

## **CABINET DECISIONS – 30 JANUARY 2019**

1. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of Hon Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, Prime Minister to India where he was invited as Chief Guest for the 15th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) in Varanasi and to attend the Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj. He was also the Guest of Honour in Mumbai for the Official Celebrations marking the 69<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Republic of India.

As Chief Guest at the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, the Prime Minister participated in the Inaugural Session of the Convention. The theme for the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas was '*Role of Indian diaspora in building a new India*'. Mauritius was the second largest delegation at that event with some 400 participants. These participants also attended the Kumbh Mela and the Republic Day celebrations in New Delhi. The Inaugural Session was attended, among others, by Prime Minister Modi, Shrimati S. Swaraj, Minister of External Affairs and Yogi Adityanath, Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh. In his address, the Prime Minister of the Republic of India stated that Non-resident Indians (NRIs) continue to play a significant role in the development of their country of residence and he called upon Indian diaspora to contribute actively in that direction. Shrimati Swaraj spoke on the origin of the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas and paid homage to former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee for starting Pravasi Bharatiya Divas in 2003.

In his speech, Hon P.K. Jugnauth, Prime Minister, laid emphasis on the role of education which not only ensured the rapid development of Mauritius but also played a crucial role in ensuring that all religious faith and cultures are respected and upheld. He also congratulated Prime Minister Modi for the impressive economic performance of India and the various initiatives he has taken to transform India into a modern and prosperous country for the benefit of all citizens, including the global community. The Prime Minister announced that Mauritius would be hosting the *Bhaagavad Gita Mahotsav* in February 2019 and the *Bhojpuri Mahotsav* next year. The closing ceremony was performed by the President of the Republic of India and he presented the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman to some 30 overseas Indians. In his intervention, he highlighted the importance of connecting with the youth as they are at the forefront of all development. The Prime Minister also paid a courtesy call on the President.

The Prime Minister also attended the Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj which is inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. He visited the Integrated Command and Control Centre which has been set up specifically to monitor and coordinate the security and safety arrangement of the entire Kumbh Mela area, spread over 3,200 hectares. The Prime Minister also participated in the Official Celebrations marking the 69<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Republic of India in Mumbai held on 26 January 2019 at the Shivaji Park and was received by HE Shri C. Vidyasagar Rao, Governor of Maharashtra as well as Shri Devendra Fadnavis, Chief Minister of Maharashtra.

During his stay in Mumbai, the Prime Minister launched the new corporate office of the SBM Bank (India) Ltd which is the first foreign bank to obtain a wholly-owned subsidiary licence from the Reserve Bank of India to operate in that country. This would allow the company to operate as a scheduled commercial bank and would reinforce its potential to promote trade and investment flows particularly along the India-Africa corridor.

The Economic Development Board (EDB), in collaboration with the Ministry of External Affairs, the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, ASSOCHAM and the Confederation of Indian Industries, also organised a Business Forum where some 130 people from the business community were briefed on the investment and trade opportunities available in Mauritius and also of the possibility of using Mauritius for investing in Africa and other emerging markets. Shri S. Prabhu, Minister of Commerce & Industry and Civil Aviation addressed the Forum. During the Business Forum, the Prime Minister informed the participants about the incentives and support that Government was providing in terms of fiscal incentives to attract potential investors.

The Prime Minister had the opportunity to visit the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) which is among the 10 largest Stock Exchanges of the world, where he was invited to participate at the Bell Ringing Ceremony. He also addressed the investors highlighting the opportunities existing in Mauritius and Africa. He launched the Vision document for Africa and AFRINEX Limited which has been set up in Mauritius to further develop and internationalise the capital market in Mauritius and enhance the role of Mauritius as a regional financial hub.

