

CABINET DECISIONS – 11 JANUARY 2019

1. Cabinet has agreed to the modalities for the implementation of a Scheme to provide free higher education in public Tertiary Education Institutions (TEIs) as from year 2019. The objectives of the Scheme are to –

- (a) better prepare young people for the challenges of the future;
- (b) further democratise access to tertiary education;
- (c) set a solid base for the development of a knowledge economy;
- (d) address the problem of skills mismatch in the labour market, especially as Mauritius pursues its ambition to become a digital economy as well as a Fintech Hub for Africa;
- (e) create capacity to foster the development of Artificial Intelligence technologies; and
- (f) catch up with countries like Singapore in terms of enrolment at tertiary level in order to lift up our national productivity.

The Scheme would cover the following public TEIs, namely –

- (a) University of Mauritius;
- (b) University of Technology, Mauritius;
- (c) Université des Mascareignes;
- (d) Open University of Mauritius;
- (e) Mahatma Gandhi Institute and Rabindranath Tagore Institute;
- (f) Mauritius Institute of Education;
- (g) Fashion and Design Institute;
- (h) Mauritius Institute of Training and Development; and
- (i) Polytechnics Mauritius Ltd.

The Scheme would apply for courses, whether part-time or full time, leading to the obtention of a first certificate, diploma or an undergraduate degree only. Beneficiaries would be newly-enrolled students as well as existing cohorts following programmes up to the undergraduate level.

2. Cabinet has agreed to the setting up of a New Scholarship Scheme for postgraduate studies in Digital Technologies, including Artificial Intelligence and Blockchain, as announced in Budget Speech 2018/2019. A new Postgraduate Scholarship Scheme would be set up at the level of the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research in February 2019. The Scheme would provide for 15 Master's level scholarship slots that would be of one-year duration if tenable overseas or of two years' duration if studies are undertaken in a local higher education institution. It would also make provision for five PhD level scholarship slots of up to four years' duration. A two-year full time Scholarship Scheme to support Mauritian students for a Master's Level Degree course in Artificial Intelligence and Robotics would also be set up at the *Université des Mascareignes*. Enrolment is planned for August 2019, with an annual cohort capacity of 25 students.

3. Cabinet has agreed to the appointment of a High Level Committee of Experts under the chairmanship of Lord Phillips to review the Law Practitioners Act and other relevant enactments concerning the legal profession in Mauritius such as the Mauritius Bar Association Act, the Mauritius Law Society Act, the Notaries Act and any enactments related thereto. The objects of the Committee would be to propose amendments to the enactments pertaining, inter alia, to –

- (a) the running of courses and examinations, including recognition of foreign qualifications, for admission to practice law in Mauritius; and
- (b) the legal framework pertaining to –
 - (i) the institution and conduct of disciplinary proceedings against law practitioners; and
 - (ii) the efficient and effective functioning of the Mauritius Bar Association, the Mauritius Law Society and the Chamber of Notaries.

4. Cabinet has taken note that the Prime Minister would make the Gambling Regulatory Authority (Personal Management Licence) (Amendment) Regulations 2019 under the Gambling Regulatory Authority Act to define the term “officer” insofar as it relates to the issuance of Personal Management Licence for people involved in horseracing activities.

5. Cabinet has agreed to the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping promulgating the Merchant Shipping (Prevention of Pollution by Oil and Noxious Liquid Substances in Bulk) Regulations under the Merchant Shipping Act 2007. The Regulations would, inter alia, –

- (a) ensure that every ship is surveyed and issued with an International Oil Pollution Prevention Certificate and prohibit the discharge of oil or oily mixture into the sea;
- (b) ensure that every Mauritius tanker of 150 gross tonnage and above and every Mauritius ship other than 400 gross tonnage and above, would have to carry on board a shipboard oil pollution emergency plan and an oil record book;
- (c) categorize and regulate the carriage of noxious liquid substances in bulk and ensure that every Mauritius ship of 150 gross tonnage and above, approved to carry noxious liquid substances in bulk, has a shipboard marine pollution emergency plan for noxious liquid substances; and
- (d) provide for the conduct of initial, periodical and annual surveys followed by the issue of an International Pollution Prevention Certificate for the carriage of Noxious Liquid Substances in Bulk.

The Regulations would be effective on 01 February 2019.

6. Cabinet has taken note of the setting up of the Mauritius Research Repository by the Mauritius Research Council. The aim of the Mauritius Research Repository, which would be an online open access collection of research projects, reports, presentations, publications, scholarly contents, media and other research works related to the Republic of Mauritius or produced by an author of Mauritian origin, would be to create awareness, disseminate and increase visibility of research works to a wider audience, including the general public. Individual researchers, innovators, local and overseas companies would be able to search for researchers or institutions/companies, based on their expertise and previous research work. The repository would be made accessible to the public in due course.

7. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Technology, Communication and Innovation would, in collaboration with the World Bank, carry out a Cybersecurity Capacity Assessment in Mauritius, based on the Cybersecurity Capacity Maturity Model for Nations developed by Oxford University. The Cybersecurity Capacity Maturity Model review process would be carried out by the World Bank based on consultations with different stakeholders including Ministries and Departments, law enforcement agencies, international organisations, academia and private sector. The aim of the exercise is to gain an understanding of the country's cybersecurity capacity in order to strategically prioritise further developments in the area of cybersecurity and cybercrime.

