

CABINET DECISIONS – 7 OCTOBER 2016

1. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Rt Hon Sir Anerood Jugnauth, GCSK, KCMG, QC, Prime Minister, to New York where he participated in the 71st Session of the United Nations General Assembly. He led a delegation comprising, among others, Mr Olivier Bancoult, OSK, Spokesperson of the Chagossians. During his intervention at the General Assembly, the Prime Minister dwelt at length on the issue of sovereignty of Mauritius over the Chagos Archipelago, stated in unequivocal terms that our sovereignty claim and the right of resettlement of the Chagossians in the Archipelago cannot be dissociated, and argued that the decolonisation of Mauritius is yet to be completed. He also spoke of the issues of poverty eradication and sustainable development, including the need for accrued assistance on climate change and the development of the ocean economy. Mauritius has succeeded in inscribing the Chagos Archipelago issue on the Agenda of the 71st Session of the United Nations General Assembly; however, at the request of the UK, the item had been deferred to June 2017.

At the request of the UK, the Prime Minister had a meeting with Hon Boris Johnson, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom, to whom he expressed the willingness of Mauritius to engage in meaningful discussions for the return of the Chagos Archipelago to the effective control of Mauritius. He also highlighted that future discussions would have to focus on the issue of sovereignty and conducted in good faith.

The Prime Minister also had bilateral meetings, among others, with HE Macky Sall, President of Senegal; HE Mr Aleksandar Vučić, Prime Minister of the Republic of Serbia; HE General Prayut Chan-o-cha (RET.), Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand, and Mr Peter Thomson, President of the 71st Session of the United Nations General Assembly.

The Prime Minister further witnessed the signing ceremony of the Host Country Agreement for Mauritius to host the Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub. He also participated in the High Level Plenary Event on the 30th Anniversary of the Declaration on the Right to Development, and the US-Africa Business Forum co-hosted by the Bloomberg Philanthropies and the US Department of Commerce.

2. Cabinet has taken note of the status of major development projects that are currently being undertaken, namely –

- (a) Metro Express;
- (b) OffShore Oil Refinery;
- (c) Victoria Urban Terminal;
- (d) Road Decongestion Programme -
 - (i) Phoenix-Jumbo-Dowlut-Roundabouts;
 - (ii) A1 – M1 Bridge linking the West to Motorway at Soreze; and
- (e) Major works at the port, including the petroleum hub.

3. Cabinet has taken note of arrangements made by the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training for the recruitment and placement of 200 Trainee Engineers in public sector bodies as announced in Budget Speech 2016-2017. The scheme is open to graduates in Engineering (Civil, Mechanical, Electrical and Mechatronics) who will have to undergo pre-registration practical training, under the supervision of a Registered Engineer, for a period of two years. The Trainee Engineers would be paid a monthly fee of Rs23,975, plus travelling allowance in accordance with recommendations of the Pay Research Bureau. It is expected that the recruitment exercise would be completed, and the Trainees in post by November 2016.

4. Cabinet has taken note that all fossil and subfossil remains of endemic fauna within the territory of the Republic of Mauritius would be designated as National Heritage, and their export and trade prohibited. Regulations, under the National Heritage Fund Act, would be made accordingly.

5. Cabinet has taken note of the status in the implementation of the Culture House project with the assistance of the Chinese Government. The Culture House would accommodate the National Archives Department and the National Library. Mr Xu You, Director of the Beijing Institute of Architectural Design, led a delegation to Mauritius in September 2016 to finalise modalities. The project would be implemented with the help of local resources.

6. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Technology, Communication and Innovation, in collaboration with the National Computer Board and the Forum of Incident Response and Security Teams (FIRST), would organise an International FIRST Technical Colloquium in November 2016. The main objectives of the Colloquium are to -

- (a) enhance communication and collaboration among participating teams;
- (b) build capacity and improve incident response capability in the ICT Sector; and
- (c) gauge and improve preparedness in the identification, response, prevention and resolution of computer incidents.

Participants from some 20 countries, as well as local experts, would attend the Colloquium.

7. Cabinet has taken note that Statistics Mauritius would conduct the 10th Household Budget Survey in 2017. The objective of the Survey that is conducted every five years, is to collect data on income and expenditure patterns, demographic characteristics, as well as housing and living conditions of the population of Mauritius and Rodrigues, with a view to updating the basket of goods and services on the basis of which the monthly Consumer Price Index is computed.

