

CABINET DECISIONS – 04 OCTOBER 2019

1. Cabinet has taken note that all core conditions of employment in the various sectors of activities have been harmonised and incorporated in the Workers' Rights Act.

Cabinet has agreed to some 30 new Remuneration Regulations being promulgated to provide for specific conditions of employment in the various sectors of activities, including the provision of shift work and vacation leave. Cabinet has also agreed to additional Remuneration Regulations being made, namely –

- (a) The Information and Communication Technologies and other Related Services Remuneration Regulations to provide for more flexibility in respect of hours of work and overtime in the Sector;
- (b) The Workers' Rights (Atypical Work) Regulations to replace the Employment Rights (Working from Home) Regulations and to provide rights and conditions of employment to all workers falling outside standard employment;
- (c) The Workers' Rights (Seed Capital) Regulations to provide for an amount to pay wages to workers in cases of insolvency, to cover unpaid contribution to the Portable Retirement Gratuity Fund and to cater for partial payment of contribution to the Fund in respect of SMEs; and
- (d) The Workers' Rights (Portable Retirement Gratuity Fund) Regulations to provide for the contribution to be made to the Portable Retirement Gratuity Fund.

Cabinet further agreed to the Workers' Rights Act being proclaimed by the end of October 2019, except for section 126(7)(b) and to the provisions for the Portable Retirement Gratuity Fund becoming effective as from 1 January 2020.

2. Cabinet has taken note that for Crop 2019, the grant allocated under the Cane Replantation Scheme has been increased from Rs71,000/ha to Rs83,000/ha for those who have completed a cane cycle of six years and from Rs50,000/ha to Rs58,000/ha for those who have not completed a cane cycle of six years.

Cabinet has also taken note of the following measures implemented in favour of sugarcane planters in terms of direct financial assistance, namely –

- (a) all planters would benefit from a special price of Rs25,000 per ton of sugar for the first 60 tons of sugar accrued to them;
- (b) an advance of Rs13,000/ha is being made for the purchase of recommended fertilisers to planters with less than 100 ha under cane cultivation. The estimated cost of this scheme is Rs180M; and
- (c) 50% advance made to planters for the purchase of fertilisers has been waived. The planters would have to refund only 50% of the advance.

The following indirect assistance has also been provided –

- (a) cess payable by all producers representing an amount of Rs250M has been waived and that amount was given to the Mauritius Cane Industry Authority to meet, inter alia, the shortfall arising from the suspension of cess; and
- (b) an amount estimated to around Rs400M due by small planters under the ex-Field Operation Regrouping and Irrigation Project (FORIP), which represented a liability to them is being waived.

Small planters have been provided assistance for an annual average amount of Rs823.8M by Government for the past five years. They have also been allocated an annual average amount of Rs42.8M as indirect support.

3. Cabinet has agreed to the sale of State land leased to the remaining 20 ex-planters of the former Land Settlement at Baie du Tombeau (Riche Terre) in accordance with the State Lands Act. These former planters were among the 106 ex-planters who had to relinquish their rights over their agricultural lease when in October 2006, the then Government decided to set up the project known as the 'Mauritius Tianli Economic Trade Cooperation Zone'.

4. Cabinet has taken note of the award of the contract for the conduct of Multi-Client Seismic Surveys for hydrocarbon exploration covering a total of 46,957 line kilometres in four selected areas of the Exclusive Economic Zone of Mauritius. Geoscientific Surveys would also be conducted. Multi-Client Seismic Surveys are essential for the acquisition of seismic data in order to better understand the subsurface geology and associated structures which are favourable for hydrocarbon accumulation.

5. Cabinet has taken note that the Carbide of Calcium (Amendment) Regulations 2019, the Inflammable Liquids and Substances (Amendment) Regulations 2019 and the Inflammable Gases (Amendment) Regulations 2019 would be promulgated under the Inflammable Liquids and Substances Act with a view to replacing the term "*certificate of registration*" by the term "*fire certificate*". Accordingly, the fire safety norms of all activities falling under the Inflammable Liquids and Substances Act would now be ascertained only through the issue of a fire certificate.

