

CABINET DECISIONS – 21 SEPTEMBER 2018

1. Cabinet has agreed to provide support to sugarcane planters who are facing financial difficulties due to the decline in sugar price on the world market. The following measures are being proposed for providing immediate relief to planters for Crop 2018 -

- (a) a cash compensation of Rs1,250 per ton of sugar to all planters; and
- (b) additional remuneration from bagasse of Rs1,250 per ton of sugar thus bringing the revenue accruing from bagasse to Rs2,500 for small planters and Rs1,700 for other planters.

For planters with less than 100 hectares of cane cultivation, the advance of 80% would be extended on all the revenue received from sugar and co-products instead of the ex MSS price on sugar only. The Mauritius Cane Industry Authority would also assist planters with less than 100 hectares under cane cultivation through an advance from the Planters Fund for the purchase of fertilizers for crop 2019. The advance would be around Rs13,000 per hectare.

Government would continue to explore new markets for sugar, in particular special sugar, with remunerative prices. In this respect, after protracted negotiations with the Chinese authorities under the Mauritius China Free Trade Agreement, Mauritius has managed to obtain a tariff rate quota of 50,000 tons of special sugar.

2. Cabinet has taken note of the launching of the Grant Scheme for the Purchase of Outboard Engine and Fishing Nets by Fishermen Cooperatives. The objectives of the Grant Scheme are to -

- (a) enable fishermen grouped in cooperatives to procure the necessary tool and equipment for their fishing activities;
- (b) give a boost to the fishermen community to modernise their fishing activity;
- (c) increase the catch of fishermen; and enhance the financial position of fishermen cooperatives; and
- (d) encourage participatory initiatives in the development of the cooperative fishing sector.

The Grant Scheme comprises the provision of financial assistance to fishermen cooperatives for the purchase of New Outboard Engine and Fishing Nets. A grant of 60% of the cost of an Outboard Engine and Fishing Nets up to a maximum of Rs60,000 would be provided to fishermen cooperatives.

3. Cabinet has agreed to the implementation of the recommendations of the Technical Committee chaired by the Financial Secretary to examine the situation of the workers employed by the Central Water Authority whose contracts of employment expired on 31 May 2018. The recommendations have been endorsed by the representatives of the Solidarity Committee with Hunger Strikers of the Central Water Authority.

4. Cabinet has taken note that a New National Strategy for Official Statistics for the period 2019 to 2023 is being designed by Statistics Mauritius. The main features of the Strategy would be to –

- (a) assess the current state of statistics in priority sectors such as Health, Environment, Labour, Tourism and Education;
- (b) consider cross-cutting issues and broader constraints;
- (c) assess the skills gaps and shortages;
- (d) evaluate the institutional environment;
- (e) optimise on digital systems in place or being developed in public sector agencies for official statistics generation; and
- (f) propose measures to meet the data needs of users and address skills gaps.

The National Strategy for Official Statistics is expected to be released by early 2019.

5. Cabinet has taken note of the conclusion of technical negotiations between the United Kingdom (UK) and the Eastern and Southern African (ESA) countries on the transposition of the interim Economic Partnership Agreement (iEPA) into a new ESA-UK Economic Partnership Agreement at the third round of discussions held in Johannesburg in September 2018.

6. Cabinet has taken note of the constitution of the National Regulatory Sandbox Licence Committee with Lord M. Desai as Chairperson. The Committee would consider all issues relating to Sandbox licensing for Fintech activities.

7. Cabinet has taken note of the activities being organised by the Ministry of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment, in collaboration with the National Empowerment Foundation, in the context of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty commemorated on 17 October. The activities include –

- (a) a lecture by Dr Jacques Rangasamy on 2 October 2018 at Sir Harilal Vaghjee Hall on the theme “*Poverty as Cultural Legacy : A reflection on the cultural resources of Mauritian Citizenship*”;
- (b) handing over of keys under the Fully Concrete Housing Scheme to 15 beneficiaries in the districts of Pamplemousses, Port Louis, Plaines Wilhems, Flacq, Savanne and Grand Port;
- (c) organisation of a Job Fair at Souillac on 20 October 2018; and
- (d) organisation of an “*expo-vente*” and the launching of three training courses in Rodrigues.