8. Cabinet has taken note of the judgment of the Court of Appeal of Bologna on the extradition case pertaining to Mrs Nandanee Soornack, and considered the possibility to pursue an appeal.

9. Cabinet has taken note that the second meeting of the *Commission Economique Régionale Mixte Maurice/Réunion* would be held in Reunion Island from 10 to 12 October 2016. In the context of this meeting, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade would hold discussions with Mr Didier Robert, President of the *Conseil Régional*, on bilateral cooperation issues, as well as the INTERREG V Indian Ocean 2014-2020 programme. In order to operationalise the INTERREG, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade would sign a Convention-Cadre with the *Région Réunion*.

10. Cabinet has agreed to the *Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (No. 204)*, adopted by the 104th Annual Conference of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), being tabled in the National Assembly. The Recommendation acknowledges that most people enter the informal economy not by choice, but due to lack of opportunities in the formal economy, and an absence of any other means of livelihood. The Recommendation provides strategies and practical guidance on policies and measures that can facilitate the transition of workers and economic units from the informal to the formal economy, while respecting workers' fundamental rights and ensuring opportunities for income security, livelihoods and entrepreneurship.

11. Cabinet has taken note that Mr Gaetan Siew, GOSK, has been nominated to stand as candidate for election on the United Nations HABITAT Governing Council for the period 2017-2020.

12. Cabinet has taken note that, in the context of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, commemorated on 17 October, the Ministry of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment would organise the following activities –

- (a) a talk on the theme **“Fighting Poverty in the 21st Century: the Sustainable Development Platform”** by Dr Rômulo Paes de Sousa, Director of the World Centre for Sustainable Development of the United Nations Development Programme;
- (b) a participatory community function with beneficiaries of the Integrated Social Housing Project at Gros Cailloux, Petite Rivière, and the award of certificates to a first batch of participants who have followed the *Atelier Partage Parents* Course;

- (c) the launching of the *Atelier Partage Parents* Course for the beneficiaries of Ste Catherine;
- (d) an exhibition to showcase the achievements of the Decentralised Cooperation Programme during the past 10 years; and
- (e) handing over of keys to beneficiaries of housing units in Rodrigues.

The theme chosen by the United Nations for this year is **“Moving from Humiliation and Exclusion to Participation: Ending Poverty in all its Forms”**.

13. Cabinet has taken note of the activities that would be organised at Domaine les Pailles and Sir Gaëtan Duval Esplanade, Mahebourg by the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security on the occasion of the World Food Day, commemorated on 16 October, namely –

- (a) an exhibition to showcase initiatives related to the adaption of agriculture to the effects of climate change;
- (b) an agricultural fair where a variety of agricultural products would be put on sale;
- (c) demonstration of grafting techniques, fixing of bird nets and food carving techniques; and
- (d) sale of traditional local food, existing/new tea varieties, fresh cane and fruit juices and local fruits.

The theme for World Food Day 2016 proclaimed by the Food and Agriculture Organisation is **“Climate is changing. Food and Agriculture must too.”**

A special desk would be set up for the registration of the small poultry breeders whose chicken had been affected by the Salmonella disease, for cash compensation.

14. Cabinet has taken note of the recent mission of the Attorney General to Venezuela where he participated in the Seventeenth Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). The theme of the Summit was **“Peace, Sovereignty and Solidarity for Development”**. A General Debate was held on the theme. The Attorney General had, among others, sought the support of NAM Member States for the process initiated by Mauritius for the United Nations General Assembly to submit a request for an Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legal consequences of the separation of the Chagos Archipelago from Mauritius in 1965. The Summit has, in its Final Document, reaffirmed that the Chagos Archipelago, including Diego Garcia, forms an integral part of the territory of Mauritius, and further resolved to fully support measures that may be taken by the Government of Mauritius.

15. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training to Washington DC where he participated in the Labour and Trade Ministerial Meeting under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA). The objective of the Meeting was to look into the manner by which labour and trade policies could be better coordinated under AGOA, and how internationally recognised workers rights may be integrated in actions aimed at increasing the utilisation of AGOA.

In the margins of the Meeting, the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training had discussions with Ms Florizelle Liser, Assistant US Trade Representative for Africa, on the possibility for capacity building of our local entrepreneurs in making optimal use of the advantages that exist for exportation of local products to the USA.

16. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Hearing Committee of the Training and Employment of Disabled Persons Board with Mr Neil Pillay as Chairperson.