The Regulations would come into operation on 20 October 2019.

6. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with the Republic of Zambia on Sharing of Information with a view to further strengthening and broadening the historical and cultural ties between the peoples of Zambia and Mauritius. The Memorandum of Understanding would provide for cooperation between the two countries, through, inter alia, –

- (a) visits by the respective Ministers of Information or their representatives;
- (b) joint participation of staff in workshops and seminars at least twice a year and sharing of expertise and resources;
- (c) offering technical assistance to each other in areas such as engineering and studio production digitalisation; and
- (d) joint production of films, musical and other cultural and informative programmes.

7. Cabinet has agreed to the amendments proposed by the Republic of India to the Framework Agreement on the establishment of the International Solar Alliance. The International Solar Alliance has been established to enable parties to collectively address key common challenges to the scaling up of solar energy in line with their needs. The scope of membership of the International Solar Alliance would now be open to all countries that are members of the United Nations.

8. Cabinet has agreed to the proposal of the Government of the Republic of Seychelles to open a High Commission in Mauritius. Mauritius and Seychelles enjoy a significant, comprehensive and deep-rooted relationship underpinned by historical legacy, strong friendship with strong people-to-people links, cultural and insular affinities as well as shared strategic maritime concerns, interests and advocacy. Mauritius and Seychelles are also linked through their common membership in a number of regional and international organisations.

9. Cabinet has taken note of the implementation of the Once-Only Principle project by the Ministry of Technology, Communication and Innovation, as announced in Budget Speech 2019/2020. Under this principle, Government agencies seek information from citizens and businesses only once and re-use the data in accordance with data protection rules. The Once-Only Principle is time-saving, reduces business costs, fulfills legal obligations faster and in the long run would help in the establishment of a digital economy, vouching for an enhanced public sector. The Principle would –

- (a) improve work processes and business operations of public institutions;
- (b) enhance administrative efficiency and quality of service delivery;

- (c) reduce administrative burden on citizens and businesses;
- (d) provide a better image of public institutions;
- (e) lay the foundation of an established digital economy; and
- (f) reduce risks of fraud and corruption.

10. Cabinet has agreed to the Department of Civil Aviation hosting a Capacity Building Workshop on the Economic Oversight and Regulation for Sustainable Development of Air Transport in Africa which would be organised jointly by the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) and the African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC) in October 2019. The Workshop would provide an opportunity to aviation stakeholders including Ministries, aircraft operators and airport operators to enhance their knowledge on the ICAO policies on taxation and charges.

It would also bring together decision and policy makers as well as experts to succinctly address the conceptual distinction between taxes, charges and other levies. Some 60 African participants from Civil Aviation Authorities, Ministries, Departments and State Agencies responsible for taxes and charges, the African Union Commission, the African Airlines Association and the ICAO are expected to attend the meeting.

11. Cabinet has agreed to a Public-Private partnership in technical and vocational education between the *Service Diocésain de L'Éducation Catholique* (SeDEC), *Collège Technique Saint Gabriel* and the Mauritius Institute of Training and Development (MITD). The *Collège Technique Saint Gabriel* is expected to contribute to the strengthening of the TVET sector by opening access to technical education to all, and particularly within the catchment area of Port Louis and its suburbs, and by affording a viable option for the most vulnerable children of the Mauritian society.

12. Cabinet has taken note that the African Union Commission would hold a Continental Technical Experts' Consultation on Drug Demand Reduction in Mauritius from 15 to 17 October 2019. The main objective of the meeting would be to improve capacity of national drug demand reduction focal points and national epidemiology network focal points to be able to implement and report to the African Union Commission. Some 150 participants from 55 African Union Member States and some representatives of Latin America, the Caribbean and the Pacific region are expected to attend the meeting.

