

## **CABINET DECISIONS – 4 SEPTEMBER 2015**

1. Cabinet has taken note that the Minister of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms would chair a monthly meeting with Supervising Officers of Ministries to look into the adverse comments made in the Report of the Director of Audit on the Accounts of the Republic of Mauritius for the Financial Year 2014 and ensure that appropriate and timely remedial measures are taken to prevent wastage of public funds.

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2. Cabinet has taken note of the recent initiatives of Mauritius Telecom to improve Internet bandwidth, and reduce the price of internet connection with a view to building a conducive environment for an innovation-led economy and society, and creating employment in the ICT sector in line with Vision 2030. Moreover, the speed has been increased by 10 times for the same price for customers who have already migrated to fibre.

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3. Cabinet has taken note that the National Stock Exchange of India has signed Memoranda of Understanding with the Ministry of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms, the Financial Services Commission and the Stock Exchange of Mauritius providing, among others, for capacity development in the fields of surveillance, investigation, technology transfer and risk management.

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4. Cabinet has taken note that the Singapore Cooperation Enterprise has completed the removal of fingerprint image and minutiae from the Mauritius National Identity Card Database. The backup tapes are also being destroyed. The exercise is being carried out in the presence of a Chief Usher of the Supreme Court.

Cabinet has agreed to the extension of the validity period of the old National Identity Card to 31 January 2016 and to the new arrangements being put in place for the registration of new Identity Cards. The issuance of the Identity Card would resume on 14 September 2015 with the following criteria:

- (a) the fingerprint image and minutiae collection will continue as previously;
- (b) the fingerprint image and minutiae will be destroyed upon issuance of the new card; and
- (c) only the ID card will contain the minutiae which will be used for one-to-one verification and not for identification purposes.

All new smart identity cards, which have been issued to date, will continue to operate normally without modification.

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5. Cabinet has agreed to the launching of the Final Report for Mauritius on the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) 2015 and its submission to the United Nations. The Report reviews the status of the Millennium Development Goals in Mauritius using the year 1990 as base year, highlights major achievements and success stories, and identifies policy measures, bottlenecks, as well as challenges and unfinished business. Mauritius is poised to make a smooth transition from the MDGs to the Sustainable Development Goals through its shift to a new development paradigm as outlined in Vision 2030.

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6. Cabinet has taken note of arrangements being made for the setting up of a new submarine fibre optic international gateway connecting Mauritius and Rodrigues in line with the Vision 2030. The project would include international connectivity and Internet bandwidth, improve resilience and route diversity to support high value-added ICT/BPO activities, such as hosting of data and disaster recovery centres, cloud computing services, financial and accounting outsourcing activities.

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7. Cabinet has taken note that the Minister of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms would chair a Steering Committee to monitor and ensure the timely implementation of the Highlands Project.

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8. Cabinet has agreed to the recommendations of the Project Plan Committee to include eight projects to the tune of Rs1 billion in the Public Sector Investment Programme. The projects include the construction of a new access road to SSR International Airport, upgrading works along Cluny Road (B83), and the construction of a Multi-Purpose Hall, a Sports Complex, a College (Phase III), a new secondary school and a stadium in Rodrigues.

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9. Cabinet has taken note that the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security would, shortly, introduce the Animal Health Bill in the National Assembly. The new Bill, that would replace the Animal Diseases Act 1925, would be in line with the veterinary legislation of the *Office International des Epizooties*, and provide an operational framework for activities related to animal health with a view to safeguarding animal and human health, as well as ensuring that international trade in animals and animal products is facilitated by the removal of unnecessary barriers and excessive bureaucracy.

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10. Cabinet has agreed to the payment of a cash compensation to the employees of the former Cane Planters and Millers Arbitration and Control Board, who had opted for the Voluntary Retirement Scheme in 2012.

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11. Cabinet has agreed to the ratification of the SADC Protocol on Trade in Services. The objective of the Protocol is to progressively liberalise intra-regional trade in services in order to promote sustainable economic growth and development. The liberalisation of trade in services entails commitments of countries to facilitate market access with respect to delivery of cross-border services, consumption of services abroad, establishment of companies abroad, and movement of service suppliers in regional member states.

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12. Cabinet has taken note of the findings of a Study on the Causes and Consequences of Suicidal Behaviour among Teenagers in Mauritius and agreed to the setting up of a Steering Committee to look into the recommendations. The main objectives of the Study were to determine the causes of suicide and attempted suicide among teenagers, and explore its consequences on family and friends of victims/survivors of attempted suicide.

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13. Cabinet has taken note of the activities being organised by the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions to mark the World Suicide Prevention Day, which is observed on 10 September. The theme of this year's event is "*Preventing Suicide: Reaching out and Saving Lives*". The activities would include an official function when the Report on the Study on the Causes and Consequences of Suicidal Behaviour among Teenagers in Mauritius, would be launched, and sensitisation campaigns on suicide prevention around the country.

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14. Cabinet has taken note that a National Workshop on "Zero Budget Natural Farming" would be held from 7 to 10 September 2015. The objectives of the Workshop are to:

- (a) disseminate information on the "Zero Budget Natural Farming" as an alternative production system;
- (b) promote natural farming to restore soil fertility and control crop pests and diseases; and
- (c) sensitize the farming community about the need to reduce their dependence on chemical inputs.

A similar workshop will also be held in Rodrigues.

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15. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare to Reunion Island. The main objective of the mission was to take cognizance of the structures and the mechanism put in place to assist victims of intra-family violence and children victims of abuse, and of the "*Education Populaire*" model of community work and its implementation to promote social inclusion and empowerment.

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16. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent visit of the Minister of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives to Rodrigues. The main objectives of the visit were to boost the Cooperative Sector, explore the possibility of putting the existing infrastructure to alternative profitable use, and look into measures to further develop the SME Sector.

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17. Cabinet has taken note of the recent mission of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade to Botswana where he participated in the 35<sup>th</sup> Summit of the SADC Heads of State and Government. The theme of the Summit was *“Accelerating Industrialisation of SADC Economies through Transformation of Natural Endowment and Improved Human Capital”*. The Summit, among others, reviewed the political and socio-economic situation in the region. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade also raised the issue of the Chagos Archipelago. The Summit re-affirmed the SADC position, adopted at the 34<sup>th</sup> Summit, which called upon Member States to fully support the legitimate claim of the Republic of Mauritius for the restoration of its sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago.

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18. Cabinet has taken note of the appointment of Mr Marimootoo Sen Ramsamy, as Director of the Tourism Authority. Mr Ramsamy holds a Master in Business Administration from George Washington University and reckons more than 30 years experience at senior management level in the fields of tourism development and hospitality management.

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19. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Mauritius Council of Registered Librarians Board.

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