The theme chosen by the United Nations for this year is “**Coming together with those furthest behind to build an inclusive world of universal respect for human rights and dignity**”.

8. Cabinet has taken note that in the context of the World Heart Day observed on 29 September, the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life would organise -

- (a) a mass awareness campaign including screening exercises, talks, exhibitions at the Trust Fund For Specialised Medical Care, Cardiac Centre on 29 September 2018;
- (b) sensitisation campaigns on cardiovascular diseases obesity, keep fit, prevention of tobacco use, healthy living etc.;
- (c) empowerment sessions for NCD patients on cardiovascular diseases and cardiac conducive healthy lifestyle; and
- (d) Continuous Medical Education for medical and para-medical staff.

The theme chosen to mark World Heart Day 2018 is “**My Heart, Your Heart**”.

9. Cabinet has taken note that the World Teacher’s Day would be celebrated on Friday 5 October 2018 and same would be decreed a school holiday for students attending pre-primary, primary and secondary schools and MITD Training Centres. The school holiday would be extended to the teaching and non-teaching staff of these institutions.

10. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms would organise a march by public officers on 27 September 2018 in the context of the National Road Safety Campaign. The objective of the march is to sensitise public officers on the importance of adopting a road safety culture with a view to reducing accidents and ensuring safety and security on our roads. The march would start from the New Government Centre, Port Louis and would proceed through Sir William Newton Street, Desforges Street, Intendance Street, Brown Sequard Street to end at Jardin de la Compagnie.

11. Cabinet has taken note that the Government of Mauritius would support the application of membership by Tuvalu in the International Finance Corporation, a sister organisation of the World Bank Group.

12. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade to Vietnam where he participated in the 3rd Indian Ocean Conference. The Conference had as central theme "Building Regional Architectures". The issues discussed were Maritime Safety and Security in the Indian Ocean, Tranquility in the Indo-Pacific Region, the imperatives of a Regional Security Architecture, strengthening Maritime Cooperation and Security in the Indian Ocean and steps towards setting up Dispute Resolution Systems in the Indian Ocean. The Conference served as a platform for the participating States to express their views on the development of a regional security architecture. Proposals for enhanced trade and economic cooperation complementing a security architecture were also made.

13 Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the 33rd Meeting of the Council of Ministers of the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) which was recently held in Mauritius. The purpose of the Meeting was to review progress in the implementation of IOC projects and programmes relating to political and diplomatic cooperation, economic and trade cooperation, environmental sustainability, ocean economy and cultural cooperation.

In the margins of the Meeting, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade had bilateral meetings with the representatives of Comoros, France/Réunion, Madagascar and the Seychelles. A Double Tax Avoidance Agreement was also signed between the Government of Mauritius and the Government of Comoros.

14. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security to Rwanda where he attended the Africa Green Revolution Forum. The main theme of the Forum was “Lead, Measure and Grow.” The Minister participated in various panel sessions on themes such as Strengthening Local Capacities to support the design of evidence-based Malabo Compliant National Agriculture Investment Plans, Entrepreneurial Youth in Agriculture, Building the Resilience of Agricultural Systems, Technological Pathways to Food Security and Leadership for Agriculture. One of the main objectives of the Forum for Mauritius was to present an Action Plan on the Biennial Review Report which outlined progress made with regard to the commitments of the Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods which was signed by AU Member States in 2014. Mauritius ranked 5th among 47 African States and the best performing country within the SADC region.

15. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Attorney-General and Minister of Justice, Human Rights and Institutional Reforms to Geneva where he attended the Ninety-sixth Session of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination where Mauritius was reviewed by the Committee. Cabinet has also taken note of the Concluding Observations adopted by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination following the submission of the twentieth to twenty-third combined periodic reports of Mauritius under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

The Concluding Observations of the Committee would be disseminated to stakeholders, civil society, NGOs and Ministries through the National Mechanism for Reporting and Follow Up.

16. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Board of -

- (a) the Mauritius Meat Authority with Mr Zaid Zoubere Heera as Chairperson; and
- (b) the Rose Belle Sugar Estate with Mr Kumar Khelawon as Chairperson.
