

CABINET DECISIONS – 12 JUNE 2020

1. Cabinet has taken note of the situation concerning COVID-19 in Mauritius and as there was no local positive case of COVID-19 since 26 April 2020, all economic, commercial and social activities would resume normally as from 15 June 2020, except for horse racing which would be held in camera as from 20 June 2020. The situation with regard to horse racing would be re-assessed in due course.

Accordingly, public beaches, public parks, cinemas, village halls, community centres and similar public buildings, gym/sports complexes, including group sports activities (football or volleyball), fairs (auction markets, market fairs and haberdashery), casinos (also gaming houses), discotheques, recreational/amusement parks as well nature parks would be re-opened to the public. The holding of marriages, religious and social gatherings would also be allowed.

Senior citizens and persons with disabilities would be allowed access public transport without any restriction as from 15 June 2020.

Cabinet also noted that the wearing of face masks in public and workplace as well as in public transport would still be mandatory. Temperature check would be effected where required.

Cabinet further noted that borders would remain closed for the time being. In the meantime, a Technical Committee has been set up to look into the modalities and protocol for the re-opening of our airspace.

Pre-primary schools would resume on 22 June 2020. For primary and secondary schools as well as tertiary institutions and MITD Centres, classes would resume as from 01 July 2020.

2. Cabinet has taken note that the Quarantine Act 2020 which was passed on 15 May 2020, would come into operation on 12 June 2020.

Cabinet has also noted of the promulgation of the –

- (i) Quarantine (COVID-19) Regulations 2020;
- (ii) the Prevention and Mitigation of Infectious Disease (Coronavirus) (Revocation) Regulations 2020; and
- (iii) the Quarantine (Quarantinable Diseases) (Revocation) Regulations 2020.

Cabinet has also taken note that –

- (i) in order to prevent the introduction and spread of COVID-19 in Mauritius, the Minister of Health and Wellness would issue a Notice under section 4(1) of the Quarantine Act 2020 for the quarantine period to be in force in Mauritius as from 12 June 2020 until 31 August 2020; and
- (ii) the Prime Minister would accordingly make an Order under section 3(1)(a) of the Quarantine Act 2020 to prohibit the entry of aircrafts and ships in Mauritius as from 12 June 2020 until 31 August 2020, except for those aircrafts and ships as may be approved by the Prime Minister.

3. Cabinet has agreed to the introduction of the Supplementary Appropriation (2019-2020) Bill of 2020 into the National Assembly. The object of the Bill is to provide for the supplementary appropriation, by votes of expenditure, both recurrent and capital, in respect of services of Government for the financial year 2019-2020, in excess of the expenditure appropriated by the Appropriation (2019-2020) Act 2019.

4. Cabinet has agreed to pay, for the month of June 2020, an allowance under the Wage Assistance Scheme and the Self-Employed Assistance Scheme to workers and self-employed individuals in the tourism sector and all those whose work premises or business operations had to remain closed after the lifting of the curfew.

5. Cabinet has agreed to the opening of a Consulate-General of Mauritius in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates (UAE). Mauritius has established diplomatic relations with UAE since 1976

6. Cabinet has agreed to the prescribed date for the payment of contribution to the Portable Retirement Gratuity Fund and the date of the coming to end of the suspension of the provisions of the other relevant Regulations to be 31 December 2021. However, with the amendment to the Portable Retirement Gratuity Fund, any worker who will, inter alia, retire during the period 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2021 will be guaranteed the payment of a

gratuity upon retirement by the employer at the rate of 15 days of remuneration per year of service.

7. Cabinet has taken note that the 5th International Conference on Advanced Computing and Intelligent Engineering (ICACIE) 2020 would be organised, on virtual mode, by the Université des Mascareignes in Mauritius from 25 to 27 June 2020. The Virtual Conference would focus on theory and applications in leading areas of advanced computing and intelligent engineering such as Artificial Intelligence, Cryptography and Informatics, among others, with the aim of creating awareness about the importance of scientific research. It would provide an online platform to the research community comprising persons from the academia, the industry and students to discuss cutting-edge developments in all areas of advanced computing and intelligent engineering. Some 100 local and international professionals, academics and researchers are expected to participate in the Virtual Conference.

8. Cabinet has taken note of the donations made to Mauritius in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic –

- (a) by friendly countries, namely Canada, China, India, Japan and United States of America; and
- (b) by foundations and regional and international organisations, such as, European Union (EU), Agence Française de Développement/Indian Ocean Commission (AFD/IOC), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), International Agency for Atomic Energy (IAEA), African Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) and Jack Ma Foundation.