13. Cabinet has taken note of the activities that would be organised by the Ministry of Arts and Culture to commemorate the 185th Anniversary of the Arrival of Indentured Labourers in Mauritius on 2 November 2019 namely, an Official Ceremony comprising a wreath-laying ceremony, cultural performances and the launching of a book on Bras d'Eau Sugar Estate. Prizes would also be awarded to the three best works of an art competition organised by the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund on the theme 'Representations of Indenture'.

14. Cabinet has taken note that an Agreement was signed by the Government of Mauritius and the Telecommunication Consultants (India) Limited for the implementation of the Pan-African e-Network Project which aimed at improving the conditions of the African populations in particular in the fields of education and health. The second phase of the project, known as the e-Vidya Bharati and e-Aarogya Bharati (e-VBAB) Network Project which is a technological upgrade and extension of the Pan-African e-Network Project, would be launched in New Delhi on 7 October 2019. The Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research, the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life and the Ministry of Technology, Communication and Innovation would participate in the e-VBAB Project.

The National Project Coordination would be ensured by the Ministry of Technology, Communication and Innovation. Tele-Education and Tele-Medicine Coordination would be dealt with by the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research and the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life, respectively. The Project would be fully funded by the Government of India for the five years' project duration.

15. Cabinet has taken note that on the occasion of World Food Day, commemorated on 16 October, the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security would organise, among others,

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- (a) an agricultural fair *cum* exhibition at the Swami Vivekananda International Convention Centre from 19 to 20 October 2019;
- (b) the inauguration of a Sheltered Farming Project consisting of six newly constructed farms at Villebague;
- (c) the launching of a Ripening Plant at Wooton for the benefit of banana and tomato growers, as announced in Budget 2019-2020; and
- (d) the launching of new varieties of ornamentals, namely Chrysanthemums, Gerbera, Anthurium, Orchids and Rose by the Food and Agricultural Research and Extension Institute.

The theme chosen for this year is **“Our Actions Are Our Future. Healthy Diets For A #ZeroHunger World.”**

16. Cabinet has taken note of activities that would be 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 2019. The activities include –

- (a) a main function on 17 October 2019 at Grand Baie Coeur de Ville during which certificates would be handed over to beneficiaries having followed various training courses;
- (b) a cultural performance by children, and beneficiaries under the Social Register of Mauritius would give testimonials on empowerment opportunities and housing support provided to them; and
- (c) a two days 'expo-sales' to give opportunity to some 90 beneficiaries to participate and generate income to be used to expand their small business.

Various activities would also be organised in Rodrigues.

The theme for this year is “**Acting together to empower children, their families and communities to end poverty.**”

17. Cabinet has taken note that the following six Grand Winners of the National Productivity and Quality Convention organised by the National Productivity and Competitiveness Council participated in the International Convention for Quality Control Circles (ICQCC) held in Japan recently –

- (a) SS Business School and Neel Trading and Facilities, for category SMEs and Micro Enterprises;
- (b) Employees Welfare Fund and Rajiv Gandhi Science Centre, for category Government bodies; and
- (c) Phoenix Beverages Ltd and NATEC Medical Ltd, for category Large Companies.

SS Business School, Neel Trading and Facilities, the Employees Welfare Fund and Phoenix Beverages Ltd won Gold Awards in their respective categories. NATEC Medical Ltd and the Rajiv Gandhi Science Centre won Silver Awards in their respective categories.

18. Cabinet has taken note of the reappointment of Mr Gaston François Desmarais as Chairperson of the Central Water Board.

19. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Construction Industry Development Council with Mrs Nadia Daby-Seesaram, as Chairperson.

20. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the following Council/Committees under the Clinical Trials Act –

- (a) the Clinical Research Regulatory Council with Dr Pierrot Chitson, Consultant Physician, as Chairperson;
- (b) the Ethics Committee with Dr Satyabhooshun Gupt Domah, former Judge, as Chairperson; and
- (c) the Pharmacovigilance Committee with Dr Devendranath Jugessur, Specialist/ Senior Specialist (General Medicine) as Chairperson.
