

**CABINET DECISIONS – 25 MARCH 2016**

1. Cabinet has agreed to the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security reviewing the Sugar Industry Efficiency Act 2001 and other legislation in the context of the implementation of the measures proposed by the Implementation Committee in regard to the recommendations made by Landell Mills Commodities International Ltd on the Sugar Sector Reforms. The review would aim, *inter alia*, at -

- (a) preparing the sugar industry well ahead of the abolition of EU country sugar quotas, that is before 30 June 2017;
- (b) implementing measures destined to ensure the long term viability of the sugar industry;
- (c) laying the foundations for the transit to a low carbon economy; and
- (d) establishing an ethanol framework to allow the mandatory blending of ethanol and mogas.

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2. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent State Visit of HE Mr Hery Rajaonarimampianina, President of the Republic of Madagascar. During the visit, the following documents were signed –

- (a) a General Framework Agreement;
- (b) an Agreement for the establishment of a Joint Commission;
- (c) a Memorandum of Understanding on the Establishment of the Special Economic Zone; and
- (d) a Memorandum of Understanding between the Board of Investment and the Economic Development Board of Madagascar.

During discussions, the Prime Minister and the Malagasy President agreed, *inter alia*, to –

- (a) pursue consultations and efforts to promote the economic development of Mauritius and Madagascar;
- (b) foster closer cooperation between the Malagasy Ministry of Defence and the Prime Minister's Office on matters regarding defence;
- (c) initiate preliminary discussions on the proposed Convention in the field of Judicial and Legal Services; and
- (d) collaborate further in the fields of sport, education, food security, industries and research, renewable energy, agriculture, and with the private sector.

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3. Cabinet has agreed to the following sites being designated as national heritage as recommended by the Truth and Justice Commission –

- (a) the Old Cemetery of Le Morne, that forms part of the rich attributes of Le Morne Cultural Landscape World Heritage Site. The cemetery appears on maps dating back to the period 1880's. Excavations carried out in 2010 revealed that the cemetery contains the remains of the very first emancipated freeborn Mauritians, i.e., inherently free as enshrined in law, and distinct from those granted freedom; and
- (b) the Old Chapel of St Anne, Rose Hill, which was built in 1872. The building is reminiscent of the contributions of the first Indo-Catholics who came under indentured migration from India. They constructed the chapel to hold religious activities and prayers.

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4. Cabinet has taken note of developments in the setting up of Polytechnics that would provide work-ready diploma holders of high quality to spearhead the development of the country into a knowledge-based and skills-driven country. Three campuses' buildings are currently under construction at Réduit, Montagne Blanche and Pamplémousses to house the Polytechnics. Courses that would be offered in the Polytechnics are as follows –

- (a) Réduit - Middle Management, ICT and ICT-related fields;
- (b) Montagne Blanche - Tourism, and Hotel Management, including cruise tourism; and
- (c) Pamplémousses - health care for nurses, technicians and trained personnel in the medical field, especially in the maintenance of sophisticated medical equipment.

Fast-track programmes would, in the first phase of the project, be offered as follows–

- (a) Réduit - Diploma in Business Information Systems, and Diploma in Internet Security
- (b) Montagne Blanche - Diploma in Events Management, and Diploma in Destination Marketing
- (c) Pamplémousses - Diploma in Public Health Education, and Diploma in Sports and Recreation

The Polytechnics would establish strategic partnerships with local industry as well as foreign leading Polytechnic systems.

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5. Cabinet has agreed to Mauritius signing the Memorandum of Understanding for Institutionalising Cooperation in Radio Astronomy in Africa in the context of the African Square Kilometre Array (SKA) project. The project is part of a global scientific initiative that is planned by the SKA consortium comprising nine countries, and will be located in the Southern Africa Region. The main objectives of the Memorandum of Understanding are to strengthen cooperation in radio astronomy and the African Very Long Baseline Interferometry Network project for the eventual implementation of Africa Square Kilometre Array Project in order to, among others, –

- (a) develop a competent community of researchers and scientists to undertake radio astronomy studies across the partner countries;
- (b) build institutional capacity in universities, research institutions and government departments that are necessary to promote the development of radio astronomy programmes and initiatives; and
- (c) mobilise funding and technical resources needed to realise the partner's collective vision for radio astronomy.

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6. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life would conduct the Fifth Non-Communicable Diseases Survey in Rodrigues in April 2016. The overall goals of the Survey are to determine the prevalence of diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular disease, obesity and their associated risk factors in the Rodriguan population, and study their trends. Detailed assessment of two new health indicators, namely cognitive decline and asthma, would also be carried out.

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7. Cabinet has taken note that the validity of the old National Identity Card would be extended to 31 March 2017 in view of the legal challenge pending at the level of the Privy Council, and to enable citizens with the old National Identity Cards to complete the necessary procedures to obtain the new National Identity Cards. Regulations would be made accordingly.

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8. Cabinet has taken note of the Stamp Issue Programme for the year 2016. The following themes have been approved for the issue of postage stamps for the year 2016 -

- (a) Fresh Water Fauna in Mauritius;
- (b) Endorsement of the Sustainable Development Goals;
- (c) Maritime Air Squadron (New Dornier Aircraft);

- (d) Nature Walks;
- (e) Fresh Water Flora in Mauritius; and
- (f) World Diabetes Day.

