

CABINET DECISIONS – 5 APRIL 2019

1. Cabinet has taken note that HE Mr Uhuru Kenyatta, President of the Republic of Kenya, would effect a State Visit to Mauritius from 09 to 12 April 2019. During his visit, he would, among others, pay a courtesy call on the Acting President of the Republic of Mauritius, have a working session with the Prime Minister and attend a Business Forum organised by the Economic Development Board.

2. Cabinet has taken note that following invitation made to the general public and political parties, suggestions/counter proposals have been received in relation to the proposals on the Financing of Political Parties. Cabinet has agreed to instructions being conveyed to the Attorney General's Office for the drafting of the Financing of Political Parties Bill.

3. Cabinet has taken note of the arrangements being made by the Forensic Science Laboratory to acquire a Liquid Chromatography-High Resolution Mass Spectrometer System for the implementation of the drug driving testing project, as announced in Budget Speech 2018-2019, in order to detect and sanction persons under the influence of drugs, including drivers, with a view to intensifying Government's fight against drug trafficking and abuse.

4. Cabinet has agreed to the introduction of the Mauritius Research and Innovation Council Bill into the National Assembly. The object of the Bill is to repeal the Mauritius Research Council Act and replace it by a new Act in order to –

- (a) provide for the establishment of the Mauritius Research and Innovative Council and the National Research and Innovation Fund; and
- (b) promote high quality research and foster innovation in the national interest.

5. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research and the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Kenya would sign a Memorandum of Understanding in the field of Higher Education and Scientific Research during the forthcoming State Visit of the President of the Republic of Kenya to Mauritius. The objective of the Memorandum of Understanding is to enshrine collaboration between the two Ministries with a view to fostering cooperation between their respective institutions of higher education through staff and student exchange, scientific research and capacity building.

6. Cabinet has taken note that Excise (Amendment) Regulations 2019 and Excise (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2019 would be promulgated. The draft regulations provide for the implementation of the Budget 2018-19 measure relating to the imposition of an excise duty of Rs2 per unit on non-biodegradable disposable plastic containers, plates, bowls, cups and trays. The Excise (Amendment) Regulations 2019 lay out the rules and procedures to operationalise the measure.

Both Regulations would come into operation on 2 May 2019.

7. Cabinet has taken note that the Income Tax (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2019 would be made to include Mauritius Renewable Energy Agency in the list of exempt bodies of the Income Tax Act. The Mauritius Renewable Energy Agency is a body corporate set up under the Mauritius Renewable Energy Agency Act 2015 operating under the aegis of the Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities. Its sole source of income is from grants and it operates on a non-profit making basis.

8. Cabinet has taken note that the Investment Promotion (Property Development Scheme) (Amendment) Regulations 2019 would be made under the Economic Development Board Act. The Regulations would set out a package of incentives to attract foreign retirees in Mauritius and also lay down the eligibility criteria to benefit from the incentives and other conditions of the Scheme.

9. Cabinet has taken note that the Statutory Bodies Pension Funds (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations would be made to include the Economic Development Board in the listing of the First Schedule to the Statutory Bodies Pension Funds Act, for the establishment of a pension fund with SICOM for its employees.

10. Cabinet has taken note that the Registration Duty (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations would be made under the Registration Duty Act to clarify that the lease/sublease of land and lease of building thereon for use as a private health institution would be exempted from registration duty upon registration of the lease and sub-lease agreement. The exemption is being extended to cover the setting up of a public health institution in order to cater for the eventuality that a public health institution may be constructed on leased land.

11. Cabinet has agreed to the setting up of a Technical Committee to look into the feasibility of establishing a Bonus Malus System for insurance of drivers and vehicles in Mauritius, and to make recommendations thereon. The Bonus Malus System relates to an arrangement where the premium payable by a customer is adjusted according to his individual claim history. The bonus would constitute a discount in the premium which is given on the renewal of the policy if no claim is made in the previous year. On the other hand, Malus is an increase in the premium if there is a claim in the previous year. The underlying principle of the proposed Bonus Malus System is that the higher the claim frequency of a policy holder, the higher the insurance costs charged to the policy holder. The proposed system is intended to reduce the number of casualties on our roads and is in line with the National Road Safety Strategy as drivers would be encouraged to be more careful.

12. Cabinet has agreed to the opening of a Consulate General of the Republic of Mauritius and the appointment of a Consul General of the Republic of Mauritius in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia as announced in the Budget Speech 2016-2017.

13. Cabinet has agreed to the State of Mauritius acceding to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. The Convention was the first human rights treaty to be adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, on 9 December 1948 and entered into force on 12 January 1951. The Convention provides, inter alia, for a precise definition of the crime of genocide in legal terms, including the required intent and the prohibited acts, and the application of the treaty and its reservations. It also specifies that the crime of genocide may be committed in time of peace or in time of war and provides for punishment of persons committing genocide whether they are constitutionally responsible rulers, public officials or private individuals.

14. Cabinet has agreed to Mauritius supporting the request of the Russian Federation for observer status in the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC).

15. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life would proceed with its annual vaccination campaign against seasonal influenza as from 11 April 2019 at the level of the Regional and District Hospitals, Mediclinics and Area Health Centres and thereafter in Rodrigues and Agalega. The vaccination campaign would target the vulnerable sections of the population recommended by the WHO as well as the general public.

16. Cabinet has taken note that the Mauritius Accreditation Service (MAURITAS) has been admitted as a signatory, that is, an Arrangement Member to the Southern African Development Community Cooperation in Accreditation (SADCA) Mutual Recognition Arrangement at the 23rd General Assembly of the SADCA. The SADCA is a cooperation structure established under the SADC Protocol on Trade and its main objective is to establish, manage and maintain a Mutual Recognition Arrangement between Accreditation Bodies in the region.

