

CABINET DECISIONS – 13 NOVEMBER 2020

1. Cabinet has agreed to the introduction of the Supplementary Appropriation (2020-2021) Bill 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 2020-2021, in excess of the expenditure appropriated by the Appropriation (2020-2021) Act 2020.

2. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of an Agreement between the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate (MES) and the Cambridge Assessment International Education for the holding of the School Certificate (SC) and Higher School Certificate (HSC) examinations in June 2021. The main conditions of the Agreement relate to –

- (a) the revised dates of the June 2021 examination schedule for Mauritius;
- (b) the results release dates for SC and HSC and Scholarship ranked order lists; and
- (c) the local marking and local moderation to be carried out by the MES according to the list of 'Locally Marked and Moderated Syllabus Components'.

3. Cabinet has taken note of the proposals of the Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB) to streamline the registration process of contractors. In order to encourage all contractors who may not have registered with the Board up to now, CIDB would give them a grace period up to 30 June 2021 to allow them to register themselves. The CIDB Council would also enable two or more contractors from grades A to C, led by a Grade A contractor, to set up Joint Ventures in order to be able to be classified as a Grade A+ and participate in the bidding for major infrastructural projects.

4. Cabinet has taken note of the Preparedness Plan being implemented by the Land Drainage Authority in consultation with the National Development Unit, the Road Development Authority, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Centre and Local Authorities, in the context of the rainy season 2020/2021, as a proactive approach with a view to attenuating the risks of flooding. The Preparedness Plan comprises –

- (a) the maintenance plan for the desilting of rivers, canals and natural watercourses;
- (b) provision of machinery and equipment to Local Authorities to improve their capacity to clean drains/watercourses;
- (c) implementation of flood mitigating projects by the National Development Unit;
- (d) prevention of illegal dumping in rivers and canals; and
- (e) communication and sensitisation campaign on actions to be taken to prevent flooding hazards.

5. Cabinet has taken note of the CaDRI Report on Capacity Analysis of Disaster Risk Management for the Republic of Mauritius and the setting up of an Implementation Committee to coordinate and monitor the implementation of the recommendations contained therein. The Report has been prepared by the CaDRI Partnership, a global United Nations partnership that works towards strengthening countries' capacities to pursue integrated and coherent solutions to reduce disaster and climate risks across the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Report contains several recommendations which cut across different sectors and emphasises on the strengthening of systems for risk reduction, including comprehensive risk information systems. The Capacity Diagnosis report includes a set of strategic, tactical and operational recommendations.

The relevant actions recommended in the CaDRI Report would be incorporated in the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Policy, Strategic Framework and Action Plan which was being developed.

6. Cabinet has taken note of the proposed Warehousing Project in Maputo, Mozambique, following the announcement made in the Budget Speech 2020-2021 to the effect that the Government would support the first two years of operation of a "Made in Mauritius" warehouse in Tanzania and Mozambique. Cabinet has also taken note of the related modalities and the responsibilities of the various stakeholders for the project.

7. Cabinet has agreed to the Fertiliser Advance Scheme being extended for Crop 2021 on the same terms and conditions as for Crop 2020, as recommended by the Mauritius Cane Industry Authority (MCIA). The MCIA has recommended the extension of the Fertiliser Advance Scheme for Crop 2021 so as to motivate the planters to continue with sugarcane production and replant their fields. All planters cultivating up to 100 ha of sugarcane would be eligible to benefit from the Scheme and 50% of the advance allocated to them for the purchase of fertilisers would be waived.

8. Cabinet has agreed to the sale of each plot of land, on which stand the housing units at La Valette, Bambous, to the beneficiaries for the price of Rs2,000, provided they fulfill the required conditions. The Integrated Social Housing Project situated at La Valette, Bambous, comprises fully concrete housing units each of an extent of 50 square metres, on a portion of land of 211 square metres. The State Bank of Mauritius Ltd would provide loan facilities to beneficiaries who are interested to become owners of their housing units. The Board of Directors of the National Empowerment Foundation has approved that the extent of land on which stands the housing units be sold to the beneficiaries.

9. Cabinet has agreed to the enlistment of the services of a Consultant for the formulation of a Project document on the setting up of "National Laundering Services System for Hospital Clothing". The scope of the Consultancy Services would consist of

three stages, namely the Preparation of the Feasibility Study, the Pre-Contract Services and the Construction Supervision.

10. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a '*Convention de Partenariat*' between the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund (AGTF) and '*Le Département de la Réunion*', for the '*mise en réseau des patrimoines iconographiques de l'Océan Indien*' to contribute to the digital safeguarding and the preservation of cultural heritage of Mauritius. The '*Convention de Partenariat*' includes the following elements –

- (a) access to images, photos and data pertaining to indentureship in Mauritius and in the Indian Ocean;
- (b) development of a partnership between the AGTF and the '*Iconothèque historique de l'Océan Indien*';
- (c) exchange of information and ideas;
- (d) access to a broader range of network;
- (e) forming part of a regional research and scholars network;
- (f) encourage capacity building in research and indentureship; and
- (g) as part of the Indenture Labour Route Project, the AGTF is currently conducting a project entitled "Photographic Database on Indenture" which could be substantially supported by the Iconothèque project.

11. Cabinet has taken note of the Industrial Policy and Strategic Plan (2020-2025) for Mauritius, which has been formulated with the technical and financial assistance of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in collaboration with the Ministry of Industrial Development, SMEs and Cooperatives. The Plan envisions "a globally competitive and sustainable industrial sector that contributes to higher economic growth for Mauritius through continuous innovation, technology upgrading, productivity gains and high skilled employment".

12. Cabinet has taken note of the measures being taken by the Ministry of Health and Wellness to have a larger number of persons screened and tested for HIV in Mauritius. The Ministry was currently preparing an HIV Testing Policy, in collaboration with the World Health Organization. Pending the finalising of the HIV Testing Policy, HIV Testing and Counselling services would be provided on a pilot basis at Dr A.G. Jeetoo Hospital as from mid November 2020.

Rapid Diagnostic Testing and Counselling for HIV would be proposed to all patients aged between 20 to 60 years, attending the Accident and Emergency Unit and Unsorted Department of Dr A. G. Jeetoo Hospital. With the pilot project, it was expected to test some 150 persons in one month.

13. Cabinet has taken note of the findings of the third Report of the National Drug Observatory. The main objectives of the National Drug Observatory report are to –

- (a) collect data from all stakeholders pertaining to drug-related admissions in Public Health Institutions;
- (b) monitor and assess the drug situation in the country; and
- (c) provide reliable data to enable the concerned authorities to respond more proactively, efficiently and in a timely manner to the problem of drugs across the country.

The Report covers drug-related issues such as the trends and patterns of illicit drugs use and trafficking, legislation and strategies, enforcement of drug control legislation, injecting-drug use, drug and imprisonment, drug-related health problems, suspected drug use in educational institutions, drug dependence treatment including rehabilitation and prevention programmes. The Ministry of Health and Wellness would share the third report of the National Drug Observatory with all stakeholders and upload it on its website.

14. Cabinet has taken note of the alarming situation of the COVID-19 pandemic prevailing across the world. With regard to Mauritius, one local case had been recorded on 12 November 2020. Currently, there were 33 active cases of COVID-19 in Mauritius. As at 13 November 2020, 470 cases of COVID-19 had been registered in Mauritius. The public should observe strict sanitary precautions.

15. Cabinet has taken note that the Mega Blood Donation 2020 organised by the Ministry of Health and Wellness in collaboration with the Blood Donors Association would be held on 16 December 2020 on the Esplanade of Emmanuel Anquetil Building, Port Louis.

16. Cabinet has taken note of the activities that would be organised to mark World Diabetes Day, observed on 14 November. The official launching of activities would be held on 16 November 2020 at the Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Tower, Ebène, and would include –

- (a) an exhibition on Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) and other health related issues;
- (b) screening for NCDs, including diabetes for the general public and also at community level, worksites and secondary school level;

- (c) distribution of pamphlets on diabetes related topics to sensitise the public on complications associated with the disease, the importance of having a balanced diet and physical activity; and
- (d) talks on the risk factors of Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus in the community, across the country and special interventions on MBC TV and radio.

The theme for this year is “The Nurse and Diabetes”.

17. Cabinet has taken note of the findings of the 2018 National Health Accounts Study undertaken in the Republic of Mauritius. The National Health Accounts is a globally recognised tool to track healthcare expenditures and describe the flow of funds in both the Government and private sectors, including expenditures incurred by households, employers, non-governmental organisations and donor partners. The National Health Accounts Report 2018 recommends, amongst others, the following actions at the national level –

- (a) develop a National Health Financing Strategy based on the WHO approach;
- (b) build the capacity of the National Health Accounts country team;
- (c) undertake regular health expenditure tracking including assessment of out-of-pocket payments and catastrophic health expenditure;
- (d) reinforce the Health Economics Unit through the recruitment of additional Health Analysts to sustain the development of National Health Accounts and the Cost Centre Project;
- (e) operationalise the Efficiency Management Committee;
- (f) increase budget allocation for health promotion activities; and
- (g) bring amendment to the Private Health Institutions Act or introduce a new legislation on the National Health Accounts, for the collection of data and other relevant information from private health stakeholders.

Two dissemination workshops on the National Health Accounts 2018 Report would be held in Mauritius and in Rodrigues, respectively in December 2020/January 2021.

