

CABINET DECISIONS – 18 DECEMBER 2020

1. Cabinet has agreed to the setting up of a Special Fund to finance the National COVID-19 Vaccination Programme in the Republic of Mauritius. The Special Fund would be set up, under the Finance and Audit Act to mobilise and manage the funds required for implementing the Programme.

2. Cabinet has taken note of the COVID-19 Vaccination Preparation Plan of the Ministry of Health and Wellness. In line with WHO Guidance on developing a national deployment and vaccination plan for COVID-19 vaccines, the Ministry of Health and Wellness has set up Working Groups to look into various issues and implications, namely -

- (a) Regulatory Preparedness;
- (b) Planning and Coordination;
- (c) Costing and Funding;
- (d) Target Population;
- (e) Delivery Strategies;
- (f) Supply Chain and Healthcare Waste Management;
- (g) Human Resource Management and training;
- (h) Vaccines Acceptance and Uptake;
- (i) Safety Monitoring;
- (j) Immunisation and Monitoring Systems;
- (k) COVID-19 surveillance; and
- (l) Evaluation of COVID-19 Vaccine introduction.

A two-day workshop would be held and an Action Plan would be elaborated with relevant stakeholders.

3. Cabinet has taken note that –

- (a) the quarantine period in Mauritius would be extended from 15 January 2021 to 15 February 2021 and in this regard, the Minister of Health and Wellness would issue a Notice under the Quarantine Act 2020 and make the Quarantine (COVID-19) (Amendment No. 7) Regulations 2020; and
- (b) the Prime Minister would accordingly amend the Order under section 3(1)(a) of the Quarantine Act 2020 to extend the prohibition of entry of aircrafts and ships in Mauritius until 15 February 2021, except for those aircrafts and ships as may be approved by the Prime Minister.

4. Cabinet has taken note of the alarming situation of the COVID-19 pandemic prevailing across the world. With regard to Mauritius, the last local case had been recorded on 26 November 2020 in a quarantine centre. Currently, there were 24 active cases of COVID-19 in Mauritius. As at 18 December 2020, 524 cases of COVID-19 had been registered in Mauritius. The public should observe strict sanitary precautions.

5. Cabinet has taken note of the status of major infrastructural projects being implemented by the Ministry of Health and Wellness, namely the New Cancer Hospital at Solferino, the New Flacq Teaching Hospital, the New Moka Eye Hospital, the Roche Bois and St. Francois Xavier Community Health Office and the Bel Air Mediclinic.

6. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent visit of HE Mr Toshimitsu Motegi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Japan to Mauritius. During the visit, the Minister -

- (a) paid a courtesy call on the Prime Minister;
- (b) signed an Exchange of Notes for a Grant Aid of 600 Million Japanese Yen in the field of Natural Disaster Reduction;
- (c) had a Working Session with the Mauritian delegation;
- (d) participated in a press briefing; and
- (e) visited the MV Wakashio related sites at Pointe d'Esny and Rivière des Créoles.

The Government of Japan has also confirmed a new grant aid under the Economic and Social Programme of Japan in the field of maritime safety and security, which would be used for the setting up of an effective coastal radar surveillance system.

The Prime Minister reiterated his appreciation for the prompt assistance provided by Japan in the context of the MV Wakashio oil spill incident. He also thanked the Government of Japan for providing the grant of 300 Million Yen in August 2020 for the purchase of highly sophisticated medical equipment as a COVID-19 emergency response measure and the assistance through the UNDP for a survey on inclusive and multi-sectoral response to COVID-19.

The assistance of Japan has been sought to enable Mauritius and other Small Island Developing States (SIDS) to secure the necessary doses of COVID-19 vaccines. Japanese companies have been invited to invest in Mauritius and engage in Africa through Mauritius. Discussions also focused on air and maritime connectivity and the TICAD 8 Summit to be held in 2022.

7. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a Joint Declaration of Intent on the Establishment of a Consultation Mechanism between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade and the Federal Foreign Office of Germany. The Consultation Mechanism with Germany would not only reinforce the bilateral relations through regular meetings in a structured format but also serve as a platform to address issues of pertinence, to follow-up on developments as well as to identify new areas of cooperation.