Cabinet has also taken note that Mrs C. Matadeen-Domun, Assistant Accreditation Manager at MAURITAS, has been elected as SADCA Marketing and Communication Committee Vice Chair. She would be assisting the Chairperson of the Committee to develop the SADCA marketing and communication strategy, as well as prepare promotional material for use by SADCA members.

17. Cabinet has taken note that a Special Call for Proposals on “Expanding access to early childhood care services at community level for vulnerable children” would be launched by the National Corporate Social Responsibility Foundation. Vulnerable children would be given the opportunity to have access to day care centres in order to develop their capacities at a very early age and help them in their educational development. The role of non-governmental organisations as child day care service providers would be crucial to enhance access to child day care services in poor and disadvantaged regions.

18. Cabinet has taken note that a Regional Workshop on Oceanographic Research and Data in the Western Indian Ocean region, would be organised by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Nairobi Convention, in Mauritius from 27 to 29 May 2019. The overall objective of the Regional Workshop would be to establish and operationalise the science to policy platform as a core structure within the Nairobi Convention. Discussions would also be held on the need for a regional ecosystem/indicator monitoring framework and road map on its development.

19. Cabinet has taken note that the Code de Commerce (Amendment) Act 2018 would come into operation on 5 April 2019. The object of the Act is to allow the use of the value of a commercial business as a whole (fonds de commerce), including leasehold rights, trade name, intellectual property rights and goodwill but excluding the value of freehold property as collateral and enhance access to credit.

20. Cabinet has taken note of the activities being organised by the National Heritage Fund to mark the International Day for Monuments and Sites, observed on 18 April, namely –

- (a) an Official Prize Giving Function for a Short Film Competition and a Painting Competition on 18 April 2019 at the Serge Constantin Theatre, Vacoas. The programme would also comprise a short documentary film entitled “*Rakont nou lavi lontan*” by students of Rodrigues College, as well as performances of ‘*Sega Tipik*’, ‘*Geet Gawai*’, ‘*Sega Tambour Chagos*’ and ‘*Sega Tambour Rodrig*’; and
- (b) Open Days for the sites/monuments on 26 and 27 April 2019.

21. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Tourism to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority and 27 tourism operators participated in the Mauritian week organised in the cities of Jeddah, Dammam and Riyadh and the 11th International Riyadh Travel Fair. The Mauritian week consisted of holding of roadshows, cultural show, photo exhibition, Mauritian food and cuisine tasting, billboard campaigns in main cities of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and launching of an aggressive online campaign. Media interviews were given to showcase the uniqueness of our destination, our tourism products, sense of place, hospitality, cultural diversity, political stability, safety and culinary offerings.

The Minister of Tourism also attended the opening of the Riyadh Travel Fair which is one of the major fairs in the Middle East for the travel and tourism industry. He also paid a courtesy call on Mr Ahmad Al-Khateeb, President of the Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage and briefed him about the tourism sector in Mauritius.

22. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Tourism to Réunion Island in connection with the National Day Celebrations 2019. The Honorary Consul of Mauritius in Réunion Island organised a ceremony with the support of the Mayor of St Denis where Mauritians living in Réunion Island and the *Préfet* were invited. The Mayor spoke about the progress achieved by Mauritius since the time of independence and referred to *Les Jeux des Iles* and the Metro Express as clear signs of a country on the move.

23. Cabinet has taken note of the recent mission of the Minister of Youth and Sports to Morocco where he attended the 37th Ministerial Session of the “*Conférence des Ministres de la Jeunesse et des Sports de la Francophonie*” (CONFESJES). The 37th Ministerial Session was organised under the high patronage of His Majesty the King Mohammed VI of Morocco and sponsored by the Secretary-General of the ‘*Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie*’. The opening ceremony was marked by a film projection reviewing the 50-year history of CONFESJES and the traditional ceremony of transmission of the presidency. Members present also had the opportunity to hear the testimonials of former beneficiaries of CONFESJES. The Ministerial Conference approved, inter alia, a calendar of activities for the four-year period ending December 2022 as well as the conferment of awards to a number of officials who contributed to the development of the CONFESJES.

24. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Financial Services and Good Governance to Rwanda and South Africa. In Rwanda, the Minister delivered a keynote address at the Africa CEO Forum, which is a high-level international event for African CEOs and investors. The Forum was attended by more than 1,500 top executives from Pan-African companies and Multi-National Companies, major financiers, bank advisors as well as political leaders. The Economic Development Board, being a key sponsor at the Forum, leveraged on the magnitude of the event to enhance the visibility of Mauritius as a jurisdiction of substance, choice and repute and made a presentation to showcase the key attributes of the Mauritius International Financial Centre as a hub for Africa. A session was organised in order to galvanize investments in the Special Economic Zone and where the Africa Strategy for Mauritius was disseminated.

In the margins of the Forum, several one to one meetings were conducted with General Electric Africa, Nedbank, Unilever Africa, the African Development Bank, the Africa Enterprise Challenge Fund and Norfund Housing/BDO Kenya.

In South Africa, the Minister led a mission with representatives of the Economic Development Board and the Financial Services Commission which was of utmost importance to share the recent legislative amendments brought to the global and financial services sector of Mauritius with the South African Operators in the financial services sphere and position the Mauritius International Financial Centre as a prime jurisdiction of substance for establishing their regional treasury, procurement and shared services centre. The Minister also had a meeting with the Chairperson of the Nedbank Group Limited who demonstrated keen interest in setting up an Investment Bank in Mauritius.

25. Cabinet has taken note of the appointment of Mr Azaad Aumeerally as Chairperson of the Sugar Insurance Fund Board.
