

## **CABINET DECISIONS – 9 JANUARY 2015**

1. Cabinet has taken note of the terrorist attack on the premises of Charlie Hebdo magazine on 7 January 2015, when 12 persons were killed. The Prime Minister, on behalf of the Government of Mauritius and in his own name, has sent a message of condolences to Mr François Hollande, President of France and expressed his sympathy with the families of the victims during the painful circumstance. He has condemned the outrageous attack against the magazine and against the values of freedom of expression. He has expressed solidarity with the people of France.

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2. In line with the pledge made by the Prime Minister during the electoral campaign to eliminate wastage and misuse of public funds, Cabinet has agreed to the setting up of the Public Sector Efficiency Bureau in the Ministry of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms. The functions of the Bureau will, amongst others, be to –

- (a) review administrative and financial systems and procedures in Ministries, Departments, statutory bodies, state-owned companies and other Government agencies with a view to identifying inefficiencies and weaknesses and make specific recommendations for improving accounting, financial and operational policies, control, systems and processes; and
- (b) investigate into suspected cases of wastage, improper use and mismanagement of public funds.

The Bureau will be headed by Dr Rajun Jugurnath, former Director of Audit.

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3. Cabinet has taken note of the status of the proceedings initiated by Mauritius on 20 December 2010 against the United Kingdom under Article 287 of, and Annex VII to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea to challenge the legality of the ‘marine protected area’ which the United Kingdom has purported to establish around the Chagos Archipelago, and of the outcome of the recent meetings in Mauritius with Professor Sands, QC.

Government wishes to state that –

- (a) it maintains the sovereignty of Mauritius over the Chagos Archipelago, and the illegality of the excision of the Chagos Archipelago from the territory of Mauritius prior to its accession to independence; and
- (b) it affirms in full the stand adopted by Mauritius with regard to the illegality of the “marine protected area” purportedly established in 2010 by the UK Government around the Chagos Archipelago. It looks forward to the Award of the Arbitral Tribunal set up under Annex VII to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea to determine this issue.

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4. Cabinet has agreed to the implementation of the recommendations of the Office of Public Sector Governance for the restructuring of the Business Parks of Mauritius Freeport

Services Ltd with a view to reaching 5% return on capital investment. The recommendations include long term investment strategy, diversification of products, development of a new e-commerce strategy, lease management for spaces, including warehousing and management of overtime, development of new services to adapt to market trends and customer exigencies; and provision of revenue generating services such as putaway, picking, preparation, packing and palletisation.

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5. Cabinet has agreed to the implementation of the recommendations of the Office of Public Sector Governance on the restructuring of the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate. The main recommendations, *inter alia*, are –

- (a) review of the organizational set up with a view to rationalizing and streamlining processes for improved effectiveness with focus on Research and Syllabus Development, Information and Communication Technology, Corporate Services and Examination Operations;
- (b) filling of strategic managerial posts, review the current schemes of service of employees to reflect the extensive use of ICT in the performance of day-to-day duties and the evolving nature of the work, and training and succession planning;
- (c) introduction of quality assurance systems and accreditation from appropriate external bodies;
- (d) use of information technology in all areas of operation;
- (e) review of the Legal Framework to cater for additional responsibilities entrusted to the Syndicate over the years; and
- (f) preparation of a Risk Register and formulation of strategies and policies for risk management.

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6. Cabinet has taken note of the performance of the Export-Oriented Enterprises Sector for the period January to November 2014 as compared to the corresponding period in 2013. Based on provisional exports data, the value of exports reached Rs43.3 billion as compared to Rs42.73 billion in 2013, representing an increase of 1.3%. Increase had been recorded in the value of export of T-shirts (+11.4%), Trousers (+18.1%), Jewellery and Precious and Semi-Precious Stones (+20.9%). Increase had also been recorded in exports to France (+8.0%), Belgium (+9.9%) and the Netherlands (+11.2%).

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7. Cabinet has taken note of the proposed visit of a delegation led by Mr Wang Fei, Vice-Minister for State Ocean Administration, People's Republic of China to Mauritius from 21 to 25 January 2015. The delegation would have an exchange of views with different government institutions on oceanic cooperation between China and Mauritius.

