

CABINET DECISIONS – 31 OCTOBER 2014

1. Cabinet has taken note of developments in the project for the Improvement in Sea and Air Transportation Facilities in Agalega, which will be executed jointly by the Government of India and the Government of Mauritius. In this context, a Memorandum of Understanding will be signed with the Government of India. The project comprises, amongst others, the construction of a jetty for berthing of ships, rehabilitation and repaving of the runway, installation of a power generation facility, and the setting up of a water desalination plant. The project will be funded from a Line of Credit provided by the Government of India during the State Visit of the Prime Minister to India in February 2012.

2. Cabinet has taken note of the various schemes introduced to facilitate access to credit for the setting up of new enterprises or the expansion of existing ones, namely –

- (a) the SME Financing Scheme to provide concessionary loans to SMEs for the implementation of viable projects. As at 31 August 2014, an amount to the tune of Rs4 billion has been approved in favour of some 3,400 SMEs.
- (b) The Loan Guarantee Scheme, introduced in 2014, to provide loan facilities up to an amount of Rs2m without the need for collateral.
- (c) The Booster Micro Credit Loan Scheme to provide loans up to Rs150,000 without collateral. An amount of Rs208m has been disbursed to 2,542 SMEs.
- (d) The Restructuring Working Group Credit Factoring Scheme to provide cash flow to entrepreneurs. An amount of Rs711.8m has been disbursed in respect of 105 SMEs.
- (e) The Leasing Equipment Modernisation Scheme to fund the acquisition and upgrading of production equipment. More than 550 SMEs benefitted from the Scheme to modernize their machinery and equipment.
- (f) The SME Partnership Fund has participated in the Share Capital of 93 SMEs having viable projects.

3. Cabinet has taken note that the proposal of Mauritius for the implementation of the International Indenture Labour Route Project was discussed and adopted at the 195th Session of the Executive Board of the UNESCO held on 28 October 2014. The proposal was adopted by acclamation and with the support of more than thirty Member States, including India, the People's Republic of China, the Russian Federation, France, the African and Caribbean groups, which welcomed the project initiated by Mauritius, the only country hosting a World Heritage Site related to indentured labour. The Project will complement UNESCO's Slave Route Project and further promote a culture of peace, cultural pluralism and intercultural dialogue. UNESCO has also agreed to the Secretariat of the project being hosted by the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund and will provide technical support for the project.

4. Cabinet has agreed to the Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology and the Ministry of Education and Skills Development of Botswana signing a Memorandum of Understanding to, amongst others, facilitate mutual recognition of qualifications, promote academic collaboration in the fields of higher education, science, research and technology, and establish collaborative MPhil/PhD programmes, joint academic research projects, and a scholarship programme for postgraduate, specialised or other research studies.

5. Cabinet has taken note that, in the context of the collaboration between the Fashion and Design Institute and the Central Saint Martins College of Arts and Design, UK, one of the world's leading centres for arts and design education, two resource persons namely, Mrs Jenny Postle, co-founder of the London-based knitwear label Leutton Postle, and Mr Luke Brook, academic from Central St. Martins with an award-winning collection, would visit Mauritius from 01 October to 15 December 2014, and hold seminars with industry and local designers on '*How to start up and run a fashion label*' and '*Trash Fashion Forum*'.

6. Cabinet has taken note of the performance of the Export-Oriented Enterprises Sector over the period January to September 2014, as compared to the corresponding period in 2013. The value of exports stood at Rs35.9 billion, as compared to Rs35.1 billion in 2013, i.e., an increase of 2.3%. The value of exports of Textiles and Clothing went up by 7.1%; Textiles (Yarns and Fabrics) by 7.2%; the Clothing sub-sector, comprising Pullovers and Cardigans, T-shirts, Shirts and Trousers by 9.0%; and Jewellery and Precious & Semi-precious Stones by 24.6%. Exports to France have gone up by 11%, Belgium by 12.5% and the United States by 24.7%.

