3. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, in collaboration with the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security, would set up an Agricultural Decision Support System under the proposed “Africa Adaptation Programme on Climate Change”. The System would help planters and farmers better adapt to climate change, enable them take appropriate and timely decisions for the planning of operations, such as fertilization, irrigation and application of crop protectants, and build resilience against climate change. Real time Agromet data, such as temperature, relative humidity, wind speed, wind direction, solar radiation and soil moisture, would be collected by Automatic Agromet Stations situated at Richelieu, Barkly, Flacq, Réduit, Plaine Sophie, Plaisance and Wooton, and provided to planters, farmers and agriculture scientists.

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4. Cabinet has taken note that, with a view to promoting excellence in the disability sector, the Training and Employment of Disabled Persons Board would launch the National Disability Excellence Award. The main objectives of the Award will be to reward -

- (a) the achievements of persons with disabilities who have excelled in, and created an impact in their field of work; and
- (b) employers, both in the public and private sectors, who have developed appropriate policies and set up strategies for the recruitment, employment and retention of persons with disabilities.

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5. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the 'Dis'Ability Business Forum organised by the Training and Employment of Disabled Persons Board, in collaboration with the Global Rainbow Foundation, held on 15 and 16 September 2014. The Forum has, amongst others, recommended –

- (a) the need to focus on accessibility issues for persons with disabilities;
- (b) the enhancement of access to information for persons with disabilities by promoting the Mauritian Sign Language, and training interpreters in Sign Language;
- (c) the promotion of the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility with focus on responsibility of enterprises with regard to employment of persons with disabilities;
- (d) the re-engineering of tailor-made programmes for persons with disabilities; and
- (e) the strict enforcement of the provisions of the Training and Employment of Disabled Persons (Amendment) Act 2012.

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6. Cabinet has taken note that the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment would make the Occupational Safety and Health (Control of Asbestos at Work) Regulations to enhance the standard of safety and health protection against asbestos found in places of work. The regulations provide, amongst others, for -

- (a) the requirement to identify, by analysis, the type of asbestos present before commencing asbestos-related works;
- (b) the need to carry out risk assessment and determine the nature and degree of exposure that may occur in the course of asbestos-related works;
- (c) the establishment of control measures to prevent or reduce exposure to asbestos; and
- (d) the provision of personal protective equipments and clothing to employees.

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7. Cabinet has taken note that the International Diabetes Federation would organize the Diabetes Summit in Mauritius from 02 to 05 October 2014. The main objective of the Summit is to promote effective counselling of diabetes-related programmes, the understanding of broader prevention and treatment methods, as well as the in-depth exchange of ideas and country experiences in diabetes care. Participants from countries of the South East Asia Regional Council, including India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Maldives, would attend the Meeting.

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8. Cabinet has taken note of the School Calendar for the primary and secondary sectors for the Academic Year 2015, which is as follows –

|          | <u>Primary</u>                            | <u>Secondary</u>                         |
|----------|-------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| 1st Term | Monday 12 January to<br>Friday 03 April   | Monday 12 January to<br>Friday 03 April  |
| 2nd Term | Monday 20 April to<br>Friday 17 July      | Monday 20 April to<br>Friday 17 July     |
| 3rd Term | Monday 17 August to<br>Friday 06 November | Monday 10 August to<br>Friday 30 October |

Admission of students to Standard I and Form I would be on Friday 09 January 2015.

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9. Cabinet has taken note that, for the period January to August 2014 as compared to the corresponding period in 2013, the value of exports of the Export Oriented Enterprises Sector increased by 1.0%. The Textile and Clothing Sector and the Jewellery and Precious and Semi-Precious stones have shown an increase in value by 6.2%, and 21.6% respectively.

Cabinet has also taken note of the growth in export to the USA and the European zone, mainly France and Belgium.

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10. Cabinet has agreed to the implementation of the National Open Source Software Policy and the National Open Source Software Strategy. The objectives of the Open Source Software Policy are, amongst others, to develop strategies and plans to reinforce the use of open source software to enhance value and improve technical efficiency within the Mauritian ICT Sector, bring localized ICT tools to help develop local knowledge communities, provide flexibility not available in closed products, and promote the creation of software, that is not proprietary.

