

CABINET DECISIONS – 20 DECEMBER 2019

1. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent official visit of the Prime Minister to Rodrigues. During the visit, the *'Lettre d'intention de financement'* for the construction of a new runway at Plaine Corail Airport was signed by the Chairperson of Airports of Mauritius Ltd, the Island Chief Executive, the Director of *Agence Française de Développement*, the EU Ambassador and the Ambassador of the Republic of France to Mauritius, in the presence of the Prime Minister and the UN Resident Coordinator. The signing ceremony was followed by the planting of endemic species by the Prime Minister and other dignitaries present, within the compounds of the Airport.

The Prime Minister also –

- (a) visited the site for the extension of the runway on the side of Ste Marie village and an ongoing project at Camp du Roi which comprises the upgrading of the bridge at Camp du Roi along with associated drain water reticulation;
- (b) effected a visit to Grande La Fourche Mangues, a village of around 50 families who had difficulties in connecting to the main road during heavy rainfall and due to flooding of the existing bridge. The contract for the construction of a new reinforced concrete bridge of span 15 metres has already been awarded;
- (c) attended a common ceremony for the unveiling of the Techno Park project at Baladirou and the signing of the contract for the Drains Project at Port Mathurin (Phase 2);
- (d) proceeded with the inauguration of Grande Montagne Police Station; and
- (e) had a working session with the Chief Commissioner, the Commissioners of Rodrigues Regional Assembly, Parliamentary Private Secretary, Mr Francisco François, Member of the National Assembly, Mr Buisson Léopold and the Island Chief Executive.

2. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the air services negotiations and discussions held with 17 countries namely, Bangladesh, Belgium, Ghana, Republic of Korea, Morocco, Oman, Poland, Rwanda, Spain, Seychelles, Senegal, Tanzania, Thailand, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, the United States of America and Zambia, during the International Conference on Air Services Negotiations Event (ICAN) 2019 held recently in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. Bilateral Air Services Agreements (BASA) were signed with Ghana, Rwanda, Spain and Tanzania. Informal meetings were held with the representatives of Oman, Thailand, United Arab Emirates and the United States of America.

3. Cabinet has taken note that the Financial Services (Amendment of Schedule) (No. 2) Regulations 2019 would be promulgated to include Peer to Peer Lending in the Second Schedule to the Financial Services Act. The Peer-to-Peer Lending activity was announced in Budget Speech 2017/2018 as an important segment of the Fintech space.

The Financial Services Commission which is, inter alia, responsible for promoting the development of new products on the financial services market, would introduce the Peer-to Peer Lending. The Financial Services Commission would also introduce the “Financial Services (Peer-to-Peer) Lending Rules 2019” to provide an adequate regulatory and operational framework for operators of automated Peer-to-Peer Lending platforms within the non-banking sector of Mauritius.

4. Cabinet has taken note that the National Agricultural Products (Amendment) Regulations 2019 would be promulgated. The National Agricultural Products Regulations 2013 provide for the procedures implemented by the National Agricultural Products Regulation Office (NAPRO) particularly the cultivation, production, importation and exportation of tea and tea products. Any tea products not classified as either green tea or black tea for blending, form part of the basket category ‘other tea products’.

The amendment being made to the National Agricultural Products Regulations 2013 restructures the fee with respect to instant or mixed tea products so that the fee would now be based on the actual volume or percentage of tea in the final product. It would ensure that all tea products are regulated and at the same time the fee levied is fair and acceptable to stakeholders.

The Regulations would come into effect as from 01 February 2020.

5. Cabinet has taken note that the Waste Water (Licence for Discharge of Industrial Effluent into a Waste Water System) Regulations 2019 would be made to replace the Waste Water (Standards for Discharge of Industrial Effluent into a Waste Water System) Regulations 2004. The aim of the Regulations is to ensure that industries discharging effluents into the waste water system comply with certain parameters and standards so as to enable the effluents to be treated at the treatment plants. The Waste Water (Licence for Discharge of Industrial Effluent into a Waste Water System) Regulations 2019 would, inter alia, –

- (a) cater for industrial activities not previously included such as printing and washing plant for textile activities; and
- (b) provide a new scale of fees which would reflect the actual cost incurred for processing, sampling and analysis.

