

CABINET DECISIONS – 31 MAY 2019

1. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of Hon Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, Prime Minister to London and New York.

In London, the Prime Minister had meetings on 20 May 2019 with the Rt Hon Jeremy Corbyn MP, UK Leader of the Opposition and Mr David Snoxell, former British High Commissioner to Mauritius and Coordinator of the UK All-Party Parliamentary Group on the Chagos Archipelago. The Prime Minister discussed with them issues relating to the Chagos Archipelago. He commended the UK Leader of the Opposition for the stand which he took with regard to the Advisory Opinion given by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on 25 February 2019 on the legal consequences of the separation of the Chagos Archipelago from Mauritius in 1965.

In New York, the Prime Minister delivered on 21 May 2019 a high-level address at the launch of the Africa Dialogue Series 2019 on the theme “Towards Durable Solutions for Forcibly Displaced Persons in Africa”. He also met the African Group of Ambassadors in New York and expressed his deep appreciation for the concerted effort of the whole African continent in constantly supporting Mauritius in the pursuit of the completion of its decolonisation and in particular, for the tabling of a draft resolution to give effect to the Advisory Opinion of the ICJ of 25 February 2019.

At the meeting of the UN General Assembly held on 22 May 2019, the draft resolution was introduced by the Permanent Representative of Senegal on behalf of African States Members of the United Nations. In the statement which he delivered to call upon UN Member States to support the draft resolution, the Prime Minister made, among others, the following points -

- (a) the landmark ICJ’s Advisory Opinion of 25 February 2019 confirms the long-standing position of Mauritius and Africa that the decolonization of Mauritius has not yet been completed and will not be completed until Mauritius is able to exercise sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago which the ICJ found to be an integral part of the territory of Mauritius;
- (b) the findings of the ICJ show the gravity and extent of the wrongful act under international law that the UK committed in carrying out the excision of the Chagos Archipelago from Mauritius in 1965 and maintaining the Chagos Archipelago as a colony ever since. Any country found to be engaged in an ongoing wrongful act by the highest Court of the world is expected to make amends and commit itself to terminate its unlawful conduct. Mauritius is extremely disappointed at the stance taken by the UK on the Advisory Opinion; and
- (c) although the Advisory Opinion itself cannot impose a new legal obligation, it can and in fact has recognised and confirmed the existing legal obligations that emanate from international law. In this particular case, the ICJ has established that the source of the legal obligations is the right of peoples to self-determination, which the UK has violated by excising the Chagos Archipelago from Mauritius without the consent of the Mauritian people. The Opinion has legal consequences for UN Member States as well as for the General Assembly and the United Nations and all its specialised agencies.

A copy of the statement of the Prime Minister has been posted on the website of the Prime Minister's Office.

The draft resolution was adopted by a recorded vote of 116 in favour to 6 against, with 56 abstentions.

In the margins of the meeting of the UN General Assembly, the Prime Minister also met the President of the General Assembly and the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Permanent Representatives of Canada and Senegal and the Permanent Observer of the African Union to the UN in New York.

2. Cabinet has agreed to the implementation of a project for the design and construction of two reinforced concrete reservoirs at Salazie and Eau Bouillie. The project which has an estimated cost of around Rs69 million, would comprise three components –

- (a) construction of two pumping houses, provision of around 400 metres of pipeline from the Rempart river to the reservoir, construction of a chlorination room, pressure filters and a generator room;
- (b) replacement of some 4 kilometres of pipes from Salazie to Les Mariannes; and
- (c) the construction of the two reinforced concrete reservoirs in Salazie and Eau Bouillie of capacity 2,500m³ and 2,000m³, respectively.

3. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Media Trust and the All-China Journalists' Association with a view to further promoting the cooperative relationship between news media and journalists of Mauritius and China. The Memorandum of Understanding would provide for cooperation in the following areas -

- (a) strengthening of friendly exchanges;
- (b) joint reporting activities;
- (c) academic exchanges;
- (d) training for journalists; and
- (e) news award.

4. Cabinet has taken note of the implementation of the first Mauritian Satellite Project known as MIR-SAT1 by the Mauritius Research Council (MRC). Following the annual call for proposal by the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs and the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency KiboCUBE Programme 2018, the MRC submitted, in April 2018, a proposal entitled the MIR-SAT1. The proposal was retained and Mauritius has been offered the opportunity for the first time in its history, to build and deploy a Mauritian Nano Satellite from the International Space Station Japanese Experiment Module. The Satellite would have a lifetime of about one and a half years and would capture data such as the satellite health data, payload data i.e., pictures of Mauritius and surrounding regions and experimenting island to island communication.

5. Cabinet has taken note that in the arbitration case of Betamax Ltd vs State Trading Corporation, the Singapore International Arbitration Centre had on 5 June 2017, issued the Award of the sole Arbitrator ordering the State Trading Corporation to pay to Betamax Ltd damages and legal cost amounting to some Rs4.5 billion plus interest. Betamax Ltd had on 7 September 2017 also obtained an ex parte provisional order from the Supreme Court of Mauritius for the recognition and enforcement of the Award. The State Trading Corporation applied to the Supreme Court to set aside the Award. The State Trading Corporation also applied to set aside the provisional order. On 31 May 2019, the Full Bench of the Supreme Court of Mauritius held, inter alia that the Award was contrary to the public policy of Mauritius within the meaning of section 39(2)(b)(ii) of the International Arbitration Act and the Award has accordingly been set aside. The Full Bench of the Supreme Court of Mauritius has also set aside the provisional order for the recognition and enforcement of the Award which was granted on 7 September 2017.