In the margins of the PBD 2019, the Prime Minister had the opportunity to have meetings with –

- (a) Shri Narendra Modi followed by a *tête à tête*. Prime Minister Modi thanked him for accepting to be the Chief Guest at the PBD and expressed his appreciation regarding the large number of Mauritian participants in the event and the naming of the Cyber tower in Ebene after Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee. The Prime Minister expressed his gratitude for the assistance granted by the Indian Government in financing key infrastructure projects which are significantly changing the landscape of Mauritius. The Prime Minister of Mauritius and Prime Minister Modi discussed future areas of cooperation;
- (b) Shrimati S. Swaraj, Minister of External Affairs and Shri S. Prabhu. Minister of Commerce & Industry and Civil Aviation with whom projects that are being implemented with the assistance of the Indian Government, namely the Metro Express, the Supreme Court, the new ENT Hospital and infrastructure projects in Agalega were reviewed. The Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement (CECPA) was also discussed; and
- (c) the Chief Minister of Maharashtra with whom he discussed areas of cooperation and the possibility of signing various MoUs in the fields of creative industry, culture, health, education and IT. The Chief Minister was keen to further strengthen the trade relations between Maharashtra and Mauritius and in that respect, he agreed to give his full support for a high level delegation to proceed to Mauritius to explore opportunities for investment.

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2. Cabinet has taken note of the status regarding the extension of the Social Contract between the Ministry of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment and households eligible under the Social Register of Mauritius for another period of 18 months ending 30 June 2020. Under the Social Contract, the beneficiaries have the obligation to, inter alia, participate in empowerment and employment programmes offered to them, ensure their children attend school with a monthly attendance of at least 90%, register with the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training in the event they are unemployed and ensure that they attend health care centres for pre-natal, post-natal and preventive medical care.

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3. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) for the establishment of a Regional Centre of Excellence in the Republic of Mauritius. The objectives of the Memorandum of Understanding are, inter alia, to -

- (a) establish a Regional Centre of Excellence in Mauritius to serve as a hub for capacity building in the fisheries and aquaculture sector for LDCs in the African and Asian regions respectively;
- (b) allow policy makers from selected African and Asian LDCs to benefit from the successful experience of Mauritius in developing its fisheries sector and building the regulatory and institutional requirements for meeting international food safety standards; and
- (c) foster an active exchange of experience, best practices and knowledge to better harness the development potential of the fisheries and aquaculture sector and to enhance their expertise and knowledge to strengthen domestic capacities in LCDs.

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4. Cabinet has agreed to the Financial Reporting Council hosting the second meeting of the African Forum of Independent Accounting and Auditing Regulators (AFIAAR) in Mauritius in May 2019. The AFIAAR was established in March 2018 to enhance a climate of investor confidence and to ensure security and stability for global investments into the African continent. The main objective of the AFIAAR is to provide a platform for its members to share information regarding the audit market environment and ethics, with focus on independent audit regulations and audit quality. Some 15 foreign participants as well as some 40 local participants would attend the Forum.

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5. Cabinet has taken note of the holding of the Third Concertation Meeting between the European Union (EU) Fishing Industry and the Indian Ocean Tuna Processing Industry in February 2019 in Mauritius. The meeting would comprise two sessions. The first session would be devoted to the technical discussions between representatives of the EU fishing industry and the Indian Ocean Tuna processing industry and the second session would allow for discussions on wider fisheries-related issues and would be restricted to Government and EU officials. The meeting would be co-chaired by Mauritius and DG MARE. HE Mr J. Machado, DG MARE and other EU representatives, Government senior officials and private sector representatives of the fisheries sector of Madagascar and Seychelles have been invited to the meeting.

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6. Cabinet has taken note of the measures being initiated for the implementation of the recommended actions in the Eastern and Southern Africa Anti-Money Laundering Group (ESAAMLG) Mutual Evaluation Report (MER). Cabinet has also taken note that the second National Capacity Building workshop on the financing of terrorism would be held in February 2019. The theme of the workshop would be “**Protecting Non-Profit Organisations from Terrorist Abuse**”. The objective of the workshop is to assist Mauritius in implementing Recommendation 8 of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) on Non-Profit Organisations.

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7. Cabinet has agreed to the organisation of a regional meeting by the Eastern and Southern Africa Trade and Development Bank in March 2019, in collaboration with the Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities to discuss on the development of a proposed Regional LNG Strategy and to agree on an operating framework to guide and co-ordinate the collaboration of the Indian Ocean island states towards the joint development, financing and operationalisation of a proposed Regional Liquefied Natural Gas procurement, transportation, storage and distribution platform.

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8. Cabinet has agreed to the proposed deproclamation of the public road, commonly known as Decaen Street, extending over a distance of around 64 metres within the Victoria Bus station. In that connection, the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport would make the Port Louis (Decaen Street) (End of Public Use) Regulations. The Decaen Street would no longer be dedicated to public use as from 01 March 2019.

