

**CABINET DECISIONS – 02 OCTOBER 2020**

1. Cabinet has agreed to the Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology promulgating the Education (Amendment) Regulations 2020. Following closure of schools as from 19 March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the initial school calendar was adjusted and the third term 2020 would now end on 26 March 2021. In the context of admission of pupils to Grade I as from June 2021, amendments would be made to the Education Regulations to provide that –

- (a) no pupil shall be admitted to a Government primary school or an Aided primary school unless – he has attained the age of five years on or before 31 May of the year in which he seeks admission'; and
- (b) in every school in receipt of public funds – the school year, which shall begin on 01 June, shall be divided into three terms, the dates of which shall be approved by the Minister.

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2. Cabinet has agreed to the alignment of the fines applicable for offences of littering and illegal dumping in four Local Authorities with that of the Local Government Act 2011 and to the Local Government (Dumping and Waste Carriers) Regulations 2003 being amended to provide for tougher penalties for the offences of littering and illegal dumping as well as additional technical specifications and new conditions being attached to the issue of a Waste Carrier Licence.

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3. Cabinet has agreed to the phased implementation of Beach Management Plans at Mont Choisy, Belle Mare, Flic en Flac and La Prairie public beaches. The amenities would comprise among others, vigilance towers, parking facilities with surface drainage system, public toilets, kiosks/gazebos, main garbage bins, litter bins, benches and picnic tables, LED solar lighting system, open showers, open gyms and landscaping works.

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4. Cabinet has agreed to the recruitment of a Consultant for the provision of consultancy services for coastal protection, landscaping and infrastructural works at 16 sites for the period 2020-2024. Taking into account the nature and magnitude of the protection and rehabilitation works required, the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change proposes to recruit a Consultant to, inter alia, -

- (a) carry out detailed site assessment in terms of ecological and hydrodynamics surveys to come up with integrated coastal protection measures, taking into consideration environmental, socio-economic and recreational aspects, as well as, the need to adapt and increase resilience to climate change impacts;

- (b) prepare preliminary design, detailed design and bidding documents;
- (c) conduct an Environment Impact Assessment for the recommended protection works in line with the Environment Protection Act;
- (d) supervise the execution of the works; and
- (e) monitor the sites and liaise with the Contractor during the implementation of the works as well as during defects liability period.

Cabinet has also agreed that a Consultant would be recruited to undertake a site assessment for the implementation of coastal protection, landscaping and infrastructural works at Rivière des Créoles public beach. The Consultant would, inter alia, also prepare the preliminary designs and detailed designs and bidding documents as well as supervise the execution of the works.

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5. Cabinet has taken note of the activities being organised by the Ministry of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management to mark the International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction celebrated on 13 October, namely –

- (a) a march from the Headquarters of the Mauritius Meteorological Services to the Town Hall of the Municipal Council of Vacoas-Phoenix involving some 200 participants. The objective of the march is to create awareness among stakeholders as well as the general public on the need for preparedness and response in situation of disaster;
- (b) an official function in the Town Hall of the Municipal Council of Vacoas-Phoenix;
- (c) an exhibition of photographs, posters and equipment on Disaster Risk Reduction and Management in the compound of the Town Hall which would be open to the public; and
- (d) a demonstration by the personnel of the SMF on disaster risk operations.

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6. Cabinet has taken note of the status of allocation of land to former employees of the sugar estates. In November 2019, some 14 projects for land allocation to the former employees of some sugar estates had been identified, out of which the outstanding issues of six projects have been resolved and discussions are ongoing with the sugar estates for the remaining eight projects.

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7. Cabinet has taken note of the activities being organised by the Ministry of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity, in collaboration with the National Social Inclusion Foundation and the National Empowerment Foundation (NEF), in the context of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, commemorated on 17 October. The theme chosen by the United Nations for this year is “**Acting together to achieve social and environmental justice for all**”. The activities being organised include, inter alia, -

- (a) the organisation of a main event on 17 October 2020 at the Caudan Arts Centre, Port Louis, comprising-
  - (i) the handing over of keys to 25 beneficiaries across the island of the Fully Concrete Housing Scheme under the NEF and to the first 47 beneficiaries of the NHDC Housing Scheme under which 10% NHDC houses are reserved for households eligible under the Social Register of Mauritius (SRM);
  - (ii) the handing over of certificates and toolkits to some 500 beneficiaries of the NEF, who have successfully completed their training courses in different sectors such as manufacture of aluminium openings and food processing;
  - (iii) testimonial from two beneficiaries having received empowerment support from the NEF; and
  - (iv) an ‘expo-sales’ of products manufactured by some 50 SRM beneficiaries. The beneficiaries would have the opportunity to meet potential customers during the ‘expo-sales’ to showcase and market their products;
- (b) the hosting of a dinner for some 150 homeless persons in Port Louis on 17 October 2020, in collaboration with the National Social Inclusion Foundation; and
- (c) the launching of the first Learning Corner at Camp Levieux on 24 October 2020.

Various activities would also be held in Rodrigues.

