

**CABINET DECISIONS – 15 FEBRUARY 2019**

1. Cabinet has agreed to the ratification of the United Kingdom (UK) – Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA) Economic Partnership Agreement. The UK-ESA Economic Partnership Agreement provides the legal framework to safeguard the preferential access of Mauritius on the UK Market once the UK leaves the European Union. The Agreement contains three main chapters namely, trade in goods, fisheries and development cooperation. The UK-ESA Economic Partnership Agreement was signed on 31 January 2019 in London. Mauritius would now deposit the instrument of ratification as provided for in the Agreement with the COMESA Secretariat.

\*\*\*\*\*

2. Cabinet has taken note of the measures taken by Government in the context of the recent passage of cyclone Gelena in Rodrigues. The following decisions have been taken with a view to assisting Rodrigues in redressing the situation, namely –

- (a) the transfer of an amount of Rs35 million from the Prime Minister's Relief Fund to the Chief Commissioner's Relief Fund for support specially with respect to the cleaning operations and urgent repairs required for roads, fishing boats, houses and other infrastructure. It would also cover provision of foodstuff and seeds;
- (b) the urgent resumption of flights in the evening of Sunday 10 February 2019 from Mauritius to enable a team of 26 SMF personnel and 15 technical CEB employees to proceed to Rodrigues. The SMF officers are supporting the existing team in Rodrigues for road clearance, tree cutting operations and removal of debris in schools and other institutions. The CEB and SMF teams are providing assistance to the technical team in Rodrigues for reinstatement works. As at date, around 95% of the electricity network has already been restored;
- (c) the conveyance of Dornier Aircraft M1 to Rodrigues on 11 February 2019 for the transport of various medicines, veterinary drugs and vegetables. A second consignment of vegetables, animal feed and bio fertilizers was sent to Rodrigues on 14 February 2019 by the Black Rhino Vessel;
- (d) the Development Bank of Mauritius is providing loan facilities under the Gelena Rehabilitation Scheme to planters whose plantations have been affected by the cyclone; and
- (e) staff of Mauritius Telecom proceeded to Rodrigues on 11 February 2019 to provide additional support for a faster network infrastructure repair. As at date, around 88% of the network has been restored.

Cabinet has also taken note that the Prime Minister would proceed to Rodrigues on 15 February 2019 to take stock of the situation after the passage of the cyclone and to have budgetary consultations.

\*\*\*\*\*

3. Cabinet has taken note that the Open University of Mauritius would, in collaboration with the Commonwealth of Learning, deliver as from August 2019 a Degree in Youth Work and related courses, as part of the professionalisation of Youth Work in the Commonwealth. The main objective of this course is to constitute a pool of professional Commonwealth youth workers equipped with the relevant professional competencies, knowledge, attitudes and fieldwork experience required for effective youth development work at senior management levels within their region.

\*\*\*\*\*

4. Cabinet has taken note that the annual meeting of the '*Conseil International des Jeux Des Iles de L'Océan Indien*' (CIJ) would be held in Mauritius on 18 and 19 February 2019. The Agenda of the meeting would include, among others, –

- (a) the readmission of Sri Lanka to CIJ and its participation in the 10<sup>th</sup> edition of the Indian Ocean Islands Games (IOIG); and
- (b) a status report on the organisation of the IOIG 2019.

\*\*\*\*\*

5. Cabinet has agreed to amendments being made to the Food Regulations 1999 to allow for the production, sale and import of flavoured milk manufactured from semi-skimmed (reduced fat) milk and skimmed milk.

\*\*\*\*\*

6. Cabinet has taken note that according to the last monthly report published by the Statistics Unit of the Ministry of Tourism, 122,273 tourists visited Mauritius in the month of January 2019 as compared to 120,974 in the month of January 2018, i.e., an increase of 1.1%. Growth has been registered in arrivals from Germany (+18.8%), Italy (+9.3%), India (+3.1%), South Africa (+6.6%), Czech Republic (+69.2%), Romania (+62.4%), Poland (+21.1%), Sweden (+8.2%), Russia (+8.0%) and Saudi Arabia (+6.3%).

\*\*\*\*\*

7. Cabinet has taken note that a national gathering would be held at the Swami Vivekananda International Convention Centre, Pailles to mark the International Women's Day 2019 on 8 March 2019. The theme retained by the United Nations for the celebration of International Women's Day 2019 is "**Think equal, build smart and innovate for change**". In line with Sustainable Development Goal 5 which relates to "Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls", the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare has retained the slogan "**Egalite zom-fam koumans par mwa**". Members of women's associations, the private sector, government institutions, students and the civil society are expected to pledge for a gender inclusive society.

\*\*\*\*\*

8. Cabinet has taken note of the Stamp Issue Programme for the year 2019. Postage Stamps would be issued depicting the following -

- (a) officers working for rescue and lifesaving;
- (b) the International Day of Families;
- (c) the Day of the African Child;
- (d) the International Day Against Violence Against Women;
- (e) the forthcoming “Jeux des îles de l’océan Indien 2019” ;
- (f) the Metro Express project;
- (g) the 150<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi;
- (h) the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Mauritius Civil Aviation;
- (i) the 300<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary of Pierre Poivre;
- (j) the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Mauritius; and
- (k) building of the First Cube Satellite in Mauritius

\*\*\*\*\*

9. Cabinet has taken note of the status of implementation of the social housing projects. Government is committed to construct some 12,000 social housing units for low income households. Out of the 12,000 new social housing units, a total of 3,901 units is expected to be completed by December 2019 and an additional 1,054 units by June 2020. Contract for works for the remaining 7,045 new social housing units is expected to be awarded by 31 August 2019.

\*\*\*\*\*

10. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Technology, Communication and Innovation to Malaysia where he participated in the Euro-Asia Blockchain Summit 2019. The Summit was a platform for participants to meet the leaders of the Europe Blockchain Hub and the Asian Blockchain Hub, representatives of participating universities, the local community, as well as governmental and regulatory agencies for an in-depth understanding of the current trends and events in the Blockchain sphere. An African Blockchain Hub would be set up as a non-governmental organisation regrouping representatives from public, private sector and academia from Africa. Mauritius was selected to host the African Blockchain Hub which intends to facilitate –

- (a) high-level advocacy for creation and development of Blockchain and emerging technologies;
- (b) generate and distribute knowledge about Blockchain and emerging technologies;
- (c) create new concepts throughout open research and innovation;
- (d) design curriculums and organise events with the aim to generate and share knowledge and initiatives; and
- (e) co-ordinate and run Blockchain and emerging technologies projects of common interest to the Hub stakeholders, members and partners.

A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the European Blockchain Hub, Asian Blockchain Hub and the African Blockchain Hub for the setting up of the World Blockchain Hub.

\*\*\*\*\*

11. Cabinet has taken note that a Consultative Workshop was held on the recommendations submitted by the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Working Group following the third cycle UPR of Mauritius in November 2018 in Geneva. The main objective of the Workshop was to engage consultative discussions with Ministries, Departments and the civil society on the recommendations prior to providing feedback to the Human Rights Council of the Plenary Session scheduled in mid-March 2019. The Workshop was facilitated by Mr Jean B. Fokwa Tsafack, Human Rights Officer at the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Regional Office for Southern Africa, Pretoria.

\*\*\*\*\*

12. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Board of the Bus Industry Employees Welfare Fund with Mr Vivekanand Narotamsing Auchoybur as Chairperson.

\*\*\*\*\*