

CABINET DECISIONS – 6 JUNE 2014

1. In the context of the abolition of the EU Sugar Quota and taking into consideration the recent decline in the price of sugar across the EU, with the consequential impact on the Sugar Sector, Cabinet has agreed to a proposal of the Prime Minister to provide financial assistance to small and medium planters for a period of two crop years pending the outcome of the assessment of the socio-economic and environmental impact of the abolition of the EU Sugar Quota currently being carried out by the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security. This measure would ensure that the critical volume of cane required for the viability of the industry is met.

2. Cabinet has agreed to the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security signing a Country Programming Framework for Mauritius for the period 2014-2019 with the Food and Agricultural Organization. The Framework sets out priorities for collaboration in the fields of –

- (a) agri-business development with focus on the strengthening of the enabling environment, strategies, legal and management frameworks and institutional capacities for selected strategic value chains;
- (b) sustainable agriculture for food security with focus on the strengthening of the enabling institutional environment related to land use management, early warning system for animal and plant diseases and pests, and agricultural statistics for improved evidence based decision making; and
- (c) sustainable fisheries with focus on improving the enabling environment, policies and legal framework and institutional capacities for the promotion of sustainable aquaculture and off-lagoon fisheries.

3. Cabinet has taken note that a Memorandum of Understanding in the field of Agri-business, Agricultural and Food Science, and Technology would be signed with the Republic of France. The main objective of the Memorandum of Understanding is to build capacities, promote policy development, develop research programmes and explore joint areas of activities with the *Centre de Coopération Internationale en Recherche Agronomique pour le Développement* (CIRAD), based in France and Reunion Island. The activities that would be carried out under the Memorandum of Understanding would be, mainly, in Rodrigues, and pertain, amongst others, to the implementation of the operations of agricultural and rural development, processing of agro-products, scientific and technical training, and research activities.

4. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions and the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, India would sign a Memorandum of Understanding providing for collaboration, amongst others, on research for the Observatory on Ageing; the elaboration of various schemes and programmes on Ageing; and the setting up of a National Institute on Ageing.

5. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development and the Government of the Republic of Mozambique would sign a Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation in the field of environment protection and conservation of natural resources. The Memorandum of Understanding would cover sectors, such as climate change; marine pollution, mitigation and adaptation; environmental education programmes; sustainable land and forestry management; and biodiversity and conservation.

6. Cabinet has taken note of the renewal of an Executive Programme for the period 2014-2016, under the Cultural Agreement between Mauritius and the People's Republic of China. The new Programme covers the various sectors, namely Arts and Culture; Libraries, Museums and Archives; Cultural Heritage; Cinema; and Press and Publication.

7. Cabinet has taken note that the United Nations World Tourism Organization and the Regional Tourism Organisation of Southern Africa (RETOSA) would organize a Capacity Building Programme on Tourism Statistics and Tourism Satellite Account from 24 to 27 June 2014 in Mauritius. The main objectives of the Workshop are to:

- (a) support RETOSA Member States in developing their Systems of Tourism Statistics for the improved measurement, analysis, understanding and strategic management of the Tourism Sector;
- (b) assist in building up statistical capacities of the key national institutions responsible for the collection and analysis of tourism statistics; and
- (c) share country experiences.

8. Cabinet has taken note that a new market would, shortly, be constructed at Bel Air.

9. Cabinet has taken note of the various activities that would be organized in the context of Music Day, celebrated on 21 June, including -

- (a) a special musical programme, with the participation of artists and performers with disabilities, at the Esplanade of the Renganaden Seeneevassen Building, Port Louis;
- (b) a cultural programme at Pointe Canon, Mahebourg by the 'Centre de Formation Artistique' of the Ministry of Arts and Culture;
- (c) musical performances in the 'Centres de Lecture Publique et d'Animation Culturelle'; and
- (d) activities by the Conservatoire National de Musique François Mitterrand, the Cultural Centres, the Speaking Unions, the Mahatma Gandhi Institute and the Rabindranath Tagore Secondary Schools.

10. Cabinet has taken note of the organization of a Conference on the theme “**Responding to Mauritius Digital Challenges and Opportunities**” in Mauritius on 23 and 24 June 2014. The main objective of the Conference is to explore how Digital Technologies can support the creation of new business models, drive process efficiencies, expand and open new sales channels, and create new products and services. The outcome would serve as input to define a national digital economy strategy.

11. Cabinet has taken note of the state of play regarding the extension of the African Growth and Opportunity Act which came into force in September 2000. AGOA has contributed significantly to increase exports from Sub-Saharan Africa to the US market, helped create thousands of jobs, particularly for women, and mitigated the impact of the phasing out of the Multi-Fibre Agreement. Mauritius would continue to canvass for a long term and an all inclusive extension of AGOA that contributes to promote regional integration.

12. Cabinet has taken note of developments in the setting up of the IIT Research Academy in Mauritius. The Mauritius Research Council and the IIT, Delhi have agreed that, during the first stage, i.e., 2014 - 2018, a core facility and research capacity in two disciplines, namely Computer Science and Electrical Engineering, would be established. At the end of Year 5, a total of 6 research clusters, with a total of 30 faculty members and some 50 research scholars would be implemented, and from Year 6, the IIT Research Academy would become an independent awarding body. The IIT Research Academy would be launched on 22 July 2014 at the Bel Air Campus. IIT Delhi has identified Professor S.M. Ishtiaque, Professor in the Department of Textile Technology at the Indian Institute of Technology Delhi, as Director to head the Research Academy.

13. Cabinet has taken note of a twinning proposal between the District Council of Grand Port and the *Commune Rurale de Tsiafahy Antananarivo Atsimondrano*, Madagascar. The twinning relations would be beneficial to both institutions in the fields of culture, social, education and best practices for gender equality.

14. Cabinet has taken note that the Child Protection Register would be launched on 16 June 2014 in the context of the celebration of the Day of the African Child. The Child Protection Register is an innovative project designed to provide an integrated database to record all cases of children in distress that are reported to the Child Development Unit of the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare. After South Africa, Mauritius is the next country in the region to develop such a system. The main objectives of the Child Protection Register are, amongst others, to improve record keeping, and overall management of cases of children in distress, facilitate generation of statistical data for informed decision making, and ensure tracking and monitoring of relapse cases.

15. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare to Johannesburg, South Africa, where she participated in the Regional Summit on the SADC Gender Protocol at Work organised by Gender Links South Africa. The main objectives of the Summit were to gather evidence of the SADC Gender Protocol at Work, and make a concerted call for increasing the momentum on the implementation in the strapline **“50/50 by 2015 and a strong Post-2015 Agenda”** by 2015.

Following presentations made by participants, Mauritius was declared winner and runner-up in the following categories –

- (a) Winner –
 - (i) Local Government;
 - (ii) Media Content – Photojournalism; and
 - (iii) Alliance and Coalition.
- (b) Runner-up –
 - (i) 50/50; and
 - (ii) Leadership.
