

CABINET DECISIONS – 25 JULY 2014

1. Cabinet has taken note that, as announced by the Prime Minister in the National Assembly on Tuesday 22 July 2014, a full-fledged Commission of Inquiry will be set up to look into all aspects of horse racing in Mauritius. The Commission will be assisted in its work by forensic auditors and other experts from overseas. The proposed Terms of Reference of the Commission of Inquiry are as follows:

To inquire into, and report on –

- (a) the organisation, management and administration of horse racing in Mauritius, including –
 - (i) the procedures relating to the licensing of stables, nominators, trainers and freelancers, as well as the registration of horse owners;
 - (ii) the procedures for the recruitment of jockeys, in particular foreign ones;
 - (iii) the procedures for the purchase of race horses, and the source of funds for such purchases;
- (b) the technical, veterinary, security, and other related measures currently in place to ensure that no horse taking part in any race is tampered with;
- (c) the occurrences of a series of incidents that have taken place recently during races, including dubious performance of certain horses and their jockeys;
- (d) the exact role and responsibilities of the Chief Stipendiary Steward, and actions recommended or taken by him since his appointment as such;
- (e) the existing rules of racing with a view to ascertaining whether they are being applied indiscriminately and in all objectivity and even-handedly, so as to stand the test of transparency and accountability, and whether they are compatible with international best practices;
- (f) the conduct of betting operations on horse racing by bookmakers and totalisator operators, including on-line systems and off-race course betting;
- (g) any financial malpractices, including impropriety, illegal betting and illicit flow of funds in the organisation of betting, including ill-gotten gains from fraud in relation to horse racing;
- (h) any conflict of interest on the part of any person in relation to his involvement in horse racing;

- (i) all aspects of horse racing in Mauritius, including the advisability of setting up a Mauritius Turf Authority to oversee the overall organisation, management and administration of horse racing in Mauritius; and

also report on any matter from (a) to (i) above, and make recommendations thereon.

The names of the Chairperson and the Commissioners will be announced shortly.

2. Cabinet has agreed to the Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology signing a Letter of Intent on joint collaborative research and academic cooperation with George Washington University. Under the agreement, the University would participate in the funding of three research collaborative awards, including one researcher at George Washington University and one researcher from Mauritius. The Letter of Intent is a framework for cooperation between the Government of Mauritius and the George Washington University to identify and achieve shared goals and objectives, and facilitate and develop a genuine and mutually beneficial exchange process and research relationship.

3. Cabinet has reviewed the payment of Rs500 monthly, in lieu of free domiciliary medical visits, to beneficiaries of Basic Retirement Pension aged 75 and above, a budget measure implemented since January 2014. As at date, only 310 out of 6,071 beneficiaries have opted for the monthly payment of Rs500. Moreover, the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions has received requests from a number of beneficiaries, who have opted for the monthly payment, to revert to the free visits by a medical practitioner. It has also been noted that the payment is not benefitting the beneficiaries. In the circumstances, and for the welfare of the beneficiaries, Cabinet has agreed to the removal of the option of the payment of Rs500 monthly and the restoration of the system of free domiciliary medical visits in all cases.

4. Cabinet has taken note of the status of the ICT Skills Development Programme to address skills gaps in the ICT/BPO sector. Some 158 companies and 4,058 job seekers have registered themselves under the Programme, and some 883 participants have secured training and work placement. The BPO Certification Institute of India would mount courses to enhance the employability of participants, and provide them with skills benchmarked on International Standards to address the mismatch between the supply and demand of qualified manpower for the Call Centre/BPO Sector. Four entry levels training and certification would be conducted, namely –

- (a) Certified Customer Interaction Professional;

- (b) Certified Financial Process Associate;
- (c) Certified Back Office Service Associate; and
- (d) Certified Technical Support Associate.

The first training session is scheduled to start in October 2014.