7. Cabinet has taken note of the water supply situation and measures being taken to ensure an adequate water supply up to the end of the present dry season in December.

Cabinet has also taken note that the storage levels in the main reservoirs as at 28 October 2014, were as follows –

Reservoir	Capacity	Actual	
	Mm3	Mm3	%
Mare aux Vacoas	25.89	16.47	63.6
La Nicolière	5.26	2.49	47.3
Piton du Milieu	2.99	1.81	60.5
La Ferme	11.52	3.91	33.9
Mare Longue	6.28	3.19	50.8
Midlands	25.50	14.80	58.0

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities had a meeting with senior officials of the Water Resources Unit, the Central Water Authority, the Irrigation Authority and the Meteorological Services to assess the water resources situation, and it has been decided to review the hours of supply of water in the light of availability of water resources.

8. Cabinet has agreed to the implementation of the National Green IT Strategy, Policy and Action Plan for Mauritius, that sets out the Green ICT commitments and actions that public and private organisations should take to reduce the carbon footprint of ICTs and build a sustainable ICT eco-friendly environment. The underlying principle of the National Green IT Policy, Strategy and Action Plan is to foster the growth of ICTs into a cost effective and energy efficient environment. This vision is supported by five key strategic objectives, namely –

- (a) establishing an institutional framework to drive Green IT at a national level across government, private sector and civil society;
- (b) embedding environmental performance across any stage of ICT projects;
- (c) measuring, monitoring and reducing consumption of non-renewable energy used to power ICT equipment and managing the carbon footprint;
- (d) reducing, re-using and recycling IT equipment to limit environmental impact; and
- (e) accelerating, empowering and promoting awareness of Green IT to society in collaboration with international institutions.

9. Cabinet has taken note that the Habitat III National Report would be submitted to the UN–HABITAT Secretariat as input towards the preparatory process of the third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, commonly known as Habitat III Conference. The main objective of the Conference is to secure renewed political commitment for sustainable urban development, assess accomplishments to date, address poverty issues and also identify and address new and emerging challenges. The Report highlights the achievements, challenges, experiences and lessons learnt and future challenges in the following six sectors –

- (a) Urban Demographic Issues;
- (b) Land and Urban Planning;
- (c) Environment and Urbanization;
- (d) Urban Governance and Legislation;
- (e) Urban Economy; and
- (f) Housing and Basic Services.

10. Cabinet has taken note that the Second Edition of the Africa Open Judo Mauritius will be held on 8 and 9 November 2014 at Pandit Sahadeo Gymnasium, Vacoas. Some 173 athletes from 22 countries would participate in the event. The Mauritius Judo Federation has been advised to ensure that athletes from countries affected by the Ebola Virus Disease or having travelled to those countries during the past two months, are not allowed to participate in the competition.

11. Cabinet has taken note that the FEMCOM Annual General Meeting would be held in Mauritius in November 2014. FEMCOM is the Federation of National Associations of Women in Business in the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA). During her recent visit, Mrs K. Ichoya, CEO FEMCOM Secretariat, signed an Agreement with the National Women Entrepreneur Council (NWEC) providing support for –

- (a) the provision of technical and advisory services as regards the Business Incubator for African Women Entrepreneurship Development;
- (b) the implementation of the COMESA Cluster Development Initiative in Mauritius;
- (c) capacity building for Women Entrepreneurship Development through the availability of technical resources; and
- (d) the facilitation of intra COMESA trade and investment for Women Entrepreneurs.

12. Cabinet has taken note that the African-Asian Rural Development Organisation (AARDO) would hold its 18th General Session Conference in the year 2015 in Mauritius. AARDO, established in 1962, promotes rural development, and develops understanding amongst Member States to explore collectively opportunities for coordination of efforts for promoting welfare and eradication of thirst, hunger, illiteracy, diseases and poverty amongst rural people.

13. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Sports Arbitration Tribunal with Mr Raj Seeballuck, Magistrate, Intermediate Court, as Chairperson.