8. Cabinet has agreed to the ratification of the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190) and the adoption of its accompanying Violence and Harassment Recommendation, 2019 (No. 206).

The Convention (No. 190) purports, among others, to –

- (a) prevent and address the rise of violence and harassment beyond the physical workplace and to also mitigate the impact of both domestic as well as gender-based violence and harassment in the world of work;
- (b) protect everyone in the world of work including those working in the informal economy;
- (c) prevent and address cyber bullying;
- (d) ensure equality and non-discrimination of persons in situation of vulnerability; and
- (e) adopt, adapt and implement workplace measures to address violence and harassment as well as promote better data capture.

Cabinet has also agreed to the Submission Paper signifying the course of action Mauritius proposes to take, to be laid in the National Assembly, in line with the Constitution of the International Labour Organisation.

9. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping and the Ministry of Environment, Water and Agriculture of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The Memorandum of Understanding provides for mutual cooperation in the following areas –

- (a) fish farming and development of fisheries;
- (b) biosecurity and quarantine of fish;
- (c) promotion and marketing of marine products;
- (d) management of marine living resources and its conservation;
- (e) scientific and applied research, and modern technical practices;

- (f) exchange of information and expertise, as well as training and developing cadres;
- (g) exchange of visits between officials, experts and specialists in the fisheries sector;
- (h) sanitary procedures related to import and export of fish products;
- (i) organisation of fisheries and other related trade fairs; and
- (j) elimination of barriers to and promotion of trade in fish and fish related products.

10. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade would establish a mechanism to review the Treaties/Conventions/International Agreements that Mauritius is a party to. The aim of the exercise is to ensure that the Agreements concluded by Mauritius are accurately reflected in domestic legislation, implemented in line with international obligations and bring tangible benefits to the country.

11. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a Financing Agreement between the European Union and the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security for the part financing of the Mauritius Ridge to Reef Project. The "Mauritius Ridge to Reef" project, which would be implemented by the National Parks and Conservation Service, aims essentially at the restoration of the Native Forest cover. It involves the restoration of mangroves as part of an integrated sustainable landscape management initiative to enhance the climate resilience of the natural ecosystem, augment carbon sequestration, preserve the endemic biodiversity and improve food security. The duration of the project is seven years and it has an estimated cost of EUR4.5 million. The EU would finance the project to the tune of EUR4 million.

12. Cabinet has taken note of the implementation of the MoKloud project which would provide a platform for issuance and verification of documents and certificates in a digital way. MoKloud would leverage on the existing InfoHighway platform, which allows data sharing across Ministries and Departments, for document movement in electronic format and accessible in real time.

The MoKloud solution would further empower citizens, through the provision of a cloud-based digital locker, for storage, signing, accessing and sharing of documents whilst leveraging on their digital identity. It would eliminate administrative overheads of Ministries/Departments, reduce service delivery time and associated costs through paperless transactions. Moreover, citizens would access their respective lockers anywhere and at anytime. Currently, two digitally signed documents are available on the MoKloud platform, namely online extracts of birth certificates and marriage certificates.

13. Cabinet has taken note of the reopening of the Blue Bay Marine Park, Ile des Deux Cocos, Bois des Amourettes Public Beach including the jetty, Rivière des Créoles Public Beach and only the northern part of Pointe Jérôme embarkation point, in the aftermath of the MV Wakashio oil spill.

The lifting of restriction at Ile des Deux Cocos, Bois des Amourettes Public Beach including the jetty, and Rivière des Créoles Public Beach would be for recreational activities only. These activities are swimming, diving, surfing and boating. The Blue Bay Marine Park would be reopened for visitors.

The reopening of only the northern part of the Pointe Jérôme embarkation point towards Preskil Hotel would be used by tourism/boat operators for embarkation of visitors to Ile aux Aigrettes.

14. Cabinet has agreed to amendments being made to the Workers' Rights (Prescribed Period) Regulations 2020 so as to extend the period during which an employer shall not reduce the number of workers in his employment, either temporarily or permanently, or terminate the employment of any of his workers, up to 30 June 2021.

