

CABINET DECISIONS – 06 APRIL 2018

1. Cabinet has agreed to the introduction of the Reform Institutions (Amendment) Bill into the National Assembly. The object of the Bill is to amend the Reform Institutions Act so as to –

- (a) do away with the system of automatic remission whereby convicted persons were eligible to be discharged after having served two thirds of the period of sentence and to replace it with a new system of earned remission with a view to encouraging convicted persons to earn maximum remission not exceeding one third of the period of sentence where, during their term of imprisonment, they are of good conduct by not committing any prison default;
- (b) toughen the law against officers of the Mauritius Prisons Service, detainees and persons working in reform institutions who are convicted under the Act; and
- (c) provide that where, during his term of imprisonment, a detainee commits an offence under the Act, that detainee shall, on conviction for that offence, be ordered to serve immediately after the expiry of the sentence for which he was detained, any sentence imposed upon him by the Court.

However, the new system of earned remission will not be applicable to those convicted for drug dealing/trafficking, sexual offences on minors and handicapped persons

2. Cabinet has agreed to the introduction of the Code de Commerce (Amendment) Bill into the National Assembly. The object of the Bill is to amend the Code de Commerce to allow the use of the value of a commercial business as a whole, including leasehold rights, trade name, intellectual property rights and goodwill but excluding the value of freehold property as collateral and enhance access to credit.

3. Cabinet has taken note that a Digital Elevation Model of high resolution and accuracy and aerial imagery would be procured for the Land Drainage Authority. The Digital Elevation Model which is a requisite in the preparation of a land drainage masterplan, would be used, inter alia, to derive topographic indices and identify water ways. The equipment would be used by various institutions, namely –

- (a) the Ministry of Housing and Lands in the review and updating of the District Council Outline Planning Schemes and the National Development Strategy;

- (b) the Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities as one of the inputs to water resources projects and hydraulic/hydrological studies;
- (c) the Ministry of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport in the design of new road and public infrastructures;
- (d) the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Centre and the Department of Environment in the development of preparedness and response plans against national disasters;
- (e) the local authorities in the updating of their detailed plans and for development control in areas potentially at risks from flooding and landslides; and
- (f) the Rodrigues Regional Assembly in the design of new dams, road and drainage infrastructures, preparation of flood risk maps and development of preparedness and response plans.

4. Cabinet has agreed to the implementation of a zoning system for the examination of vehicles at the three private Vehicle Examination Stations, and to Regulations being made under the Road Traffic (Examination of Motor Vehicles) Regulations 2016 for the implementation of the zoning system to become effective as from 1 January 2019.

5. Cabinet has taken note of the draft Commonwealth Principles on Freedom of Expression and the Role of the Media in Strengthening Democracy and Good Governance, prepared by the Commonwealth Journalist Association and agreed to the comments and feedback on the draft Principles being submitted to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

6. Cabinet has agreed to the review of the eligibility income thresholds for Additional Laureate Schemes based on Merit and Social Criteria with a view to allowing more students from low income families to be eligible for a scholarship. The Scheme would be revised to –

- (a) increase the income threshold for the 16 scholarships awarded to students ranked among the first 500 on basis of merit and social criteria from Rs12,000 to Rs16,000; and
- (b) increase the income threshold for the 8 scholarships awarded on basis of HSC results to children from low income families from Rs6,200 to Rs9,500.

The relevant Regulations will be amended, accordingly.

7. Cabinet has taken note that the deemed fob price of molasses for crop 2017 has been set at Rs2,147.48 per tonne by the Mauritius Cane Industry Authority, as compared to Rs1,988.52 for crop 2016, i.e., an increase of around 8%. Planters will receive an estimated revenue of Rs3,601.55 per tonne of molasses for crop 2017, as compared to Rs3,535.43 for crop 2016.

8. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security would sign the Country Programming Framework for the biennium 2018 to 2021, prepared with the technical assistance of the Food and Agriculture Organization. The Country Programming Framework would focus on addressing unemployment, alleviating if not eradicating poverty and encouraging sustainable development and innovation. The priorities are –

- (a) promoting the adoption of sustainable forms of agriculture that are smart and certified organic for enhanced food safety;
- (b) support to agri-business development, and
- (c) promoting sustainable fisheries and further support the concept of ocean economy.

9. Cabinet has agreed to the Information and Communication Technologies Authority hosting the Commonwealth Spectrum Management Forum 2018 in September 2018. The annual Forum is a means for the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation to assist Commonwealth countries to use broadband and spectrum efficiently so that the potential of information and communication technologies can be fully realised. The Forum would enable sharing of experience among Commonwealth Member States and ICT regulators and designing harmonised policies based on best practices on Spectrum Management. Some 100 foreign participants and Internet Service Providers from the region are expected to attend the Forum.

10. Cabinet has taken note that an International Conference entitled “Between Slavery and Post-Slavery: Citizenship, Dependence and Abolitionism in African and Indian Ocean Societies” would be organised by the University of Mauritius, from 10 to 12 April 2018. The Conference aims at bringing together members of the public interested in the issue as well as NGOs and scholars and will focus mainly on the legacies of past slavery, slavery today and African anti-slavery movements and grassroots activism. Some 50 participants from African and European countries are expected to attend the Conference.

11. Cabinet has taken note of the activities that would be organised to mark the World Health Day 2018, observed on 7 April, namely –

- (a) an Exhibition at the Esplanade of Emmanuel Anquetil Building to showcase achievement in the area of attainment of Universal Health Coverage in relation to curative, preventive and rehabilitation care; and
- (b) a Ceremony at Victoria Hospital to commemorate the 60 years of existence of the Central Health Laboratory Services and the associated development in terms of Universal Health Coverage for alleviating suffering.

The theme for this year is **“Universal Health Coverage: everyone, everywhere.”**

12. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare would organise a Workshop for gender focal points and their alternates represented on the National Steering Committee on Gender Mainstreaming and a Training of Trainers Programme on gender mainstreaming strategies for senior officers of all Ministries in April 2018.

The objective of the Workshop is to provide an in-depth understanding of gender equality, including the pertinence to engender policies and programmes of all Ministries. The Training of Trainers Programme aims at building the capacity of Ministries on gender mainstreaming strategies and the use of gender tools.

13. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Board of Directors of the Mauritius Africa Fund with Mr Radhakrishna Chellapermal, Deputy Financial Secretary, as Chairperson.

14. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Board of the the Malcolm de Chazal Trust Fund with Mrs Angel Angoh as Chairperson.