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8. Cabinet has taken note of the status of implementation of the 10-Year Master Plan for the SME sector, launched by the Ministry of Industrial Development, SMEs and Cooperatives in March 2017 with the objective of reshaping the entrepreneurship landscape as well as accelerating SME innovation and growth.

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9. Cabinet has taken note of the organisation of an “Empowering Programme for Housewives on Healthy Lifestyle” in 30 localities throughout the island which would target around 1500 housewives. The Programme would start in October 2020 and would end by June 2021. The objectives of the programme are to –

- (a) encourage housewives to adopt a healthy lifestyle;
- (b) empower housewives with the required knowledge and skills for choosing as well as preparing healthy foods/ meals for their families;
- (c) teach housewives how to take anthropometric measurements (height, weight and waist circumference); and
- (d) show housewives how to calculate Body Mass Index (BMI) indicator to determine underweight, overweight and obesity.

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10. Cabinet has taken note of the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic prevailing worldwide and in the region. As at 2 October 2020, 385 cases of COVID-19 had been registered in Mauritius. The last local case was registered on 26 April 2020.

As at 2 October 2020, there were 26 imported active cases of COVID-19 in Mauritius. The public should continue to observe strict sanitary precautions in order to avoid any importation or resurgence of COVID-19 in the country.

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11. Cabinet has taken note of the completion of the COVID-19 related repatriation of Mauritians and other stranded persons. By the end of the repatriation phase, some 8,979 passengers have returned to Mauritius on board repatriation flights including 8,383 Mauritians out of whom there were 2,430 former cruise workers. The remaining 596 were non-Mauritians who were experts, diplomats, Occupation Permit and Resident Permit Holders and foreign students. The outcome of the repatriation phase ending 30 September 2020 is as follows -

- (a) repatriation of the near totality of stranded former cruise workers;
- (b) repatriation of the near totality of hardships cases registered with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade;
- (c) repatriation of the vast majority of Mauritians holders of a return ticket issued on or before 20 March 2020; and
- (d) repatriation of at least half of all Mauritian registered with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade desiring to return to Mauritius.

Cabinet has also taken note that the requests of Mauritians stranded abroad, holding a return ticket issued on or before 20 March 2020 and who could not return to Mauritius before the end of September 2020, would be looked into by a Committee on a case to case basis.

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12. Cabinet has taken note of the consolidation of the COVID-19 Preparedness Plan of the Ministry of Health and Wellness. The objective of the Plan is to present the measures to be taken in case of a resurgence of COVID-19. The Plan takes into account international recommendations and guidelines, including those formulated by the World Health Organization, and also all the best practices developed and acquired locally following the experience gained in responding to the first infection wave registered in Mauritius.

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13. Cabinet has taken note of the measures taken to implement a phased COVID-safe Reopening of Borders as from 01 October 2020, to all Mauritians and non-Mauritians willing to undergo mandatory quarantine in a state-designated Quarantine Facility. A new detailed Protocol has been prepared and covering prescribed measures and behaviour in respect of -

- (a) airline operations including crew;
- (b) airport operation and passenger facilities (arrival and departure) including Duty Free outlets;
- (c) contingency planning for Airport Personnel;
- (d) transfer to quarantine facilities by Destination Management Companies under police supervision;
- (e) operation of quarantine facilities by hotel personnel under supervision of Ministry of Health and Wellness, and
- (f) integrity of quarantine facilities ensured by Ministry of Health and Wellness with Police assistance.

In line with the new Sanitary Protocol, training sessions are ongoing since 09 September 2020, targetting hotel personnel, airport and airline personnel and Destination Management Companies personnel. Passengers intending to travel to Mauritius are purchasing airline tickets through normal sales channels, including travel agencies and are directed to a dedicated Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority online page for information as to hotels available in respect of each flight and then proceed to purchase a quarantine hotel package inclusive of accommodation on full-board basis and transfers, from the chosen hotel.

Mauritians would be exempted from payment of the three PCR tests and medical expenses in Mauritius. All non-Mauritians are being charged, in addition to quarantine costs, medical expenses amounting to Rs13,500 including three PCR tests, quarantine related Health staff costs as well as a COVID-19 insurance subscribed by the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority from an insurance company.

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14. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a Memorandum of Agreement between Airport Terminal Operations Ltd (ATOL) and the Ministry of Health and Wellness for the operation of a full-fledged Airport Health Laboratory at the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport with the objective of providing adequate testing facilities at the Airport to rapidly identify all COVID-19 positive cases among incoming passengers.

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15. Cabinet has taken note of the National Laboratory Policy which has been prepared by the Ministry of Health and Wellness with the technical assistance of the World Health Organization. The National Laboratory Policy has been developed to perform testing for the purpose of disease diagnosis, screening, prevention and monitoring of treatment and finally to contribute to the ongoing surveillance of diseases of public health importance not only in the local context but also in the regional and international contexts. The National Laboratory Policy provides for the overall framework and strategies for establishing, strengthening and maintaining the National Health Laboratory system. The Policy is aligned with the Health Sector Strategic Plan 2020-2024.