The Regulations would become effective as from 01 January 2020.

6. Cabinet has taken note that the National Land Transport Authority (NLTA) would issue a licence to Metro Express Ltd (MEL), in the context of the commencement of operation of the light rail system. The Light Rail Act provides that the NLTA issues a licence to MEL and imposes such conditions to provide for safety of operations and compliance of the operator with performance standards.

Cabinet has also taken note that Metro Transit Solutions Pte Ltd, which was appointed to carry out the safety assessment of the Metro Express, has submitted its Report and informed that the light rail transit system is safe for normal operations and for revenue passenger service.

7. Cabinet has taken note that the Minister of Housing and Land Use Planning would approve the Action Area Plan for Urban Heritage Area: Buffer Zone of the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Property which has been prepared by the Ministry of Housing and Land Use Planning in consultation with relevant stakeholders. The Action Area Plan is in line with the recommendations of UNESCO/ICOMOS, focusing on the preservation and maintenance of the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Property to support the development of Port Louis into a vibrant and sustainable precinct. It aims at safeguarding the quality of the buffer zone of the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Property and ensuring a single overall vision for the forthcoming projects in Port Louis, including –

- (a) the Intercontinental Slavery Museum;
- (b) the proposed Immigration Square Urban Terminal; and
- (c) the Metro Express Light Rail Project.

UNESCO/ICOMOS have agreed to the contents of the Action Area Plan. The Plan would be available for public inspection both at the Ministry of Housing and Land Use Planning and the Municipal City Council of Port Louis. It would be posted on the website of the Ministry of Housing and Land Use Planning and also be available for sale.

8. Cabinet has agreed to the setting up of a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) for the implementation of both Phase I and Phase II of the Intercontinental Slavery Museum project. The functions of the SPV would, inter alia, be to –

- (a) develop a list of objects and reconstitutions of objects, documents, models, replicas, that would be part of the collection of the Museum;
- (b) develop and edit a storyline for the permanent exhibition concept of the Museum;
- (c) prepare texts for the different displays, the exhibition texts, the multimedia brochure, texts for short films to be shown on TV screens and all related literature;
- (d) work out the use of indoor and outdoor spaces and the displays to be contained therein;
- (e) liaise with experts and other stakeholders in various fields of research to gather information that would enable the development of the content of the Museum; and

- (f) enlist the services of multi-disciplinary technical and the scientific teams.

The SPV would be a 100% Government-owned Company in the initial stage of its operation and would be chaired by Mr J. M. Simonet, currently Secretary for Public Service.

9. Cabinet has agreed to the new policy for the payment of grants to registered fee-paying private secondary schools. Request for grant-in-aid from registered fee-paying private secondary schools operating on a non-profit making basis would be considered, provided they fulfill the required criteria.

10. Cabinet has agreed to Mauritius signing the fourth Country Programme Framework (CPF) 2020-2025 with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The CPF for Mauritius has been developed by the Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities, in consultation with the IAEA and the relevant local stakeholders, on the country's needs in the application of nuclear science and technology for peaceful purposes. The CPF covers seven priority areas, namely –

- (a) Radiation Safety and Nuclear Security;
- (b) Food and Agriculture;
- (c) Health and Nutrition;
- (d) Water, Environment and Blue Economy;
- (e) Energy;
- (f) Industrial Applications; and
- (g) Capacity Building in Nuclear Science and Technology.

11. Cabinet has agreed to the coming into operation of the Higher Education Commission (HEC) and the Quality Assurance Authority (QAA), and the ceasing of operation of the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC), as from mid-January 2020. The Higher Education Act 2017, provides for a reformed, modern and appropriate legislative framework for the higher education sector and makes provision for the establishment of the HEC and the QAA, the repeal of the TEC Act and the passing over of its powers and functions to the two new statutory bodies.