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9. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms, with the technical assistance of the Commonwealth Secretariat (COMSEC), would formulate a Civil Service Reforms Strategy in line with Vision 2030 to bring about transformational and meaningful change in the Civil Service. The COMSEC has designated Ms Kelly Susan Culver, Consultant, to prepare the Strategy with focus on -

- (a) the review of existing reform initiatives and building an understanding of the reform context;
- (b) the formulation of a draft Civil Service Reform Strategy document, incorporating a Human Resource Strategy, as well as a Capacity Building Strategy; and
- (c) the development of a draft implementation matrix for the short, medium and long terms activities.

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10. Cabinet has taken note that, according to the last monthly report published by the Statistics Unit of the Ministry of Tourism and External Communications, 100,649 tourists visited Mauritius in February 2016 as compared to 91,128 in February 2015, i.e., an increase of 10.4%. Growth had been registered in arrivals from Germany (+31.8%), United Kingdom (+8.5%), Italy (+6.6%), France (+7%), India (+9.4%) and Reunion Island (+5.2%). Tourism earnings for the year 2015 amounted to Rs50.2 billion, representing an increase of 13.3% as compared to the year 2014.

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11. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism and External Communications to Germany where he had participated in the International Tourismus Borse (ITB) Fair, which is the world leading business-to-business event for the travel and tourism industry. The Deputy Prime Minister led a delegation comprising hoteliers, Destination Management Companies, the Rodrigues Tourism Office, the *Association des Hôteliers et Restaurateurs de l'île Maurice* (AHRIM), the *Association des hôtels de Charme*, the Association of Tourism Professionals and the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority (MTPA). He had engaged in a series of consultations with trade partners, in particular representatives of airlines, media, German travel agents and tour operators, to enlist their commitment in promoting Mauritius. He also had discussions on marketing strategies with our European Public Relations Representatives from Germany, France, Switzerland, the UK and Russia. He had met Mr Oliver Wagner, Chief Executive Officer of Eurowings who had confirmed that Eurowings would start one weekly flight to Mauritius as from May 2016, and two weekly flights in December 2016 from Cologne.

On his way to Berlin, the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism and External Communications stopped over in the UK, where he had meetings, among others, with key UK tour operators and stakeholders, Destination Management Companies and airlines, and explained the “Mauritius 365” campaign that had been launched to promote Mauritius as an all-the-year-round destination.

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12. Cabinet has taken note of the recent visit of the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism and External Communications to Singapore in the context of the Inaugural Flight of the Africa-Mauritius-Asia Air Corridor, and his study tour on tourism development in Malaysia.

In Singapore, the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism and External Communications participated in several activities organised to mark the inaugural flight, and to sensitize key stakeholders on the opportunities offered by the Air Corridor. A Business Forum on the theme ‘*Mauritius: Your Business Hub to Africa*,’ and a presentation on the theme “*Mauritius as a Tourist Destination*” were organized. The Deputy Prime Minister met, among others, the Singaporean Deputy Prime Minister and Coordinating Minister for Economic and Social Policies, Mr Tharman Shanmugaratnam, with whom he discussed skills development policy in Singapore and its matching with career, and the employment of foreign labour.

At the invitation of the Government of Malaysia, the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism and External Communications visited Langkawi, world famous for its tourism product. He met YBhg Tan Sri Khalid Ramli, Chief Executive Officer of Langkawi Development Authority with whom he had talks on exchanges between the MTPA and the Langkawi Development Authority.

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13. Cabinet has taken note that the 15th Annual General Meeting of the Southern Africa Postal Operators Association (SAPOA) would be held in Mauritius in June 2016. The SAPOA is the SADC regional body responsible for the Postal Sector, and aims at ensuring that every sector of the community has access to a modern, efficient and diversified range of mail and e-products. Some 100 delegates from Member countries, and senior officials from the Universal Postal Union and the Pan-African Postal Union would attend the Meeting.

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14. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Health and Quality of Life to India. The Minister, among others, -

- (a) had a meeting with the Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare, Shri J.P. Nadda, with whom he reviewed the Memorandum of Understanding signed between India and Mauritius on the provision of technical assistance. A Joint Steering Committee has been set up to work out the modalities of the cooperation;

- (b) signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Balaji Dental and Craniofacial Hospital of Chennai on specialized craniofacial treatment; and
- (c) had meetings with Dr Jayshree Mehta, Chairperson of the Medical Council of India, on the review of our regulatory mechanism, and Prof Bipin Batra, Executive Director of the National Board of Examinations of India, on support for the assessment of specialists prior to registration with the Medical Council.

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15. Cabinet has taken note of the successful implementation of the Flexible Working Arrangement Scheme. The Scheme was implemented on a pilot basis in the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms as from 1 October 2015 and extended to five other Ministries/Departments as from January 2016. A survey carried out in the six Ministries/Departments concerned to assess the effectiveness of the Scheme has revealed that the Flexible Working Arrangement is a welcome initiative as it is beneficial to both the officers and the Civil Service. It is proposed to extend the Scheme across the Civil Service in the near future.

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16. Cabinet has taken note of the constitution of the Pharmacy Council of Mauritius for period 2016 to 2018.

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