

CABINET DECISIONS – 04 March 2016

1. Cabinet has agreed to the recommendations of the Ministerial Committee, chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism and External Communications, to streamline procedures for the grant of work permits in the Textile Manufacturing Sector with a view to boosting the Sector and palliating the shortage of manpower. The recommendations include -

- (a) the ratio of local to foreign workers being reviewed to 1:1;
- (b) the duration of stay of foreign workers being extended to eight years, subject to their swearing an affidavit that they will not apply for Mauritian Citizenship;
- (c) the introduction of a short term work permit of 3 months to facilitate entry of foreign workers, pending approval of long term work and residence permits; and
- (d) the prohibition of direct recruitment by companies.

The Recruitment of Workers Act and the Non-Citizens (Employment Restriction) Act would be amended accordingly.

2. Cabinet has taken note that the MauBank SME Financing Scheme is being extended to individuals implementing a feasible project. Under the Scheme, individuals would be eligible to loans at an interest rate of 3.4%, a maximum of 90% project financing with maturity of up to 10 years, and a moratorium of 2 years on principal repayment. So far, the Scheme catered only for small companies incorporated under the Companies Act and registered under the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority Act on or after 2 June 2015.

3. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of air services negotiations held with the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany in February 2016. The negotiations culminated in the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding that entered into force as from the date of signature, i.e., 25 February 2016. The salient points that have been agreed upon are -

- (a) each contracting party will have the right to designate one or more airline(s). The designated airline for Mauritius to operate on the scheduled air services on agreed routes is Air Mauritius and the German side has designated Lufthansa, Condor and Eurowings;
- (b) the designated airline(s) of each contracting party will be allowed to operate up to 14 frequencies in each direction per week. All-cargo operations will also be allowed without restrictions on capacity and frequency;

- (c) a new route schedule has been adopted where Air Mauritius can serve 10 points in Germany; and
- (d) the designated airline(s) of each contracting party may enter into cooperative arrangements, like codesharing, with airlines of the same contracting party, the other contracting party and a third country.

Cabinet has agreed to an Air Transport Agreement being signed with the Federal Republic of Germany.

4. Cabinet has taken note that, during the forthcoming State Visit of HE Hery Rajaonarimampianina, President of the Republic of Madagascar, the following documents would be signed –

- (a) a Memorandum of Understanding (*mémorandum d'entente*) on the setting up of Special Economic Zones in Madagascar, that lays down the modalities for the development of the Zones; and
- (b) the '*Accord Cadre Général de Coopération*' (General Framework Agreement) and the '*Accord d'établissement de Commission Mixte*' (Agreement for a Joint Commission). The '*Accord Cadre*' aims at enhancing the existing friendly relationship, strengthening the historical ties, promoting and supporting cooperation in various sectors, namely, agriculture, trade, fisheries, tourism, transport, education, research, culture, environment, energy, health, innovation, information and communication, defence and security, migration and development, and justice. A Joint Commission that would be co-chaired by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of both countries, would oversee the implementation of the Agreement.

5. Cabinet has agreed to the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security signing an Agreement for Reimbursable Technical Assistance with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). The Fund would support the setting up of an operational and necessary legal framework for the development of the Seeds Sector in Mauritius. It would also –

- (a) carry out a review of the Seeds Act 2013, and develop draft priority Regulations for the setting up and operation of institutions created under the Act;
- (b) prepare detailed roles and responsibilities of each section of the National Plant Varieties and Seeds Office;
- (c) set up management systems for the running of the National Plant Varieties and Seeds Office; and
- (d) develop seeds testing capacity.

6. Cabinet has agreed to the Ministry of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries, Shipping and Outer Islands signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Science, ICT and Future Planning of the Republic of Korea and the International Maritime Organization (IMO) concerning a feasibility study for the establishment of a Maritime Single Window System in Mauritius. The Single Window System is a trade facilitation concept that allows international traders to submit regulatory documents at a single location and/or point of entry, thus reducing the through-time and allowing cost saving for ships in their dealings with Government authorities for obtaining the relevant clearances and permits for moving cargoes across national or economic borders.

7. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the discussions of the 8th Meeting of the Mauritius-Seychelles Joint Commission of the Extended Continental Shelf held in the Seychelles. The Mauritius delegation was led by Mr S. Seebaluck, GOSK, Secretary to Cabinet and Head of the Civil Service. The main outcomes of the 8th Meeting of the Mauritius-Seychelles Joint Commission are –

- (a) issue of letters of Expression of Interest to international companies for the conduct of Multi-Client Geotechnical Surveys that could be identified by the Joint Commission;
- (b) finalization of the draft Strategic Plan 2016-2018 for the development of the Joint Management Area (JMA) with focus on, *inter alia*, the setting up of institutional framework and capacity building necessary to govern the JMA, and promoting the Area as an attractive destination for investment by international oil companies;
- (c) examination of the first draft of the Marine Scientific Research Code for the JMA; and
- (d) approval for the launching of a Logo Design Competition for the JMA in both Mauritius and the Seychelles. The competition would be open to citizens of both countries aged between 15 to 25 years.

8. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare has adopted a Charter for Family Values, which has been validated by religious organizations grouped under the Shared Faith Belief Programme. The Charter portrays the core values, principles and strategies that the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare advocates for families, and provides broad guidelines for the upbringing of children, care of all immediate family members, as well as elders. The Charter would also assist religious bodies in sustaining awareness on values in their different congregations.

9. Cabinet has taken note that the Fourth International Conference on Pure and Applied Chemistry would be held in Mauritius in July 2016. The objectives of the Conference are, *inter alia*, to –

- (a) group participants conducting research in chemical sciences under a single platform;

- (b) allow participants to keep abreast with the latest research findings in chemical sciences;
- (c) promote discussion and sharing of ideas; and
- (d) strengthen the visibility of Mauritius as a destination of higher education and research in the scientific and engineering sectors.

10. Cabinet has taken note of the activities that would be organized by the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection to mark the World Consumer Rights Day 2016, observed on 15 March. The theme retained for this year is '**Antibiotics off the Menu**'. Activities that would be held on the occasion include the holding of a National Workshop on "*Responsible and Prudent Use of Antibiotics in Food Production*", and an exhibition of brochures, pamphlets, photographs and posters on the theme.

11. Cabinet has agreed to the Action Plan for the implementation of measures contained in the Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC) for Mauritius that was submitted in the context of COP21 Meeting. The Action Plan comprises a list of projects, which are in line with the Vision 2030 of the Prime Minister and includes land drainage and infrastructure, coastal zone, water, food security, health and biodiversity as well as mitigation measures in the sectors like renewable energy, energy technologies, low emission transport, and waste management.

12. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training to the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The Minister had a meeting with HE Saqr Ghubash Saeed Ghubash, Minister of Labour, on prospects of employment of Mauritians. The Minister also signed a Memorandum of Understanding in the field of manpower with the Government of the United Arab Emirates with a view to promoting collaboration for the recruitment and employment of Mauritian Nationals in the UAE.

13. Cabinet has agreed to the Minister of Health and Quality of Life making the Pharmaceutical Product (Fees) Regulations for the processing, registration and renewal of registration of imported and locally manufactured pharmaceutical products. The regulations would contribute to a healthier pharmaceutical sector with better control on imported and locally manufactured drugs.

14. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Board of the Statutory Bodies Family Protection Fund with the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Local Government as Chairperson.