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16. Cabinet has taken note of the status of implementation of the Occupational Safety and Health Management System across the public service, as announced in the Government Programme 2020-2024. The Ministry of Public Service, Administrative and Institutional Reforms has set up the Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Committees in all Ministries and Departments to look into safety and health matters. Since 2016, the ILO-OSH 2001 Guidelines, which have been drawn up by the International Labour Organisation, in consultation with Government, employers and trade unions, are being implemented on a pilot basis in 19 Ministries, covering 43 worksites, as most of these Ministries are already certified compliant to ISO 9001:2015. In 2018, the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) came up with the ISO 45001:2018 standards to provide organisations with a tool for implementing safety and health norms and standards at workplace based on international best practices. The 43 worksites would now migrate into the new standard in order to avail these organisations of the accrued benefits. Based on the outcome of the pilot phase, the system would be deployed to other Ministries and Departments in a phased manner.

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17. Cabinet has agreed to the National Land Transport Authority (NLTA) introducing a new category of Public Service Vehicle Licence (PSVL), namely the H-Licence to address transport issues at remotely located areas. The absence of public transport in the proximity of some remotely-located regions causes hardship to the inhabitants and poses security hazards in their daily activities. The H-PSVL would be introduced, on a pilot basis, in a few specific localities which are situated at least one kilometre away from the nearest point of accessibility to the bus transport system. The prime objective of the proposed H-PSVL would be to contribute towards the provision of a dedicated transport service that would act as a modal transfer between the point of residence/activity to the bus system to ensure the safe and secure movement of the inhabitants. If the service meets the satisfaction of the NLTA and responds adequately to public demand, it would be extended to other remotely-located regions of the island.

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18. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management would carry out a fresh Human Resource Audit exercise in Local Authorities. The conduct of a Human Resource Audit exercise in all Municipal and District Councils is important so as to determine whether the organisational structure of each Council was appropriate to meet its objectives as laid down in the Local Government Act and to develop a strategy to strengthen, with a consistent budget, the share of operational expenditure in the key areas of a local authority. A multidisciplinary team would be constituted to carry out the exercise which would start by end October 2020 and be completed in February 2021.

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19. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding on the Establishment of a Consultation Mechanism between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Estonia. The Consultation Mechanism with Estonia would not only reinforce our bilateral relations through regular meetings in a structured format but would also serve as a platform to address issues of pertinence, to follow-up on developments as well as to identify new areas of cooperation. Over the last three years, bilateral relations with Estonia have been mainly geared towards collaboration in the Information and Communications Technology sector. Other potential areas of cooperation with Estonia include, inter alia, cyber security, blockchain, fintech, education sector, health sector and exchange of best practices in the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises sector.

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20. Cabinet has taken note that the Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development would promulgate the Statutory Bodies Pension Funds (Amendment of Schedule) (No. 3) Regulations 2020 for the listing of the National Youth Council in the First Schedule to the Statutory Bodies Pension Funds Act for the establishment of a pension fund with SICOM for its employees, with effect from 01 September 2020.

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21. Cabinet has taken note that the Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development would promulgate the following regulations to provide for the implementation of measures mentioned in the Annex to the Budget Speech 2020-2021 relating to revenue laws as well as technical amendments to clarify, fine tune and harmonise various provisions in revenue laws –

- (a) Customs (Amendment) Regulations 2020;
- (b) Customs Tariff (Amendment of Schedule) (No. 3) Regulations 2020;
- (c) Customs (Movement Certificate EUR 1) (Amendment) Regulations 2020;
- (d) Excise (Amendment) Regulations 2020;
- (e) Excise (Amendment of Schedule) (No. 3) Regulations 2020;
- (f) Value Added Tax (Amendment) Regulations 2020; and
- (g) Value Added Tax (Amendment of Schedule) (No. 3) Regulations 2020.

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22. Cabinet has taken note that the Financial Services Commission (FSC) intends to enter into agreements with its sister institutions in Abu Dhabi, Canada, India, Kenya and Qatar for the purpose of, inter alia, promoting mutual assistance, technical and information exchanges and, collaboration on Innovation and Fintech related matters. One of the functions of the Commission relates to the establishment and maintenance of such links and liaison with international bodies in the field of financial services and global business as may be necessary for the furtherance of its objects. The FSC proposes to enter into agreements with the following institutions –

- (a) the Abu Dhabi Global Market Financial Services Regulatory Authority;
- (b) the Ontario Securities Commission, the *Autorité des Marchés Financiers* (Québec), British Columbia Securities Commission, the Alberta Securities Commission, the Financial and Consumer Affairs Authority of Saskatchewan, the Manitoba Securities Commission, the Financial and Consumer Services Commission (New Brunswick), the Nova Scotia Securities Commission;
- (c) the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India;
- (d) the Capital Markets Authority, Kenya; and
- (e) the Qatar Financial Centre Regulatory Authority.

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23. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Board of the National Transport Corporation with Mr Amarnath Jagannath as Chairperson.

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24. Cabinet has taken note of the composition of the Nursing Council of Mauritius for the period 2020 to 2023, following the election of members of the Council on 19 September 2020.

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