15. Cabinet has taken note that the Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development would promulgate the Customs (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2020 which make provision for freight forwarding agents appointed prior to March 2006 to continue to make bills of entry without employing a customs broker up to 30 September 2021 instead of 31 December 2020. A freight forwarding agent is responsible for arranging the storage and shipping of merchandise on behalf of importers and exporters. It provides a full range of services including preparing shipping and export documents, warehousing, booking cargo space, negotiating freight charges, freight consolidation and cargo insurance.

16. Cabinet has agreed to the Minister of Public Service, Administrative and Institutional Reforms advising the President of the Republic to make the Civil Establishment Order 2020 and the Civil Establishment (Rodrigues Regional Assembly) Order 2020 that establish offices in the public service, determine the number of persons who may be appointed to such offices and the emoluments to be attached to such offices.

17. Cabinet has taken note that the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities would promulgate the Central Water Authority (Dry Season) (No. 2) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 to revoke the ban in respect of washing of vehicles, on the condition that car washing operators would be required to review their operations before the next Dry Season so that they would no longer use potable water. The Development Bank of Mauritius has put in place a scheme to support the operators in their transformation process. The CWA (Dry Season) (No. 2) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 would be effective as from 19 December 2020.

18. Cabinet has agreed to the submission of the State of Conservation Report for the Apravasi Ghat World Heritage Property to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre.

The purpose of the State of Conservation Report is, to, inter alia, -

- (a) demonstrate how the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Property is being maintained and enhanced;
- (b) provide information on the factors affecting the Outstanding Universal Value of the Property, including threats if any, to its authenticity and/or integrity;
- (c) describe conservation measures as well as practical actions taken by the Committee on the state of conservation of the property; and
- (d) address and follow up on previous decisions of the World Heritage Committee on the state of conservation of the Property.

The Report provides measures taken by the Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage and the Apravasi Ghat Trust Fund to maintain and enhance the Outstanding Universal Value of the Apravasi Ghat World Heritage Property and to address challenges that may affect its authenticity and integrity.

19. Cabinet has taken note of progress being made in the implementation of the Economic Recovery Programme in respect of –

- (a) Development Projects;
- (b) the National Training and Re-Skilling Scheme;
- (c) the Employment Support Scheme for SMEs and MMEs;
- (d) the Nationwide Clean-up Campaign;
- (e) Assistance Schemes for Coral Farming and Fish Breeding;
- (f) Provision of Cargo Facilities to Export-Oriented Enterprises; and
- (g) Financial Assistance for Payment of Salary Compensation.

20. Cabinet has taken note of the launching of the Rodrigues Research and Innovation Scheme by the Mauritius Research and Innovation Council which aims at supporting innovative research projects that can address the specific challenges faced in Rodrigues. The following thematic areas for potential research and innovation have been identified -

- (a) Ocean and Marine Resources;
- (b) Agro-industry and bio-farming;
- (c) ICT, Renewable Energy and Emerging Sectors;
- (d) Social Sciences;
- (e) Manufacturing;
- (f) Green business;
- (g) Water Management; and
- (h) Waste Management.

A call for proposals for research and innovation under the scheme would be launched in January 2021 for a period of eight weeks and would be open to Commissions and Departments under the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, enterprises/cooperatives/NGOs registered in Rodrigues as well as educational institutions located in Rodrigues.

21. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the National Youth Football League 2020 organised by the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation. The first edition of the National Youth Football League was organised for boys and girls aged between 12 and 17 years old. The tournament was opened to the trainees of the 12 Regional Technical Centres, the Liverpool Football Club International Academy Mauritius and the Centre Technique National François Blaquart. 54 male football teams and 11 female football teams participated in the tournament, involving some 1,357 players.

22. Cabinet has taken note that at the 74th Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), a resolution has been adopted to declare year 2021 as the International Year of Fruits and Vegetables. The Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security would organise a series of activities in collaboration with all stakeholders, to mark the event.

23. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Board of the Financial Services Commission with Mr Yerukunondu Mardayah Kona, First Deputy Governor of the Bank of Mauritius as part-time Chairperson.

24. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Boards of the National Insurance Company Ltd and the NIC General Insurance Company Ltd with Mr Vikash Peerun as part-time Chairperson.

25. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Managing Committee of the Insurance Industry Compensation Fund with Ms Kivisha Devi Goodar as part-time Chairperson.

26. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Board of the Commission Nationale du Sport Féminin with Mrs Isabelle André as part-time Chairperson.