12. Cabinet has agreed to Mauritius signing the African Road Safety Charter. The main objective of the Charter is to serve as a policy framework aiming at facilitating the creation of an enabling environment to drastically reduce the road traffic crashes. The specific objectives of the Charter are to –

- (a) facilitate the formulation of comprehensive Road Safety policies at country level and speed up implementation of national, regional and continental Road Safety programmes;
- (b) promote better coordination of interventions by Development Partners in the Road Safety area and the harmonisation of the collection, treatment and dissemination of Road Safety data; and
- (c) enhance private sector and civil society organisations participation in Road Safety issues.

13. Cabinet has agreed to the Mauritius Standards Bureau (MSB), becoming signatory to the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Declaration on Gender Responsive Standards and Standards Development. The objective of the Declaration is to assist National Standards Bodies in identifying actions for gender mainstreaming in standardisation activities and regulatory policies based on standards. Being a signatory to the Declaration for Gender Responsive standards and standards development would be a positive step to enhance empowerment of women, more particularly in standardisation activities. The Declaration would be a commitment taken by National Standards Bodies to integrate women concerns and issues in standardisation works.

14. Cabinet has taken note that in the context of actions being taken in the fight against drug trafficking and in line with the recommendations made in the Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Drug Trafficking, the Tourism Authority would sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the Mauritius Revenue Authority, with a view to ensuring effective sharing of information on pleasure crafts and other entities licensed by the Tourism Authority. The main objectives of the Memorandum of Understanding are to –

- (a) ensure and promote cooperation, collaboration and assistance between the two parties for combatting any offences under the Revenue Laws, fraud, drug trafficking, money laundering and other transnational crimes;
- (b) clarify the roles and responsibilities of the parties for sharing of information on pleasure crafts, skippers, canvassers, beach hawkers, tourist enterprises and any other entities licensed by the Tourism Authority; and
- (c) manage and maintain a reliable source of data that may be required by the parties for intelligence, administrative or enquiry purposes.

15. Cabinet has taken note of the status of implementation of the Government Medical Insurance Scheme. The services of a Consultant in the field of insurance are being retained to assist the Ministry of Public Service, Administrative and Institutional Reforms in the implementation of the project.

16. Cabinet has taken note of the activities being organised by the Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage in collaboration with Le Morne Heritage Trust Fund, the National Heritage Fund, the Nelson Mandela Centre for African Culture and the Creole Speaking Union, to mark the 185th Anniversary of the Abolition of Slavery in Mauritius. The official programme on 01 February 2020, would be as follows –

- (a) a wreath laying ceremony at 10 30 hours at the International Slave Route Monument, Le Morne Public Beach;
- (b) the inauguration of an Open-Air Museum at 11 00 hours at *Trou Chenille* village; and
- (c) the official programme would continue at Le Morne Village at 11 30 hours and would comprise cultural items.

17. Cabinet has taken note that 1,806 vacancies have been filled in the Civil Service for the period 01 July to 30 November 2019.

18. Cabinet has taken note that the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service would proceed with changes in the pattern and colour of the uniform of its Officers.

19. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities would release a '*Treatise on Energy Efficiency Development in Mauritius*'. The Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities and the Energy Efficiency Management Office with the support of the Indian Ocean Commission have compiled, into one single publication, several studies on energy efficiency in Mauritius carried out by consultants and reports which have been produced.

The publication includes descriptions of actions implemented since 2015, namely the implementation of regulations on mandatory energy labelling of domestic appliances, mandatory energy audit of Government buildings introduced in 2017 and awareness raising on energy savings and conservation, which would be used by stakeholders, the public and private institutions, to enable them to implement energy conservation and energy efficiency measures. The document would be disseminated free of charge and posted on the website of the Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities.

20. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade to Kenya where he participated in the 9th Summit of ACP Heads of State and Government which was chaired by the Prime Minister of Jamaica. After deliberating on the theme '**A Transformed ACP Committed to Multilateralism**', the Summit adopted "*The Nairobi Nguvu ya Pamoja Declaration*". The Declaration, inter alia, reaffirmed the commitment of the ACP to its primary mandate of promoting the socio-economic development of the Group through international trade particularly with the European Union and intra-ACP trade. The Declaration also emphasised the importance of multilateralism as an essential system through which to address not only international threats such as peace and security, maritime safety, environmental sustainability but also intra-ACP trade and the challenges faced by Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Middle Income Countries (MICs) in accessing much needed development assistance to continue and strengthen their economic growth. HE Mr Georges Rebelo Chicoti, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Angola was appointed as the next ACP Secretary General.

Cabinet has also taken note of the ACP's consistent support on the issue of the decolonisation of Mauritius, following the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice of 25 February 2019 and the UN General Assembly Resolution 73/295, which demands that the United Kingdom put an end to its unlawful occupation of the Chagos Archipelago.

21. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Industrial Development, SMEs and Cooperatives to South Africa where he attended the Global Manufacturing and Industrialisation Summit (GMIS), GMIS Connect Southern Africa, titled "*Advancing Industrialisation in Southern Africa. Think Globally, Act Locally – The Impact of Digital Transformation in Southern Africa*". The objectives of the Summit were, inter alia, to –

- (a) showcase the importance of Fourth Industrial Revolution for industrial development in Southern Africa;
- (b) highlight the challenges faced by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries in fostering industrial innovation and the opportunities to enable them to embark on the digital transformation bandwagon; and
- (c) share experiences on what national Governments were doing to promote digital industrial policies.

In the margins of the Summit, the Minister had discussions with -

- (a) Mr Anders Isaksson, Senior Research and Industrial Development Officer, UNIDO, for assistance in the implementation of the new Industrial Policy and Strategy 2020-2024 being defined; and
- (b) Mr Neeraj Vij, Regional Sector Head, African Development Bank on the potential support of the African Development Bank to launch an Operating Leasing mechanism in Mauritius to support Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs).

22. Cabinet has taken note of the recent mission of the Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change to the Kingdom of Spain where he participated in the 25th Session of the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 25). The main objective of COP 25 was to consider and decide on various climate change issues, including unfinished agenda items regarding the implementation of the Paris Agreement 2015 in line with decisions adopted in Katowice, Poland last year. In the margins of the COP 25, the Minister attended various Ministerial level meetings, including –

- (a) the Meeting of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN);
- (b) the Meeting of Ministers of Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS);
- (c) the Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub;
- (d) the “Concertation des Ministres de la Francophonie”; and
- (e) the Ministerial Event with Green Climate Fund (GCF) and the Global Environment Facility (GEF).

23. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Attorney General, Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security to China where he attended the First China-Africa Agricultural Cooperation Forum. The theme of the Forum was “**Joining Hands to Promote Agricultural Sustainable Development for a New Type of Closer China-Africa Agricultural Cooperation**”. The Forum set up an interactive platform for policy communication, economic and trade cooperation, scientific and technological exchanges and projects establishment for African agricultural sectors to work together to help Africa achieve food security and agricultural modernisation by 2030. In his speech, HE Mr Hang Chang Fu, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Affairs of the People’s Republic of China stated that China would speed up exchanges and cooperation with Africa on the selection and breeding of superior strains, livestock improvement as well as prevention and control of diseases and pests. The Minister also had a working session with the Director of the Chinese Academy of Tropical Agricultural Sciences.

24. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Arts and Cultural Heritage to Columbia where he participated in the 14th Session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. The Report of the Evaluation Body was presented to the Intergovernmental Committee. Forty-eight files were examined by the Committee, which comprised five files relating to the “List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding”, including the nomination dossier for the “Sega Tambour Chagos”. The delegation provided *viva voce* clarifications to the observations made in the Report of the Evaluation Body and the explanations satisfied the requirements of the Committee. The inscription of the “Sega Tambour Chagos” was proposed to the Intergovernmental Committee and the dossier was successfully passed by acclamation.
