

CABINET DECISIONS – 07 APRIL 2016

1. Cabinet has agreed to the modalities for the implementation of the scheme for the payment of examination fees in respect of students sitting for the Cambridge SC/HSC/ GCE 'O'/GCE 'A' Level Examinations. As from year 2016, payment of examination fees by Government would be effected only in respect of school candidates sitting for the first time for the October/November Cambridge SC/HSC/GCE 'O'/GCE 'A' Level Examinations, subject to the candidate having an attendance level of at least 90% in the year of examinations and the preceding year, i.e., Forms IV and Lower VI.

Cabinet has also taken note that the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions would consider requests for the payment of Cambridge SC/HSC/GCE 'O'/GCE 'A' Level Examination fees, in full, in respect of students who have failed at the examinations at their first attempt, and whose households are registered in the Social Register of Mauritius at the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions.

2. Cabinet has taken note that, following representations made by the Federation of Hotels Taxis Associations, the Ministerial Committee, chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism and External Communications, reviewed the measures taken in respect of hotel and airport-based taxis and agreed to the following -

- (a) Taxi desks would be set up at hotels with a minimum room capacity of 50 instead of 100.
- (b) Taxi meters would be mandatory for all newly licensed hotel and airport-based taxis, but optional for existing ones.
- (c) Where the metered taxi is not in operation, the taxi operators would recuperate payment for their trip under a voucher system to be set up.
- (d) A new category of contract cars, with minimum engine capacity of 2,000 cc for petrol and 2,500 cc for diesel, would be introduced to cater for a niche market segment and provide a luxury or premium chauffeur-driven car service.
- (e) The Tourism Employees Welfare Fund Act would be amended to include hotel and airport-based taxi operators to enable them to contribute to the Fund and benefit from the different schemes that are operated by the Fund.

3. Cabinet has agreed to the introduction of the Firearms (Amendment) Bill in the National Assembly. The main object of the Bill is to amend the Firearms Act so as to implement the provisions of the Arms Trade Treaty to which Mauritius is a signatory. The Bill also aims at strengthening the provisions of existing legislation in order to enable the Police Force to better control the movement of firearms within the country, and in transit through the port and airport.

4. Cabinet has agreed to the setting up of an Intercontinental Slavery Museum, as recommended by the Truth and Justice Commission, at the Ex-Labourdonnais Military Hospital in Port Louis. The Museum would give more visibility to slavery and the slave trade in the Indian Ocean, promote slave history, and emphasize the contribution of the African Diaspora in the world development. The functions of the Museum would be, *inter alia*, to –

- (a) study slavery and slave trade in the Indian Ocean;
- (b) gather, collect and preserve documents and oral history on slavery;
- (c) create and preserve a catalogue of artifacts related to slavery;
- (d) host a permanent exhibition and organize regular roving exhibitions; and
- (e) promote curricular development, scientific research, as well as the production of educational and pedagogical materials.

5. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Technology, Communication and Innovation would launch the National Innovation Framework (NIF) 2016-2020. The Framework aims at promoting creativity in businesses and enhancing technopreneurship, through strong Science and Technology and Research cast, to ensure the ability to innovate continually. It consists of a cohesive set of practices which inspires imaginative/creative teams to –

- (a) look beyond the obvious;
- (b) explore a broad range of possibilities;
- (c) identify significant opportunities;
- (d) make informed decisions about the most promising paths to pursue;
- (e) create a shared vision for growth; and
- (f) define pragmatic action plans that will align their organisations with the requirements for success.

Twenty Schemes have currently been developed and are classified into four different clusters, namely Innovation and Commercialisation Schemes, Research and Innovation Grant Schemes, Research and Innovation Support Schemes and Capacity Building Award Schemes. The main gist of the Schemes is to inculcate and promote research and innovation culture among individuals, groups, companies and institutions.

6. Cabinet has agreed to the setting up of a modern Cancer Centre in the building housing the former Medpoint Clinic at Solferino, Vacoas, in line with Government Programme 2015-2019. The Centre would be equipped with the state-of-the-art medical equipment including Multi-leaf Collimator Linear Accelerator, CT Simulator, 3D Treatment Planning System, and logistics. According to the National Cancer Registry Report 2015, a total of 2,387 new cancer cases were registered in 2014, i.e., 1,068 males and 1,319 females, representing an increase by 13.0% in males and 1.4% in females as compared to 2013.