18. Cabinet has taken note of the activities being organised by the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family Welfare in the context of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women 2020, commemorated on 25 November. The following activities would be organised -

- (a) an official function on 25 November 2020 where the strategy on the elimination of Gender Based Violence as well as a Gender-Based Violence Mobile Application would be launched;

- (b) a “SALON” for Women Entrepreneurs from 26 to 28 November 2020 at the Swami Vivekananda International Convention Centre, Pailles and the theme would be “Economic empowerment of women through entrepreneurship development”;
- (c) training in Self-Defence for young girls and women, in collaboration with the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation, in Helvetia, Rivière du Rempart, Beau Bassin and Souillac respectively;
- (d) the setting up of an InterFaith Forum which would be launched on 02 December 2020;
- (e) a refresher course for facilitators who followed the Domestic Violence Perpetrators’ Rehabilitation Programme in 2019;
- (f) launching of the “*Accompagnement des Familles*” Project at Panchvati, Rivière du Rempart on 08 December 2020; and
- (g) the extension of the Domestic Violence Information System to Rodrigues.

The United Nations has retained the theme “Orange the World: Fund, Respond, Prevent, Collect!” for this year.

19. Cabinet has taken note of the 2018 Report on “Statistics in Mauritius: A Gender Approach” prepared by the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family Welfare in collaboration with Statistics Mauritius. The Report is based on sex-disaggregated data for the year 2018, collected on the demographic characteristics relating to health, education, economic characteristics, public life and decision-making, disability, poverty and social welfare, gender based and family violence, and crime and security, amongst others. The Report would be disseminated to all stakeholders, including policy makers, researchers, academicians and students.

20. Cabinet has taken note of progress achieved so far by Ministries/Departments in the implementation of the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) introduced in July 2020 to support the Public Sector Business Transformation Strategy. The three Key Performance Indicators relate to E-procurement, training and good governance to accelerate the process of transformation across the Public Service and promote integrity. The Transformation Implementation Committee set up at the level of each Ministry and Department has the responsibility to initiate appropriate actions for the implementation of the KPIs and report progress on a monthly basis on the Management Information System set up at the level of the Ministry of Public Service, Administrative and Institutional Reforms.

21. Cabinet has taken note that a national event would be organised on 3 December 2020 at the J&J Auditorium, Phoenix to mark the International Day of Persons with Disabilities 2020. Persons with disabilities, including representatives from NGOs dealing with persons with disabilities are expected to attend the event which would comprise, inter alia, a cultural programme.

22. Cabinet has taken note that the Minister of Commerce and Consumer Protection recently participated online in the opening ceremony of the third China International Import Expo (CIIE) and Hongqiao International Economic Forum. The keynote speech was delivered by HE Xi Jinping, President of the People's Republic of China. The CIIE, a national expo dedicated to import, is a major initiative undertaken by the People's Republic of China, to open its market wider to the rest of the world, thus demonstrating a firm support to trade liberalisation and economic globalisation. The goods and services exposed at the CIIE mainly comprised Trade in Services, automobile products, Intelligent industry and Information Technology, consumer goods, medical equipment and health care products and food and agricultural products.

23. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent visit of the Minister of Commerce and Consumer Protection to Rodrigues. The purpose of the visit was to assess the current situation regarding commerce and trade in Rodrigues and to hold discussions regarding the construction of a new warehouse for the State Trading Corporation in Rodrigues. It was reported that there was no issue with the supply of rice and flour.

24. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the "Workshop on Human Rights" organised by the Human Rights Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade recently. The aims of the Workshop were to -

- (a) apprise the participants of the legislative framework and the institutional set up for human rights in Mauritius;
- (b) identify any proposals for legislative or structural amendments to improve the human rights landscape in Mauritius;
- (c) exchange information on the human rights actions effected by the NGOs and the civil society; and
- (d) propose ways to improve the synergies and strengthen the cooperation between all stakeholders so as to address more effectively the human rights issues in Mauritius.

Around 100 participants attended the workshop. There were two panels of discussions, namely on "Legislative framework and institutional set up for human rights in Mauritius" and "How to create better synergies and strengthen the cooperation between all stakeholders with a view to addressing more effectively the human rights issues in Mauritius".

25. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Board of the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate with Mr Ravi Meettook, Senior Chief Executive of the Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology, as part-time Chairperson.

26. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the National Regulatory Sandbox License Committee with Lord Anthony St John of Bletso as part-time Chairperson.

27. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Board of the National Council for Sports in Schools and Universities with Mr Stephane Rock as part-time Chairperson.

28. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Boiler and Machinery Inspectors Board with Mr Yves Maxime Rozar as part-time Chairperson.
