

## **CABINET DECISIONS – 11 APRIL 2014**

1. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of Dr the Hon Navinchandra Ramgoolam, GCSK, FRCP, Prime Minister to Brussels, France and the United Kingdom.

In Brussels, the Prime Minister participated in the 4<sup>th</sup> EU-Africa Summit. He was accompanied by Dr the Hon A. Boolell, GOSK, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade. The theme of the Summit was “*Investing in People, Prosperity and Peace*”. The main objectives of the Summit were to discuss the future of EU-Africa relations and cooperation, and reinforce links between the two continents.

In his intervention, the Prime Minister drew attention to the fact that peace and security were intrinsically linked to prosperity, and stated that both Africa and EU should work as true partners to optimise on the tremendous potential and opportunities that the continent offers. He stressed on the importance of the transfer of technology and know-how, especially in areas of food production and management of natural resources, and for mitigating the impact of climate change. He appealed for support for generating wealth and creating employment in Africa. He informed the Summit that, in the context of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the African Union, Mauritius has offered 50 scholarships to African students in our universities. He urged the European partners to display flexibility in negotiations on Economic Partnership Agreements, in particular on the issue of Rules of Origin, which represents a hindrance to the very concept of global value chains.

In the margins of the Summit, the Prime Minister had bilateral meetings with Mr Andris Piebalgs, EU Commissioner for Development; the Right Hon Baroness Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission; and the President of the Republic of Madagascar, HE Mr Hery Rajaonarimampianina. He also met HE Mr François Hollande, President of France and HE Mrs Angela Merkel, German Chancellor.

During his meeting with Commissioner Piebalgs, the Prime Minister discussed several issues, including the fight against piracy, the abolition of the EU Sugar production quota by the EU, and support under Promoting Sustainable and Equitable Development (PSED 1).

EU Commissioner Piebalgs congratulated Mauritius for making efficient use of development aid resources provided by the EU and expressed his appreciation to the role played by Mauritius at the international and regional level especially in the resolution of the Malagasy crisis. The Commissioner agreed to consider the proposals of the Prime Minister including the disbursement of funds under the PSED 1 for the Ethanol Use Framework.

During his meeting with Baroness Ashton, the Prime Minister reiterated the concerns of Mauritius on the abolition of sugar quota, support under Promotion Sustainable and Equitable Development and exchanged views on the implementation of the EU-Mauritius Transfer Agreement signed in 2012. Baroness Ashton congratulated Mauritius for its leadership role in the region not only at political level but also at providing capacity-building and investment in the region and assured the Prime Minister that she would support the measures proposed by Commissioner Piebalgs to address his concerns.

The Prime Minister also met HE Mr Hery Rajaonarimampianina, President of the Republic of Madagascar to whom he reiterated the unconditional support of Mauritius in the restructure of its economy. He also stressed on the importance of further strengthening cooperation between the two countries, particularly in the fields of air, maritime and digital connectivity, as well as agriculture, trade and investment opportunities.

The Prime Minister took the opportunity of the presence of the Heads of State/Government of Member States of the *Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie* to garner their support in favour of the candidature of Mr Jean Claude de l'Estrac for the post of Secretary General of the *Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie*.

During his stopover in France, the Prime Minister conveyed his congratulations to Mr Manuel Valls, who had been appointed Prime Minister of the Republic of France and Mrs Ségolène Royal, Minister of Environment, Sustainable Development and Energy.

In London, the Prime Minister had a meeting on the Chagos Archipelago issue with Mr Philippe Sands, QC, leading counsel. The Secretary to Cabinet and Head of the Civil Service, the Solicitor General, amongst others, also attended the meeting. The main purpose of the meeting was to review latest developments in the case brought by Mauritius against the United Kingdom under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea to challenge the legality of the 'marine protected area' which the United Kingdom has purported to establish around the Chagos Archipelago.

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2. Cabinet has agreed to the introduction of the Mauritius Cane Industry Authority (Amendment) Bill in the National Assembly. The main object of the Bill is to amend the Mauritius Cane Industry Authority Act to provide, *inter alia*, for –

- (a) a new definition of 'crop year' in order to enable the Control and Arbitration Committee to perform its functions related to weighbridge and milling activities, determination of sugar accruing to planters and millers and arbitration of disputes;

- (b) a factory that has closed down but contains fully operational infrastructure with regard to cane sampling, cane storage facilities, cane unloading facilities and weighing of canes, to operate as a cane transit site which would continue providing those facilities to planters; and
- (c) remove any reference to middlemen since no person now acts as middleman.

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3. Cabinet has taken note that, in the context of the implementation of the Roadmap of the Ocean Economy, the legal, regulatory and fiscal frameworks for the Hydrocarbon and the Deep Sea Mineral Mining Sector is being developed with the collaboration of the Commonwealth Secretariat. The Secretariat would also advise on the regulation of offshore petroleum and mineral exploration and development.

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4. Cabinet has taken note of developments in the transformation of the Development Bank of Mauritius Ltd into a Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME) Bank. The aim of the restructuring of the Bank is to improve service delivery, bridge the gap by offering an array of products, and provide a one-stop solution to MSMEs, amongst others, in the tourism, agriculture, manufacturing, trade and environmental sectors. The vision of the Bank would be "*To be the most preferred customer-centric bank serving the unmet financial needs of MSME customers*". The new Bank would retain the appellation of 'DBM'. It is expected that the Bank would, subsequently, extend its activities to Africa and the region, in line with the Africa initiative of Government. In this connection, the Development Bank of Mauritius Ltd and an Indian Consortium, led by the Small Industries Development Bank of India, in partnership with the Bank of Maharashtra, would sign a Memorandum of Understanding on the operationalization of the new Bank.