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8. Cabinet has taken note that the Agreement for the payment of grant to the 46 private-aided primary schools of the Roman Catholic Education Authority in respect of period 2014

to 2016 would be renewed. The grant provides for the financing of private-aided primary schools to cover operating expenses, infrastructural and maintenance costs, management overheads and a performance grant. An agreement would also be signed with the Hindu Education Authority for the payment of a grant in respect of compensation for use of private building and performance grant.

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9. Cabinet has taken note of the status of the project for the construction of SME Parks across the island with a view to providing support to entrepreneurs in the promotion and development of the SME sector. The SME sector plays a key role in economic growth, contributes towards 40% of the GDP and provides employment to around 54% of the working population. Such parks are being put up at Roche Bois, La Tour Koenig, La Valette/Bambous, Plaine Magnien, Solitude, Vuillemin/Quartier Militaire, Petit Bois/Caroline, Chebel, Henrietta and Mon Loisir/Gokhoola. These units would be rented to entrepreneurs at a subsidized rate of 50% of the rental payable in the first three years of occupancy. The Ministry of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives proposes to regroup entrepreneurs in clusters to create the required synergy for SMEs to become more productive and enhance their competitiveness.

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10. Cabinet has agreed to the Ministry of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries, Shipping and Outer Islands holding negotiations on a new fishing agreement with the Government of the Republic of Seychelles. In March 2005, two Fishing Agreements were signed on a reciprocity basis for fishing in each country's waters, and provided for vessels to fish for tuna and associated species. The new fishing agreement would aim, amongst others, at sustaining the development of the Mauritius seafood hub, transshipping their catches in Mauritius Port, and supplying fish to processing factories.

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11. Cabinet has agreed to the implementation of a project for the Recognition of Prior Learning, the first of its kind in the field of social work, aimed at professionalising the social services sector. An Industry Training Advisory Committee for social work has been set up with a view to generating unit standards and qualifications in the social sector, and making recommendations for the registration of the unit standards and qualifications on the National Qualifications Framework. The Recognition of Prior Learning would enable social workers to –

- (a) have their experience recognised by obtaining a qualification;
- (b) enhance their employability;
- (c) pursue lifelong learning; and
- (d) boost their self esteem and self confidence.

The Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions, in collaboration with the UNDP, would initiate the project on a pilot basis targeting 20 to 25 NGO volunteers.

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12. Cabinet has agreed to the Ministry of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives and the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of India signing a Memorandum of Understanding on

collaboration in the field of cooperatives. The Memorandum of Understanding provides, *inter alia*, for cooperation in the following areas -

- (a) regulatory framework for cooperatives;
- (b) cooperative development policies and strategies;
- (c) cooperative education;
- (d) technical assistance in cooperatives;
- (e) dairy sector; and
- (f) sharing of information, exchange of views and identification of new avenues in the field of cooperatives in relation to areas such as agriculture, agro-processing and handicraft.

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13. Cabinet has taken note that a regional workshop on WTO issues for Parliamentarians from Member States of the Indian Ocean Commission and the East African Community would be held in Mauritius from 9 to 11 February 2015. The main objective of the Workshop, organized by the WTO Secretariat in collaboration with the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and the *Assemblée Parlementaire de la Francophonie*, is to enable parliamentarians to obtain a better understanding of the WTO rules and its functioning and to enhance the understanding of the Bali outcomes and the way forward to conclude the Doha Round of Negotiations.

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14. Cabinet has taken note of the evolution of the Ebola Virus Disease and the travel restrictions imposed upon foreign nationals visiting or residing in countries affected by the Ebola Virus Disease since its outbreak. As from 26 November 2014, the window period for both port and airport activities has been reduced from 60 to 21 days. Sierra Leone, Guinea Conakry and Liberia are still on the list of countries with travel restrictions in Mauritius.

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15. Cabinet has taken note that Mr Vijay Kumar Pritam Parmessur has been appointed Director General of the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation with effect from 30 December 2014. His contract of employment is of one year duration, renewable on satisfactory performance. The clause relating to the termination of contract '*pour des raisons de conscience*', as was provided in the contract of the former Director General, has been deleted. The new contract is in line with the provisions of the Employment Rights Act 2008, as subsequently amended.

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