8. Cabinet has taken note of the results of “*The African Report on Child Wellbeing 2018: Progress in the child-friendliness of African governments*” where Mauritius ranked first in the 2018 edition.

9. Cabinet has taken note that Government will pay tribute to the memory of Kaya who passed away in February 1999.

10. Cabinet has agreed to Mauritius hosting the World Travel Awards Gala Ceremony for the Africa and Indian Ocean Category in 2019. The World Travel Awards has been rewarding success across all sectors of the tourism industry since 25 years. Some 300 industry leaders, professionals from the regional tourism and hospitality industry as well as high ranking Government representatives would attend the event. Such events are widely regarded as providing excellent networking opportunities as well as enhancing international visibility for the host country.

11. Cabinet has taken note of the activities that would be organised to mark the 184th Anniversary of the Abolition of Slavery in Mauritius, commemorated on 1 February. In this context, HE Filipe Nyusi, President of the Republic of Mozambique, would be the Chief Guest. The activities would include –

- (a) a symbolic wreath laying ceremony at the “*Monument aux Esclaves*”, Pointe Canon, Mahebourg; and
- (b) a wreath laying ceremony on 1 February 2019 at the International Slave Route Monument, Le Morne Public Beach, followed by an official programme at Le Morne Village.

12. Cabinet has taken note of the various activities being organised for the celebration of the Spring Festival at national level, including-

- (a) a Chinese Spring Festival Parade in the streets of Port Louis on 3 February 2019. Shows with the participation of local and foreign artists and demonstrations of Chinese handicraft and cuisine would also be held;
- (b) a Gala Show on 5 February 2019 at the J&J Auditorium, Phoenix comprising performances by the Shaanxi Provincial Acrobatic Troupe Co. Ltd from China; and
- (c) a Cultural Show on the occasion of the Lantern Festival on 16 February 2019 at the Mahatma Gandhi Institute, Moka.

13. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Youth and Sports, in collaboration with the '*Comité d'Organisation des 10èmes Jeux des Iles de l'Océan Indien*', would organise a major activity each month with the view to rallying the population around the forthcoming Indian Ocean Islands Games scheduled from 19 to 28 July 2019. The activity would comprise a grand musical show, PS4 games, face painting and fun games for children and the public in general. The activities would be organised at Port Louis Waterfront, Mahebourg Waterfront, Flacq Coeur de Ville, Flic en Flac Public Beach, Municipality of Curepipe, Plaza, Rose Hill and Grand Baie.

14. Cabinet has taken note that Mauritius has been selected by the International Maritime Organization as a Lead Partnering Country under the GEF-UNDP-IMO GloFouling Partnerships Project. The GloFouling Partnerships Project is a collaboration between the Global Environment Facility, the United Nations Development Programme and the International Maritime Organization. The aim of the GloFouling Project is to build capacity in developing countries for implementing the International Maritime Organization and other relevant guidelines for biofouling management and to catalyse overall reductions in the transboundary introduction of biofouling-mediated invasive species with additional benefits in the reduction of Greenhouse Gas emissions from global shipping.

15. Cabinet has taken note 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 Ethiopia where she participated in the High Level Dialogue on the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa. The event was organised by the African Union Commission to commemorate the 15th anniversary celebration of the Maputo Protocol. The objectives of the High Level Dialogue were to –

- (a) take stock of progress made so far in implementing gender equality and women's empowerment as provided under the Articles of the Protocol;
- (b) raise awareness about critical gaps that must be addressed and identify creative ways to improve the status of women across Member States; and
- (c) develop strategies for promoting universal ratification, domestication and implementation of the Protocol.

16. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research to South Africa where she participated in the Harvard Ministerial Roundtable for Human Development Policy Innovation. The key objective of the Roundtable was to inform about opportunities and inspire Ministers present to think through and work out steps to implement and scale-up innovative human development policy initiatives. Following the Roundtable, participating Ministers were called upon to develop and present an agenda of innovative policy ideas that are relevant to their specific challenges and map directions as to how to implement same. The Roundtable produced a set of policy briefs providing options and recommendations for innovative inter-sectoral human development policies applicable to different African contexts.

17. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the “*17ème Colloque VIH/SIDA Océan Indien*” which was recently held in Mauritius. The theme of the “*Colloque*” was “*Une Région, Des Évolutions, Des Solutions ... Ensemble!*”. The main objectives of the “*Colloque*” were to –

- (a) update the knowledge and management of the HIV infection among the scientists, the medical and paramedical personnel and the service providers;
- (b) share best practices and experiences between health personnel and civil society of the Region; and
- (c) reinforce cooperation amongst Member States of the Indian Ocean Region with regard to HIV and AIDS and harm reduction strategies.

Eminent and renowned experts in the field of HIV and AIDS from France, Reunion Island and Mauritius participated in the “*Colloque*” and shared their experiences with some 300 participants.

18. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of –

- (a) the Discharged Persons’ Aid Committee with Mr Serge Roland Montille as Chairperson; and
- (b) the Jewellery Advisory Council with Mr Teswar Rai Ramkhalawon as Chairperson.
