

CABINET DECISIONS – 21 NOVEMBER 2014

1. Cabinet has taken note that, following the breakdown of negotiations between the Mauritius Sugar Producers' Association (MSPA) and the Joint Negotiating Panel, workers of three sugar estates that are members of the MSPA, have gone on strike as from 19 November 2014. Cabinet has further taken note that the strike will have a disruptive effect in the sugar harvest which will result in a substantial reduction in the timely production of sugar, thus affecting adversely the supply of sugar to the international buyers and the reputation of Mauritius as a reliable exporter of sugar. It would also lead to a disruption in the production of electricity from bagasse and the abandonment of land by planters. Cabinet, subsequently, invited the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment to meet the parties concerned to find a solution to end the strike, failing which Government will take a decision on the way forward.

2. Cabinet has taken note of the status of the project for the upgrading of Pailles water treatment plant. The works comprise, *inter alia*, the construction of a new rapid gravity water treatment plant with a treatment capacity of 80,000 m³/day and the rehabilitation of the existing slow sand filters with a treatment capacity of 30,000 m³/day. Works are expected to be completed by 14 March 2015. The treatment plant supplies potable water to the City of Port Louis, and surrounding areas including Pointe aux Sables, Guibies, Pailles, Roche Bois, Tranquebar, Vallée Pitot, Plaine Verte, Vallée des Prêtres, Cité la Cure, Les Salines and Ste Croix. These regions, normally, suffer from interrupted water supply after periods of heavy rainfall due to clogging of the existing filters by muddy water. With the completion of the project, these regions will be assured of a regular supply of water and, more importantly, during and after periods of heavy rain when the turbidity of water in the Grand River North West is excessively high.

3. Cabinet has taken note that the 9th Edition of the Festival International Kreol, organized by the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority, in collaboration with the Ministry of Arts and Culture and the Ministry of Tourism and Leisure, would be held from 17 to 20 December 2014. The activities that would be organised on the occasion include -

- (a) a '*Dikte Kreol*' and a '*Salon Kiliner*' at the Municipal City Council of Port Louis and Rue du Vieux Conseil;
- (b) a Poetry Recital Night at La Citadelle;
- (c) an activity for children, including fun games, *jeux d'antan*, mini concert, etc., followed by a '*Sware Tipik*' at Le Morne Public Beach;
- (d) a conference on the theme **Kreolite dan modernite** at the Grand Baie International Conference Centre; and
- (e) an all-night mega concert animated by international, regional and local artists, at Fort William, Les Salines. A '*Salon Kwizinn Kreol*' would also be held in the margins of the concert.

The theme chosen for this year's edition is '*Kreolite dan modernite*'.

4. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology will receive a special ITU World Telecommunication ICT Indicators Award for good performance in the Telecommunication Sector at the World Symposium Meeting which will be held in Georgia next week.

5. Cabinet has taken note that the Second International Conference on Data Mining, Internet Computing and Big Data, organised by the University of Mauritius, in collaboration with the Society of Digital Information and Wireless Communications, Hong Kong, would be held in Mauritius in 2015. The main objective of the Conference is to generate reflection on the theme of big data, which is an emerging area of research as large volumes of data are now available and new techniques have to be devised to process the data. The Conference would serve as a forum for scientists and engineers to meet and present their latest research results, ideas and papers in diverse areas of Computing Science, Business on the web and other related disciplines. The Conference would bring together researchers from Australia, Austria, Bulgaria, China, Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Ireland, Japan, Jordan, Lebanon, Malaysia, Morocco, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Poland, Portugal, South Korea, Tunisia, Turkey, UK and USA.

6. Cabinet has taken note of developments regarding the collaboration between the University of Mauritius and the University of Delaware, USA. Professor Ed Urban, Executive Director of the Scientific Committee on Ocean Research at the University of Delaware, visited Mauritius in October 2014 and following discussions he had with the University of Mauritius, it has been decided that -

- (a) the University of Delaware would consider the possibility of bringing Visiting Scholars to support the University of Mauritius in building capacity in ocean related fields of study; and
- (b) the US Embassy would consider the possibility of specialists from the USA to support capacity building in ocean and related matters under the Fullbright Scholarship Programme.

Prof Nancy Targett, Dean of the College of Earth, Ocean and Environment, University of Delaware, would lead a delegation to Mauritius in December 2014, and participate in a workshop organised by the Faculty of Ocean Studies of the University of Mauritius on the theme **Resilient Coastal Economics and Outreach/Extension Capacity**.

7. Cabinet has taken note of the setting up of a Centre for Applied Genomics at the University of Mauritius, with the assistance of Prof McCarthy, Director of the Oxford Centre for Diabetes, Endocrinology and Metabolism. The Centre will be a multi-disciplinary Centre with a state-of-the-art facility that would allow investigators to further their research programmes through the implementation of genomics, transcriptomics and proteomics-based strategies. The Centre would focus on national priorities, and provide research support and collaboration to the various sectors of the economy, including agro-industry, pharmaceutical industry and ocean economy.

8. Cabinet has taken note that, in the context of the International Day Against Violence Against Women 2014, observed on 25 November, the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare would organize, amongst others, a Consultative Workshop to devise appropriate strategies for perpetrators of domestic violence and a Validation Workshop to finalize the *“Les Assises de la Famille”* Report. This year, the local theme for the commemoration of the International Day Against Violence Against Women will be *“Lape dan lakaz komans avek twa”*.

9. Cabinet has taken note that Egypt would host the 3rd COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite Summit of Heads of State and Government on 20 December 2014 when the Tripartite Free Trade Area would be launched. One of the main objectives of the Tripartite Free Trade Area is to resolve the longstanding issue of overlapping membership of the three regional blocs, COMESA, EAC and SADC, through the establishment of a single trade regime, thus eliminating the problems of duplication, contradiction and confusion in business operations.

10. Cabinet has taken note of the status in the formulation and implementation of sectoral gender policies by Ministries in accordance with the National Gender Policy Framework of the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare. The National Gender Policy Framework, which was adopted in 2008, is a generic policy document that provides the guiding principles, broad operational strategies and institutional arrangements for achieving gender equality at national level. It calls upon Ministries to mainstream gender in the formulation of their policies, programmes and strategies.

11. Cabinet has taken note of the performance of the Export-Oriented Enterprises Sector for the period January to October 2014 as compared to the corresponding period in 2013. Based on provisional exports data, the value of exports reached Rs39.8 billion as compared to Rs39.1 billion in 2013, representing an increase of 1.7%. Increase had been recorded in the value of export of T-shirts (+12.7%), Trousers (+24.7%), Fish and fish preparations (+7.1%), and Jewellery, precious and semi-precious stones (+19.6%). Increase had also been recorded in exports to France (+9.9%), Belgium (+10.8%), the Netherlands (+7.5%) and the USA (+21.2%).