The medical equipment and supplies donated include test kits, reagents, masks, thermometers, swabs, footwear covers, surgical gloves, goggles, personal protective equipment (PPE), extractors, and ventilators. Donated medicines include mainly tablets of Hydroxychloroquine and Ayurveda products from India. Donations in cash have also been made in terms of contributions to the COVID-19 Solidarity Fund.

9. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the participation of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade in the SADC Council of Ministers held recently, via video conference. Prof. P.J. Kabudi, Minister of Foreign Affairs and East African Cooperation of Tanzania and Chairperson of the SADC Council of Ministers, highlighted that

the severity of the COVID-19 called for strengthened solidarity to address the socio-economic impact of the pandemic in the SADC region. He called on the SADC region to turn the COVID-19 crisis into an opportunity by expanding the medical and pharmaceutical industry and in turn create jobs and boost the economy. The meeting agreed, inter alia, to the following proposals of Mauritius –

- (a) medical supplies be sourced within the region as a matter of priority so as to strengthen the regional value chain and promote Intra-SADC trade;
- (b) an on-line trade platform be developed to strengthen business linkages and promote regional investment and economic growth; and
- (c) the Secretariat to reprioritise and refocus SADC projects and programme of activities to ensure a more judicious use of funds.

The meeting also took note of progress made in the implementation of the Industrialisation Strategy and Roadmap (2015-2063), including the SADC Protocol on Industry.

10. Cabinet has taken note that the Melting Pot Indianoceanic Submarine System (METISS) would proceed with the laying of the METISS cable on 13 June 2020. The objective of this project of the Indian Ocean Commission is to satisfy the growing demand of internet connectivity and to improve conditions of access to internet for the population. The METISS fibre optic cable would connect Mauritius, Réunion and Madagascar to South Africa and once operational, the cable would provide a bandwidth of 24 Terabits per second connecting Mauritius to the International Internet Highway through South Africa.

11. Cabinet has agreed to the Attorney General's Office finalising the draft Climate Change Bill. The main object of the draft Climate Change Bill is to consolidate the legal framework and mechanism towards making Mauritius climate change resilient and achieving a low emission economy in line with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the overarching Government objective of developing a greener economy.

12. Cabinet has taken note of the closure of the Reufac and Bel Ombre weighbridges as from crop 2020, as approved by the Control and Arbitration Committee and the Mauritius Cane Industry Authority (MCIA) under the Weighbridge Control Regulations and the MCIA Act, respectively. The closure would be subject to the planters being duly compensated in

accordance with the “Package for Planters” and the conditions set out by the MCIA. A Crop Monitoring Committee would be set up under the MCIA to monitor the situation closely and to address any issue that may arise.

13. Cabinet has taken note of developments regarding the implementation of the Civil Service College, Mauritius project. The consultant has already prepared and submitted the Master Plan and the Preliminary Design of the project. The Working Drawings and Tender Document of the project are being worked out.

14. Cabinet has taken note of the activities that would be organised by the Ministry of Public Service, Administrative and Institutional Reforms to mark the UN Public Service Day, designated on 23 June, namely -

- (a) a special message would be issued to all officers of the Civil Service through the SMS-based platform;
- (b) an Essay Writing Competition among public officers on the theme of the year would be organised by the Public Officers’ Welfare Council; and
- (c) an online virtual exhibition to showcase the history of the Civil Service would be mounted and hosted on the website of the Ministry of Public Service, Administrative and Institutional Reforms.

The theme chosen for this year is “*Action Today, Impact Tomorrow: Innovating and Transforming Public Services and Institutions to realise the Sustainable Development Goals*”.

15. Cabinet has taken note that to mark the International Day of the African Child 2020, designated on 16 June, the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family Welfare would -

- (a) develop a clip on this year’s national theme which would be broadcast on television to sensitise members of the public on the roles and responsibilities of children as well as the challenges they face; and
- (b) organise talks/interactive sessions in shelters by officers of the Ministry.

The theme chosen for this year by the African Union to mark this Day is “Access to a Child-Friendly Justice System in Africa”. The theme retained at National level is “*Proteksion Zanfan Bizin fer Dan Linite*”.

16. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of –

- (a) the Pharmacy Board with Dr S. Ramen, Director General Health Services, as Chairperson;
- (b) the Trade and Therapeutic Committee with Dr B. Ori, Director Health Services, as Chairperson; and
- (c) the Poisons Committee with Mr S. Ramphul, Director Pharmaceutical Services, as Chairperson.