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11. Cabinet has taken note that the High Level Committee on the Ebola Virus Disease has reviewed the evolution of the Disease and recommended that -

- (a) the Republic of Senegal be removed from the list of affected countries, subject to the guidelines of the World Health Organisation; and
- (b) all foreign nationals who have visited one or more of the countries affected by the Ebola Virus Disease, i.e., Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of Congo, during the last two months as from the date of their travel to Mauritius, would temporarily not be allowed to enter Mauritius.

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12. Cabinet has taken note that the Project Plan Committee has recommended 15 projects to the tune of Rs1.5 billion for inclusion in the Public Sector Investment Programme. The projects are, amongst others, the construction of a modern slaughter house at Belle Rive; a multi-purpose building consisting of commercial, social, sports amenities and market fair at Le Forum, Forest Side; housing units and associated works, and serviced plots at Mont Goût, Melrose and Souillac; 30km of trackroads around Rodrigues, and the Head Office Building for the District Council of Flacq, and the upgrading of Ripailles Nicolière Road – B49 from Nouvelle Decouverte to Eau Bouille Bus Terminal.

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13. Cabinet has taken note of arrangements being made by telecommunication operators to put up towers to address the issue of poor mobile network coverage in certain regions of the country, particularly the Terre Rouge-Verdun Link Road and the M1 Motorway in the short term, and the entire road network in the long term.

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14. Cabinet has taken note of developments on the design and formulation of a National Export Strategy. A team of Consultants from the International Trade Centre, that visited Mauritius recently, has proposed the design of a comprehensive National Export Strategy, to -

- (a) address trade opportunities and challenges as a result of trade preference erosion, emerging competitive threats and development of new growth poles;
- (b) increase policy coherence and convergence, and improve the legal and regulatory framework;
- (c) formulate a strategic vision and roadmap for key sectors with export development potential; and
- (d) establish more formal linkages between trade and poverty alleviation, as well as with other development dimensions, such as gender, youth and environment.

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15. Cabinet has taken note of developments in the implementation of the Resource Efficient and Cleaner Production Programme for the Manufacturing Sector. The main objectives of the Programme are to promote greening of participating enterprises, and improve productivity and competitiveness.

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16. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology, in collaboration with the African Union Commission, would hold the Internet Exchange Point Best Practice Workshop on 06 and 07 October 2014. The main objectives of the Workshop are to create awareness and impart knowledge on the values and benefits of establishing a local Internet Exchange Point for the local Internet ecosystem, and build consensus and gain commitment towards peering.

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17. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent official visit of the Hon Ms Julie Bishop, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Australia to Mauritius. During the visit, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade had a bilateral meeting with the Hon Ms Bishop, with whom he raised, amongst others, –

- (a) cooperation in the field of education and the possibility of having Indian Ocean Islands included in the New Colombo Plan that aims at lifting knowledge of the Indo-Pacific in Australia by supporting Australian undergraduates to study and undertake internships in the region;
- (b) the signing of a Comprehensive Economic and Trade Cooperation Agreement to allow Mauritius to be used as a platform by Australian businesses to penetrate the broader COMESA/SADC markets; and
- (c) the possibility of concluding a short stay waiver agreement and a Bilateral Agreement on Circular Migration.

The Hon Ms J. Bishop, Minister for Foreign Affairs, also attended a High-Level Briefing on the theme “**Tackling Maritime Crime in the Indian Ocean**” organised by the Indian Ocean Rim Association. The aim of the briefing was to discuss cooperation with Australia and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime with the possibility of complementing ongoing efforts to fight piracy with further focus in the areas of narcotics and arms trafficking. She also hosted a High-Level Panel on Ocean Economy. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade attended both sessions. In the margins of her visit, a Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation in the field of Ocean Studies was signed between the University of Mauritius and the University of Western Australia.

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18. Cabinet has taken note that, in line with the recommendations of the ILO, the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment has, in June 2014, forwarded the Draft National Employment Policy to the Technical Committee on Labour Market, Employment Creation, Skills and Training under the National Tripartite Forum for their views. The views and recommendations of the Technical Committee are being awaited, following which a Validation Workshop would be organized. The National Employment Policy would be launched thereafter.

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19. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Standards Council of the Mauritius Standards Bureau with Mr Suttihudeo Tengur as Chairperson.

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20. Cabinet has taken note of the appointment of Mr Jimmy Harmon as Director of the Nelson Mandela Centre for African Culture.

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