

CABINET DECISIONS – 15 JANUARY 2016

1. Cabinet has taken note that the Bilateral Air Services Agreement between the Government of Mauritius and the Government of Australia would be signed on 4 February 2016 by the Secretary to Cabinet and Head of the Civil Service. The Agreement provides, *inter alia*, for –

- (a) multiple designation of airlines;
- (b) designated airline(s) of each country being entitled to operate up to seven weekly frequencies on the Mauritius/Australia route to/from Brisbane, Melbourne, Perth and Sydney; and
- (c) fifth freedom traffic rights for the designated airline(s) of both countries at certain points.

2. Cabinet has taken note that, according to the last monthly report published by the Statistics Unit of the Ministry of Tourism and External Communications, 1,151,723 tourists visited Mauritius during the period January to December 2015 as compared to 1,038,968 for the period January to December 2014, i.e., an increase of 10.9%. Growth had been registered in arrivals from Germany (+40.8%), Italy (+12.3%), United Kingdom (+3%), France (+3%), South Africa (+6.3%), Reunion Island (+2.8%), China (+38.1%) and India (+4.2%).

3. Cabinet has agreed to the Overseas Treatment Scheme being reviewed with a view to enabling a greater number of patients to benefit from treatment and get value for money. Under the Scheme, financial assistance is granted to patients requiring treatment not available locally. The Memoranda of Understanding, signed with medical institutions in India, would also be reviewed to provide, among others, for specialists, surgeons or other health professionals being despatched at short notice to Mauritius to carry out complex operations. This arrangement would enable the recovery of patients in an environment where they are surrounded by relatives, as well as enhance capacity building of the local personnel.

4. Cabinet has agreed to Mauritius becoming a partner of the Global Water Partnership (GWP), a non-profit network set up to foster integrated water resources management. The GWP, which was founded by the World Bank, the UNDP and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, provides technical expertise, knowledge sharing, and capacity building through publications, workshops, training courses, meetings, informal exchanges, and its Integrated Water Resource Management Toolbox. It also strives to integrate water issues into socio-economic development and climate change adaptation. It has a global network of 13 Regional Water Partnerships, 85 Country Water Partnerships, and over 3,000 partner organizations.

5. Cabinet has taken note that the Minister of Environment, Sustainable Development, and Disaster and Beach Management would sign a Memorandum of Understanding with Stichting Deltares and UNESCO IHE Institute for Water Education, Netherlands, for the development of an early warning system for storm surge. The areas of cooperation include –

- (a) consultations and exchange of expertise in the fields of research and training;
- (b) provision of services and support to update/extend the warning system and ensure its operation; and
- (c) training and capacity building in the field of disaster risk reduction management, coastal engineering and adaptation to climate change.

6. Cabinet has taken note of the activities that would be organized to mark the 181st Anniversary of the Abolition of Slavery in Mauritius on 01 February 2016, namely -

- (a) the Official Programme at Le Morne Public Beach comprising, *inter alia*, the National Anthem sung by children of Le Morne village, a Wreath Laying Ceremony, and a cultural programme; and
- (b) a Wreath Laying Ceremony at the 'Monument des Esclaves', Pointe Canon, Mahebourg on 02 February 2016.

7. Cabinet has taken note that fruit fly species, belonging to the *Bactrocera dorsalis*, have now been detected in the Eastern region of the country, namely at Quatre Cocos, Isidore Rose, Camp Ithier and Mare la Chaux. These areas have been declared as pest quarantine areas. The Entomology Section of the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security is currently implementing an eradication programme and fly traps have been installed throughout the country. The situation is being closely monitored.

8. Cabinet has agreed to the following measures being taken with a view to better controlling and regulating scrap metal activities –

- (a) the export of scrap metal, including copper, would be banned;
- (b) steel manufacturing plants in Mauritius or any other buyer of scrap metal would pay to scrap metal operators the international market rate for scrap metal, exclusive of export charges (freight and insurance); and
- (c) no new scrap dealer licence would be issued.

9. Cabinet has agreed to the setting up of the satellite centre of the Rajiv Gandhi Science Centre, comprising a planetarium and exhibition galleries, at Réduit. The new project will enable the decentralisation of the activities of the Rajiv Gandhi Science Centre, thus making the science exhibits accessible to a wider public.

10. Cabinet has agreed to the winding up of the National Agency for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Substance Abusers (NATReSA). A cost effective assessment carried out last year indicates that it would be more effective for the Harm Reduction Unit of the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life to take over the functions and personnel of the NATReSA .

11. Cabinet has taken note of the 2014 Report on Statistics in Mauritius: A Gender Approach. The Report presents sex disaggregated data for the year 2014 collected on demographic characteristics, persons with disabilities, children, health, education and employment.

12. Cabinet has taken note of the findings of the Mauritius Non-Communicable Diseases Survey carried out by the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life, in collaboration with the World Health Organization and various international organizations. The main objective of the Survey was to study the prevalence of type 2 diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular diseases, cognitive decline and the associated risk factors, as well as the trends in the prevalence of these diseases so that appropriate intervention policies are formulated. It has been noted that the prevalence of diabetes has stabilized and of pre-diabetes has declined following the implementation of various screening and prevention activities. A multisectoral Task Force had been set up to coordinate the development and implementation of a programme aimed at the prevention and control of Non-Communicable Diseases and their risk factors.
