

CABINET DECISIONS – 07 JUNE 2019

1. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Prime Minister to India where he was invited to attend the Swearing-in Ceremony of Shri Narendra Modi as Prime Minister and the members of the Union Council of Ministers on 30 May 2019 at the Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi. The Government of India invited the leaders of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) countries, the Kyrgyz Republic and Mauritius for the ceremony. Shri Narendra Modi and 57 Ministers took oath of office before President Ram Nath Kovind.

On 31 May 2019, the Prime Minister had a bilateral meeting with Shri Narendra Modi and congratulated him on his re-election as Prime Minister for a second term. The Prime Minister expressed his gratitude to Prime Minister Modi for the support being extended to Mauritius in respect of its development agenda. They reviewed progress on various infrastructural projects financed by the Indian Government and currently being implemented in Mauritius. Discussions were held on various new projects. The Prime Minister also thanked Prime Minister Modi for his unflinching support in the Chagos Archipelago issue and for assisting Mauritius in getting wide support for the resolution which was adopted by the UN General Assembly on 22 May 2019.

2. Cabinet has taken note that the Income Tax (Amendment of Schedule) (No. 2) Regulations 2019 and the Income Tax (Amendment) Regulations 2019 would be promulgated. The Income Tax (Amendment of Schedule) (No. 2) Regulations 2019 would be amended to provide authority to the Minister of Finance and Economic Development to lay down conditions that a company must satisfy to enjoy the tax holiday for innovation-driven activities. The Income Tax (Amendment) Regulations 2019 would lay down the conditions that must be fulfilled by a company to enjoy the tax holiday.

3. Cabinet has agreed to the drafting of the Children's Bill in accordance with the major policy orientations elaborated following consultations with key stakeholders. The main objectives of the Children's Bill are, inter alia, to –

- (a) transpose into domestic law the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child;
- (b) include new provisions with regard to the best interests of the child, inter alia, better care and protection to children, promoting the development and welfare of children, including children with disabilities, and providing assistance and protection to families; and
- (c) repeal the existing Child Protection Act 1994.

4. Cabinet has agreed to the setting up of the Mauritius Artificial Intelligence Council administratively pending the introduction of a proper legal framework. The objectives of the Council would, inter alia, be as follows—

- (a) formulate an Action Plan in line with the Mauritius Artificial Intelligence Strategy 2018;
- (b) conduct a thorough examination of ready-made Artificial Intelligence solutions which might be of immediate benefit to Mauritius;
- (c) facilitate and oversee the rapid implementation of ready-made Artificial Intelligence solutions in Mauritius to boost the national economy;
- (d) enlist the required expertise for the implementation of various Artificial Intelligence projects; and
- (e) assess and quantify the socio-economic impact of Artificial Intelligence in the country.

5. Cabinet has taken note that rehabilitation works would be carried out to the sewerage infrastructure at Residence Atlee, Gustave Colin Street and Derby Street in Curepipe at an estimated cost of Rs137 million. Works are expected to start in November 2019.

6. Cabinet has agreed to Mauritius ratifying the Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183) of the International Labour Organisation. The Convention applies to all employed women, including those in atypical forms of dependent work and makes provision for the following –

- (a) extension of protection to all employed women;
- (b) at least 14 weeks of maternity leave, including six weeks of compulsory postnatal leave;
- (c) additional leave in case of illness, complications or risk of complications arising out of pregnancy or childbirth;
- (d) cash benefits during leave of at least two-thirds of previous or insured earnings (or at an equivalent level where benefits are not calculated on the basis of previous earnings);
- (e) access to medical care, including prenatal, childbirth and postnatal care, as well as hospitalisation when necessary;
- (f) health protection, that is the right of pregnant or nursing women not to perform work prejudicial to their health or that of their child;
- (g) minimum of one daily break with pay for breastfeeding; and
- (h) employment protection and non-discrimination.

7. Cabinet has agreed to the promulgation of the Merchant Shipping (Security of Ships) Regulations 2019 which would implement the requirements of Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) Chapter XI - 2 and the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code with regards to security of ships. The Regulations would, inter alia, provide for a set of measures to enhance security of ships at all times. Every Mauritius ship engaged in international voyages and every foreign ship within the port or territorial sea of Mauritius would be bound to have a Ship Security Certificate, a Ship Security Plan and a Continuous Synopsis Record. The Regulations would come into force on 1 July 2019.

8. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding in the field of Tertiary Education and Scientific Research between the Government of the Republic of Mauritius and the Government of the Republic of France under the Partenariat Hubert Curien. The Partenariat Hubert Curien is a partnership between the French and various foreign governments. The Memorandum of Understanding aims at encouraging reciprocal mobility between early career researchers in Mauritius and France, leading to closer collaboration on existing research projects as well as strengthening connections that could lead to more Franco-Mauritian collaboration on future projects. Priority would be given to the following areas –

- (a) applied sciences: energy and renewable energies, environment and climate change, engineering and modelling, artificial intelligence and oceans study;
- (b) human health, veterinary and agronomic sciences, biology and biotechnology;
- (c) art, heritage, humanities and social sciences; and
- (d) didactics of the French language and Francophone literature.

9. Cabinet has agreed to the Mauritius Voluntary National Review Report on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Mauritius would present the Report to the High Level Political Forum of the United Nations Economic and Social Council in New York in July 2019. The Report discusses how Mauritius is implementing the 17 SDGs, the lessons learnt and the challenges faced in implementing the Goals. The best practices are reflected in the Report as Bright Spots and it includes an SDG Progress Tracker which indicates the progress achieved under each Goal. Public institutions and the public in general have been requested to submit any feedback, comments, views on the draft document by Monday 10 June 2019. A Press Communiqué has been issued and can be accessed on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade.

10. Cabinet has taken note that Finance and Audit (Build Mauritius Fund) (Revocation) Regulations 2019, and the Finance and Audit (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2019 would be promulgated following the decision to wind up the Build Mauritius Fund.

11. Cabinet has agreed to the allocation of State land on lease at Schoenfeld, Rivière du Rempart to the Viswassi Co-operative Credit Society. In 2008, sugar cane planters, grouped in Viswassi Co-operative Credit Society, and occupying State land at Ville Valio, Balaclava, were evicted by the then Government.

12. Cabinet has taken note of the results, achievements and progress made by SME Mauritius since its coming into operation in January 2018 following the proclamation of the Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) Act 2017.

13. Cabinet has taken note of the list of Public Holidays for the year 2020 which is as follows –

New Year	- Wednesday 01 January
New Year	- Thursday 02 January
Chinese Spring Festival	- Saturday 25 January
Abolition of Slavery	- Saturday 01 February
Thaipoozam Cavadee	- Saturday 08 February
Maha Shivaratree	- Friday 21 February
Independence and Republic Day	- Thursday 12 March
Ugaadi	- Wednesday 25 March
Labour Day	- Friday 01 May
Eid-UI-Fitr**	- Sunday 24 May
Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary	- Saturday 15 August
Ganesh Chaturthi	- Sunday 23 August
Arrival of Indentured Labourers	- Monday 02 November
Divali	- Saturday 14 November
Christmas	- Friday 25 December

** The exact date of this festival is subject to confirmation as its celebration depends on the visibility of the moon

14. Cabinet has taken note of the activities being organised in the context of the Day of the African Child 2019 commemorated on 16 June, namely –

- (a) a Children's Forum on 13 June 2019 at Salle des Fêtes, Plaza, Rose Hill where students from primary and secondary schools would be invited to participate in an elocution on the "ill-effects of drugs and Substance Abuse" and also on "family values" followed by an interactive session in the presence of panelists comprising representatives from the Police Force, a medical practitioner, a lawyer, a sociologist and a psychologist;
- (b) a cultural show by children; and
- (c) an aggressive "16 days – 16 rights campaign" on the rights of the child as per the Convention of the Rights of the Child from 1 to 16 June 2019 in some primary and secondary schools and children's club.

15. Cabinet has taken note of the activities that would be organised to mark Music Day celebrated on 21 June, namely –

- (a) a Fusion Musical Concert titled "Across Borders" on 21 June 2019 at the J&J Auditorium, Phoenix, in collaboration with the Conservatoire National de Musique Francois Mitterand Trust Fund, the Mahatma Gandhi Institute, the Indira Gandhi Centre for Indian Culture and the School of Chinese Music; and
- (b) the National Heritage Fund would distribute to some 150 artists/groups, traditional musical instruments used by performers of Séga Tipik of Mauritius, Geet Gawai, Séga Tambour of Rodrigues and Séga Tambour of Chagos on 20 June 2019 at Serge Constantin Theatre, Vacoas.