5. Cabinet has taken note of the programme of activities that would be organized to celebrate Eid-UI-Fitr at national level, namely:

- (a) performances by a folkloric troupe from the Arab Republic of Egypt;
- (b) lunch for inmates of Orphanages, Day Care Centres and Centres for Disabled;
- (c) Quiraat Nite by famous Qaris of Mauritius;
- (d) organization of an Islamic Food Festival during the second fortnight of August 2014 in Port Louis; and
- (e) performances by a Sufi singer and three musicians from the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

6. Cabinet has taken note of the launching of the International Institute of Technology Research Academy on 23 July 2014 at the Bel Air University Campus in the presence of Professor Raghunath Kashinath Shevgaonkar, Director of the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi. The Institute would promote and develop a research and innovative culture. All academic programmes and examinations would be managed by IIT Delhi and, for the first time, students would be awarded IIT MS(R) and PhD degree in Mauritius.

7. Cabinet has agreed to the ratification of the *Accord Cadre de Coopération* between Mauritius and the Union of the Comoros. The Agreement covers cooperation in areas, amongst others, of diplomacy, trade, agriculture, fisheries, science and technology, arts and culture, and health.

8. Cabinet has taken note of progress in the implementation of the Reduction of Non-Revenue Water Project in the Upper Mare aux Vacoas water supply zone. The overall long term objective of the project is to reduce the level of Non-Revenue Water, improve the water distribution system, and modernize water supply management in the upper Mare aux Vacoas zone. Some 79 km of defective pipelines and laterals in the project area would be replaced. With a view to ensuring the sustainable operation and management of the assets developed under the project, a number of officers of the CWA are being trained to develop and learn best water utility practices and procedures in the management of Non-Revenue Water. The training includes, *inter alia*, data analysis, Geographical Information System, modelling, active leakage control, material and equipment selection, engineering, and contract documents and procurement as well as construction management. The monitoring of the water supply system will be carried out using state-of-the-art technology. The Project started in July 2013 and is scheduled to be completed in June 2015. On completion, the project would be replicated in other water supply zones.

9. Cabinet has taken note of the performance of the Export-Oriented Enterprises Sector over the period January to June 2014, as compared to the corresponding period in 2013, based on provisional exports data. The value of exports of the Export-Oriented Enterprises has maintained a positive trend; it has reached Rs23.65 billion as compared to Rs23.02 billion in 2013, i.e., an increase of 2.7%. Increase in the value of exports of textiles and clothing (+7.6%), Textiles (Yarns and Fabrics) (+5.8%), T-Shirts (+16.4%), Trousers (+28.8%), Jewellery and Precious and Semi-Precious Stones (+33.3%) had been registered.

10. Cabinet has agreed to the submission of the Country Report of Mauritius to the WTO for review by the Trade Policy Review Body. The Report highlights changes in trade practices and policies since the last Trade Policy Review in 2008, lays special emphasis on the economic reform programme of Government, and enumerates the challenges facing the country as a small island developing state. The Report also underscores components of the new economic infrastructure, namely consolidation of key infrastructure, i.e., road network and airport; Maurice Ile Durable Project; Ocean Economy Initiative; and the strategy for the seafood sector, to show the efforts of Mauritius in consolidating new poles of growth whilst targeting sustainable development.

11. Cabinet has reviewed the operation of the Coherence and Coordination Committee, set up in 2013 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, to align actions undertaken by the public and the private sectors globally and, particularly, in Africa with a view to advancing the Africa Agenda. The Committee has worked out a matrix aligning actions to be taken in 2014 in 12 African countries, namely Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Zambia, Gabon, Nigeria, Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, and Ethiopia. The Committee has made recommendations to improve diplomatic, economic and trade relations with the African countries.

12. Cabinet has taken note that the National Economic and Social Council has published a Report on 'Management of Water Resources'. One of the objectives of the National Economic and Social Council is to undertake studies on socio-economic issues of national importance. In conducting its study, the Council had had consultations with the relevant authorities, consumer associations, professionals in the water sector and members of the civil society. The Report highlights the constraints encountered by the Central Water Authority in providing potable water to domestic households on a 24hr/7-day basis, and makes recommendations for an integrated approach to improve the overall efficiency of water supply in the country.