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5. Cabinet has taken note that Dr Michel Sidibé, Executive Director of UNAIDS and Under Secretary General of the United Nations, would effect an official visit to Mauritius from 17 to 21 April 2014. The objects of his visit are to advance efforts towards ending the AIDS epidemic and reposition AIDS within the broader Post-2015 Development Framework. He would meet the Prime Minister and have working sessions with the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life, the National AIDS Secretariat and other stakeholders.

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6. Cabinet has taken note that the Minister of Information and Communication Technology would promulgate the Information and Communication Technologies (Quality of Service) Regulations to operationalise the National Quality of Service Framework for Broadband Internet. The main objectives of the Regulations are to provide, *inter alia*, for -

- (a) public operators meeting the minimum requirements for quality of service, and recording measurements of all relevant quality of service parameters in accordance with the directives issued by the ICT Authority;
- (b) the ICT Authority publishing such quality of service results, and monitoring report data of public operators; and
- (c) penalty clauses and charges in case of provision of false information by public operators.

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7. Cabinet has taken note that, to mark its 25th Anniversary, the Islamic Cultural Centre would unveil a Commemorative Stèle and hold cultural and educational activities, namely, exhibitions; a workshop on the actual status of Arabic & Urdu as taught subjects in Primary and Secondary Schools; a symposium on the contribution of the Muslim Community in the independence of Mauritius; and Anasheed, quiz, culinary and national Quiraat competitions.

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8. Cabinet has taken note that from 4 to 10 April 2014, 1,398 samples had been analysed at the Central Health Laboratory and no case of dengue fever had been detected. The Ministry of Health and Quality of Life is maintaining its surveillance and is strengthening its sensitization campaign against the proliferation of mosquito-borne diseases.

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9. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection, in partnership with the Board of Investment, Enterprise Mauritius and the Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and with the collaboration of the Seychelles Authorities, would organize a Mauritius-Seychelles Business Forum, and a Mauritius Exhibition and Trade Fair from 24 to 26 April 2014 in Mahé, Seychelles. During the Business Forum, discussions would focus on challenges and opportunities to strengthen business linkages, and promote investment and trade opportunities between Mauritius and Seychelles. Business-to-Business meetings are also scheduled. In the margins of the Business Forum, Enterprise Mauritius, the State Trading Corporation and the Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and Industry would sign Memoranda of Understanding with their Seychelles counterparts.

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10. Cabinet has agreed to the Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities and the International Atomic Energy Agency signing the Country Programme Framework providing for technical assistance programmes with focus on priority development areas for the period 2014-2018. The areas that have been identified are, amongst others, –

- (i) human health;
- (ii) food and agriculture;
- (iii) control of marine and terrestrial pollution;
- (iv) water and energy resources development;
- (v) support to human resources development and capacity building in nuclear science and technology; and
- (vi) radiation protection and waste safety.

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11. Cabinet has taken note of progress on the implementation of the Mauritius Light Rapid Transit project that aims at solving traffic congestion problems and providing an efficient and quality public transport system from Curepipe to Port Louis, in the first instance.

Cabinet has also taken note that a Bill would shortly be introduced in the National Assembly for the operation of the mass rapid transit system.

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12. Cabinet has taken note that the Mauritius Cane Industry Authority and the Sugar Research Institute Fiji would sign a Memorandum of Understanding providing for cooperation in crop improvement and biotechnology, exchange of cane germplasm, crop management, mechanisation of small farms and research and development, amongst others.

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13. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security to Tunis where he participated in the 28th Food and Agriculture Organisation Regional Conference for Africa. The theme of the Conference was **Towards African Renaissance: Renewed Partnerships for a Unified Approach to end hunger in Africa by 2025**. The Ministerial roundtable focused on three key priority areas of actions needed to accelerate agricultural transformation and eradicate hunger in Africa, viz:

- (a) enhance the enabling environment for investment by the domestic private sector, including smallholder farmers;

- (b) invest in the enhancement of agricultural productivity and constructive engagement of youth, smallholder farmers and family farming; and
- (c) determine how Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme can more effectively contribute to building systemic capacity for monitoring and evaluation, and results-oriented action.

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14. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology to South Africa where he participated in the First Ministerial Meeting of the Square Kilometre Array Project. The Project, the biggest and most powerful telescope in the world with a collecting area of one million square metres, would survey the sky and provide the highest resolution images in astronomy.

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15. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment to Geneva where he participated in the International Dialogue on South-South Migration: Partnering Strategically for Development. The Conference was organised by the International Organisation for Migration in the framework of its International Dialogue on Migration, under the theme **Human mobility and development: Emerging trends and new opportunities for partnership**. The Conference examined emerging global trends of human mobility and assessed their impact, focusing specifically on migration between countries and regions of the “Global South”. In the margins of the Conference, the Minister had a meeting with Mr William Lacy Swing, Director General of the International Organisation for Migration, with whom he discussed avenues of migration for Mauritians, particularly those holding degrees in different fields of study.

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16. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Hearing Committee of the Training and Employment of Disabled Persons Board with Mrs Johan Moutou-Leckning, as Chairperson. The Hearing Committee holds hearings with employers referred to by the Board for non-compliance with the provisions of the Training and Employment of Disabled Persons (Amendment) Act, and makes recommendations for consideration by the Board.

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17. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of –

- (a) the Committee of the President's Fund for Creative Writing under the Chairmanship of Mrs Anitah Aujayeb, Educator and Part-time Lecturer at the Open University; and
- (b) the Committee of Management of the National Archives Research and Publication Fund under the Chairmanship of Mrs Diana Bablee, Acting Director, National Archives.

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