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9. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities to Abu Dhabi where he participated in the 9th Assembly of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) and a Ministerial Meeting of the International Solar Alliance. The most important event of the Assembly was the appointment of Mr Francesco La Camera, as the new Director General of IRENA. The 9th Assembly’s approved the following –

- (a) the scale of contributions of Member States, which has remained unchanged for Mauritius;
- (b) the Annual Report of IRENA for 2018-2019;
- (c) the financial statements of IRENA and audit reports;
- (d) the membership of the Council of IRENA for 2019 and 2020; and
- (e) various human resource and governance issues.

The Deputy Prime Minister also attended a Ministerial Meeting of the International Solar Alliance and made a statement, inter alia, on the various fiscal incentives provided by Government to encourage investment in solar energy.

The Central Electricity Board and the Abu Dhabi Fund for Development, also signed a loan agreement for the grant of 10 million USD to implement the Home Solar project which consists of the installation of solar PV kits on rooftops of 10,000 houses of low income families.

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10. Cabinet has taken note that the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities participated in the Swearing-in ceremony of HE Mr Andry Nirina Rajoelina, as the 6<sup>th</sup> President of the Republic of Madagascar on 19 January 2019. The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities also had meetings with HE Mr Andry Nirina Rajoelina and prominent businessmen who reiterated their commitment to invest further in Mauritius.

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11. Cabinet has taken note that the National Sports Awards 2018 would be held on 9 February 2019 at the Caudan Arts Centre, Port Louis. The National Sports Awards recognises and rewards excellence in sports and individuals, teams and coaches receive due distinction for their outstanding performance during the preceding year, in all categories and cutting across all age groups.

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12. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Youth and Sports would launch, as from February 2019, the Youth Service Programme also called the National Youth Civic Service, for 1,000 young persons aged between 17 and 25 years. The key objective of the National Youth Civic Service is to promote positive youth development through youth civic engagement. The programme endeavours to steer young people to practise and exercise citizenship, develop talents, life skills and soft skills such as team building, discipline, communication and work ethics, as well as the practice of sports and physical activity. The aim is to enhance the employability of young people and help them become agents of positive change who can contribute to society, development and peace. The programme would be of a duration of 18 weeks on a full-time basis.

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13. Cabinet has taken note of the activities being organised in the context of World Cancer Day, observed on 4 February, namely –

- (a) the launching of the event on 12 February 2019 at Roche Bois Social Welfare Centre where screening for breast and cervical cancer would be carried out;
- (b) an exhibition on healthy life style and healthy diet;
- (c) sensitisation campaigns on television on the theme of the World Cancer Day, that is “**I am and I will**”, as well as at the level of Community Health Centres, Women Centres, Social Welfare Centres and schools; and
- (d) wide range screening for breast and cervical cancer and counselling for prevention of cancer.

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14. Cabinet has taken note that according to the last monthly report published by the Statistics Unit of the Ministry of Tourism, 158,043 tourists visited Mauritius in the month of December 2018 as compared to 155,615 in December 2017, i.e., an increase of 1.6%. During the period of January to December 2018, 1,399,287 tourists visited Mauritius as compared to 1,341,860 for the same period in 2017, i.e., an increase of 4.3%. Growth has been registered in arrivals from Germany (+25.5%), Italy (+16.2%), France (+2.0%), South Africa (12.8%), Saudi Arabia (+233.2%), Czech Republic (+37.4%), Russia (+27.8%), Hungary (+21.9%) and Romania (+51.5%).

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15. Cabinet has taken note that the Minister of Health and Quality of Life would make the Dental Council (Medical Institutions) (Amendment) Regulations under section 40 of the Dental Council Act for the recognition and listing of the Griffith University, Australia and the Chaudhary Charan Singh University, Meerut, India, following the recommendation of the Dental Council of Mauritius.

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16. Cabinet has also taken note of the reconstitution of the –

- (a) Correctional Youth Centre Board of Visitors with Dr Mahendranath Motah as Chairperson;
- (b) Rehabilitation Youth Centre Board of Visitors with Mrs Leelawtee Ramsaha as Chairperson; and
- (c) Agalega Island Council with Mr Gino Alfred, an Agalean, as Chairperson.

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