6. Cabinet has taken note that the Minister of Youth and Sports would officially launch the Indian Ocean Islands Games (IOIG) 2019 Song on 31 May 2019 at Serge Constantin Theatre, Vacoas.

7. Cabinet has agreed to the holding of the Egmont Working Group Meeting in Mauritius in January/February 2020. The Egmont Group is a network consisting of Financial Intelligence Units of 159 countries worldwide and it provides a platform for the secure exchange of expertise and financial intelligence to combat money laundering and terrorist financing. The meeting is convened to discuss policy matters and the strategic direction of the Group and to facilitate exchange of financial information and intelligence products internationally. Some 300 foreign participants are expected to attend the meeting.

8. Cabinet has taken note of a proposal from the United Nations Development Programme for Mauritius to participate, as a pilot country, in the “Estonia-UNDP cooperation on Digital Transformation as Sustainable Development Pathway”. The Estonia-UNDP cooperation aims at supporting the digital transformation of developing countries by leveraging the e-governance expertise of Estonia and tapping UNDP’s long-standing support and presence as a development partner in around 170 countries. A team of experts from the UNDP and Estonia would visit Mauritius in July 2019 to meet the relevant stakeholders and make a survey of the situation and thereafter submit a report on the way forward.

9. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent Validation Workshop on the National Leather Value Chain Strategy organised by the Ministry of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives, in collaboration with SME Mauritius. The objective of the Workshop was to validate the Strategy formulated with the assistance of consultants from the African Leather and Leather Product Institute, which aims at revamping and revitalising the Mauritian leather sector. The Strategy would serve as a roadmap for the local SMEs and would also help to improve the leather value chain contribution to GDP and foreign currency earnings and have positive effects on other sectors such as transport and logistics, chemical, textile and other service providers.

10. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life would host the First Technical Meeting on Pooled Procurement for Small Island Developing States in collaboration with the World Health Organization from 16 to 18 July 2019. The overall objectives of the meeting are to move further the process of establishing the SIDS Pooled Procurement Programme, by promoting a common understanding of the requirements for Pooled Procurement and later move on to preparing and agreeing on the technical, financial and administrative requirements for implementing such programme. Some 40 foreign participants are expected to attend the meeting.

11. Cabinet has taken note that in the context of World No Tobacco Day 2019, the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life has been awarded a Certificate of Appreciation by the World Health Organization (WHO) in recognition of its outstanding contribution to tobacco Control. Every year, WHO recognises individuals or organisations in each of the six WHO Regions for their accomplishments in the area of tobacco control.

12. Cabinet has taken note of the activities that would be organised in the context of World Food Safety Day, to be commemorated for the first time on 7 June 2019, namely –

- (a) sensitisation programmes on food safety on radio from 3 to 7 June 2019 and on television during the last week of June 2019; and

- (b) distribution of posters on five keys to safer food (keep clean; separate raw and cooked; cook thoroughly; keep food at safe temperatures; and use safe water and raw materials) in the public health institutions, youth centres, social welfare centres, primary and secondary schools and supermarkets.

The theme for the first World Food Safety Day is “Food Safety, everyone’s business”.

13. Cabinet has taken note of the activities that would be organised in the context of World Oceans Day, commemorated on 8 June, namely –

- (a) guided visits for members of the public at the research facilities of the Mauritius Oceanography Institute, free guided glass bottom trips at Trou aux Biches, Quatre Soeurs, and Blue Bay Marine Park for students of secondary and tertiary institutions and members of the public;
- (b) talks and presentations in colleges in different regions of the country; and
- (c) a quiz competition on MBC and private radios.

The theme for this year is “**Gender and Oceans**”.

14. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Health and Quality of Life to Geneva where he attended the World Health Assembly Meeting. The Minister had the opportunity to intervene at the Plenary session on Universal Health Coverage laying emphasis on progress made by Mauritius in ensuring that free access to health care is provided whereby no citizen is left behind.

The Minister also attended the Commonwealth Health Ministers Meeting where speakers agreed that the achievement of the Universal Health Coverage was a key aim of the global health agenda and an important target of the Sustainable Development Goals. Member countries were invited to focus attention and mobilise resources to reach “the Unreached” in order to ensure that no one is left behind. The Minister also attended the Commonwealth Ministerial Meeting on Digital Health.

In the margins of the World Health Assembly, the Minister met –

- (a) Dr Naiken, General Surgeon and Dr Sologashvili, Paediatric Cardiac Surgeon to discuss about possible areas of collaboration; and
- (b) representatives of the International Atomic Energy Agency and discussions focused on areas where technical assistance and support could be provided, namely in the field of mammography, quality assurance and capacity building.

15. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping to Portugal and Mozambique. In Portugal, the Minister participated in the Conference on Ocean Smart Governance. The aim of the Conference was to share experiences with various countries with a view to designing new policies for better management of oceans. The Minister participated as a panelist in the session on “*Challenges of Ocean Governance: Small Island Development States.*”

In Mozambique, the Minister participated in the Growing Blue Conference which was a forum for sharing information and experiences and dissemination of knowledge by academics and scientists with a view to inducing reflection in support of decision making. The Minister participated as a panelist in the Plenary Session on Maritime Highways with focus on “*Opportunities for Enhancing Marine Tourism in the Indian Ocean*”.