7. Cabinet has agreed to the recommendations of the National Heritage Fund to designate the following religious and cultural sites as national heritage –

- (a) Al Aqsa Mosque at Plaine Verte;
- (b) Aroul Migou Dhandayuthabani Swami Kovil at Clemencia;
- (c) Cohan Tai Biou Pagoda (Kwan Tee Pagoda) at Les Salines, Port Louis;
- (d) Mitr Mandal Samaj at Sainte Croix;
- (e) the Monument commemorating the Centenary of Indian Immigration at Port Louis;
- (f) the Monument of Maha Rana Pratab at Bell Village;
- (g) Pandurang Kshetra Mandir at Cascavelle;
- (h) Shri Simhadri Appanah Alayam at Beau Vallon;
- (i) St François d'Assise Church at Pamplemousses;
- (j) St James Cathedral at Port Louis;
- (k) St Jean Presbyterian Church at Port Louis; and
- (l) Triolet Maheswarnath Shivala.

8. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life would introduce the Human Papilloma Virus Vaccine in Mauritius and Rodrigues as a primary prevention strategy against cervical cancer. Cervical cancer is one of the leading causes of cancer in women. According to the World Health Organization, cervical cancer affects about 528,000 women and causes more than 270,000 deaths worldwide. In Mauritius, cervical cancer has been the second most prevalent cancer in women, after breast cancer. Some 99 new cases were diagnosed in 2014, showing an increase of 4.2% as compared to 2013.

Cabinet has also taken note that the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life is currently carrying out a Cervical Cancer Screening Programme in connection with WHO recommendations.

9. Cabinet has taken note of developments in the opening of a Mauritius Embassy in Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The Saudi authorities have put a plot of land of an extent of 4,516 square metres at the disposal of the Government of Mauritius in the Diplomatic Quarter of Riyadh, and pledged to build the Chancery and the official residence of the Ambassador thereon. In the meantime, the Saudi authorities would provide two premises to temporarily accommodate the Chancery and the official residence pending the delivery of the official buildings.

10. Cabinet has taken note of the Action Plan for the Tertiary Education Strategic Plan, elaborated by a team of Consultants commissioned by the Delegation of the European Union. The vision of Government is to transform Mauritius into a knowledge-based economy by 2025 in the light of a globalised economy, which requires higher skills, more research and innovation, and competitiveness. Government puts more focus on innovation as the driving force for creating jobs and welfare.

The Report of the Consultants recommends strategic approaches to Governance, Education as a Change Agent, and Research as the main engine for an Innovation Knowledge Hub. The course of action adopted by the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research to improve the functioning of the Tertiary Education Sector includes –

- (a) the improvement of the functioning of feeder channels to tertiary education through the Nine Year Schooling Project at Primary and Secondary levels;
- (b) the diversification of post-secondary education through the strengthening of the TVET and Polytechnics subsectors; and
- (c) the consolidation of legislation and regulation of the Tertiary Education Sector through the Higher Education Bill to be worked out with the help of an expert from the Commonwealth.

11. Cabinet has taken note that 69 e-services are, currently, available on the Government portal and some 50 additional e-services would be made available during the course of the next financial year for better public service delivery. E-services are essentially online application forms which enable citizens to apply online for services requested. Personal computer terminals and other facilities are available in various Post Offices to enable the public to access the internet and use the e-services.

12. Cabinet has agreed to Mauritius accepting the accession of the Republic of Ukraine to the Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction in accordance with Article 38 of the Convention, and including the Republic of Ukraine as a contracting State to the Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction Act 2000.

13. Cabinet has taken note that the Seventh Association of Commonwealth Universities Human Resource Management Network Conference would be held in Mauritius in October 2016. The theme of the Conference will be '**HR steps up**'. The objectives of the Conference are, *inter alia*, to –

- (a) provide a unique opportunity for HR professionals and People Managers to discuss issues which specifically relate to human resources management in higher education;
- (b) profile best practice; and
- (c) provide excellent opportunities for professional development and networking.

Some 120 participants from the Commonwealth countries are expected to attend the Conference.

14. Cabinet has taken note that, in the light of the report received from the World Health Organization, the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life has removed Liberia and Sierra Leone from the list of countries on surveillance for Ebola Virus Disease. There would, therefore, be no restrictions on travel and trade with Liberia and Sierra Leone. However, surveillance and travel restriction on Guinea Conakry are being maintained in view of the resurgence of the disease.

15. Cabinet has taken note that the World Health Organization (WHO) would hold its annual meetings of the Directors Programme Management and Directors of Administration and Finance from all WHO regions in Mauritius in April 2016. The main objectives of the Meetings are to allow WHO senior managers to harmonise their administrative practices and discuss about global cross-cutting topics in the areas of management and administration. Some 25 participants are expected to attend the meetings.

16. Cabinet has taken note of the appointment of Mrs Khoudijah Maudarbocus-Boodoo as Director of the Tourism Authority. Mrs Maudarbocus-Boodoo holds a Master in Business Administration from the University of Surrey, UK, and reckons more than 15 years experience at Senior Management Level.

17. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of -

- (a) the National Pensions Board with Mr Goolabchund Goburdhun as Chairperson; and
- (b) the National Savings Fund Technical Committee with Mrs Shaheena Abdul Carrim as Chairperson.