Various events would also be organised by parastatal bodies and local authorities to mark Music Day 2019.

16. Cabinet had taken note of the activities that would be organised in the context of the United Nations World Elder Abuse Awareness Day observed on 15 June, namely –

- (a) an intergenerational programme on 12 June 2019 at Sir Abdool Razack Mohamed State Secondary School (Boys), Port Louis to raise awareness on ill-treatment of elderly persons and strengthen the bond between the generations; and
- (b) Sensitisation and Awareness Workshops for the Elderly. The first workshop would be held on 15 June 2019 at the James Burty David Recreation Centre at Pointe aux Sables. Other workshops would be held during the months of June and July 2019.

The theme for World Elder Abuse Awareness Day 2019 is "*Access to Justice: Legal, Social and Economic Services for Older Victims of Sexual, Physical and Financial Crimes*".

17. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands, Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare to Comoros and Namibia.

In Comoros, the Vice-Prime Minister attended the Swearing-in Ceremony of the President of the Union of Comoros, HE Mr Azali Assoumani, who was re-elected following the presidential elections of 24 March 2019. The ceremony was attended by dignitaries from various countries and representatives of key regional and international organisations. The Vice-Prime Minister also had a meeting with HE Mr Azali Assoumani and bilateral exchanges with HE Mr Souef Mohamed El Amine, Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and the Francophonie, in charge of Comorians abroad and reviewed the decisions taken at the First Session of the Joint Commission between Comoros and Mauritius in April 2017.

In Namibia, the Vice-Prime Minister attended the meeting of SADC Ministers responsible for Gender/Women's Affairs which is an annual event where Ministers are invited to note progress in the implementation of the SADC Gender and Development Programme and to agree on a plan of action for the coming year. The Meeting of Ministers considered various issues including the Report of the Analytical Assessment of Gender Mainstreaming in the SADC region, the Regional Multi-Dimensional Women's Economic Empowerment Programme and the SADC Gender-Based Violence Comprehensive Report. The SADC Secretariat was directed to develop tools to guide the regional response for gender based violence and roll out the tools to Member States to support implementation at national level.

18. Cabinet has taken note of the recent mission of the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade to Belgium where he attended the 109th Session of the ACP Council of Ministers and 44th Session of the ACP-EU Council of Ministers. The ACP Council session was preceded by statutory thematic Ministerial meetings. The Minister chaired a meeting of the Ad Hoc Contact Group on Tax Matters which considered, inter alia, developments regarding the EU Common List of Non-Cooperative Tax Jurisdictions. The 109th Session of the ACP Council Meeting considered and adopted, inter alia, the respective reports of the Committee of Ambassadors, the ACP Secretary General, the Editing team on the revision of ACP Georgetown Agreement and the ACP Ministerial Subcommittees. The main issues discussed at the 44th Session of the ACP-EU Council of Ministers included the Strengthening of ACP-EU Cooperation in International Fora, Climate Change, Ocean Governance, Migration, Development Finance Cooperation, Economic Issues, Private Sector Development, Future of the ACP-EU Relations (including post Cotonou negotiations), Gender Violence and Brexit.

In the margins of the sessions, the Minister had bilateral meetings with –

- (a) Ms Maria Magdalena Grigore, EU Co-Chair, Secretary of State on Foreign Affairs of Romania who indicated that Romania was keen to strengthen cooperation with ACP States, including Mauritius, on a bilateral basis;
- (b) Dr Patrick Gomes, ACP Secretary General, EU Development Commissioner Neven Mimica; and

- (c) Ministers from Namibia, Jamaica, Zimbabwe and Botswana with whom he exchanged views, inter alia, on post Cotonou ACP-EU relations and avenues for enhancing bilateral relations.

19. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade to Denmark where he attended the meeting of the Friends of the Chair of the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia (CGPCS). The meeting aimed at discussing the future of the CGPCS after 10 years of its existence and preparing for the 22nd Plenary Session of the CGPCS which would be hosted by Mauritius on 20 June 2019.

The role of Mauritius in demonstrating strong commitment for maritime security and building an image as an international player and regional leader on maritime security issues was widely acclaimed at the meeting. The main points discussed were the Threat Assessment and Risk in the Western Indian Ocean and the enlargement of the mandate of the CGPCS. The 22nd Plenary Session of the CGPCS would be preceded by the 2nd Ministerial Conference on Maritime Security on 19 June 2019.
