

CABINET DECISIONS – 14 AUGUST 2020

1. Cabinet has taken note that President Emmanuel Macron has delegated HE Mr Sébastien Lecornu, Minister for Overseas France, to effect a visit to Mauritius in connection with efforts being made to mitigate the effects of the oil spill caused by MV Wakashio. Mr Lecornu would reach Mauritius on 16 August 2020 and would be accompanied by his Adviser on Communication Matters and the Head of his Ministry.

He would meet the Prime Minister and would, among others, visit the Command Centre at Blue Bay Marine Park, meet the French team helping with the operations and take stock of anti-pollution measures being implemented in the lagoon.

2. Cabinet has taken note of the actions initiated following the oil spill from MV Wakashio as from 6 August 2020, namely, –

- (a) around 3.9 kilometres of booms had been deployed at the Blue Bay Marine Park, Pointe d'Esny, Mahebourg Waterfront and in the lagoon area around MV Wakashio. Additionally, some 10 kilometres of artisanal booms of the private sector and civil society organisations had been placed at various sites. To protect the Blue Bay Marine Park, around 1,800 metres of booms had been deployed thereat;
- (b) a total of 3,240 metric tons of oil had been pumped out of the vessel and the pumping exercise was ongoing for the remaining 110 metric tons;
- (c) coastal water quality at 15 sites was monitored on a daily basis, from Blue Bay to Trou d'Eau Douce;
- (d) cleaning at the affected sites was underway by the National Coast Guard, the Special Mobile Force, the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change and other public organisations along with private sector participation and the civil society. Some 728 metric tons of contaminated waste oil had been collected, out of which 225 metric tons had been sent for recycling and 503 metric tons had been temporarily stored at the Hazardous Waste Interim Storage Facility at La Chaumière; and
- (e) eleven experts from France, six from Japan and five from UN Agencies, with various competencies, were already in Mauritius. The Diplomatic Missions of Australia, India, United Kingdom and the United States of America were liaising with the relevant Mauritius focal points with regard to possible assistance in terms of equipment and technical experts.

As part of phase 2 of the oil spill response, which is the clean-up and restoration, a team of environmental experts from the International Tanker Owner's Pollution Federation

Limited and from Le Floch Depollution, the international contractor appointed by the Protection and Indemnity Club, the Insurer, were in Mauritius.

Additional foreign expertise was being sought on environmental laws, ecosystem rehabilitation, site bio-remediation, marine biology, mangrove, remote sensing, terrestrial biodiversity and species rescue, with a view to effectively deal with the aftermath of the oil spill.

3. Cabinet has taken note of the arrangements being made to provide financial support under the MV Wakashio Assistance Scheme to fishers, fishmongers and commercial pleasure craft operators/workers who could not continue their operations as a result of the oil spill following the wreck of MV Wakashio off the coast of Pointe d'Esny.

4. Cabinet has taken note of the situation of COVID-19 pandemic prevailing across the world and in the region. As at 13 August 2020, there was no active case of COVID-19 in Mauritius. Nevertheless, sanitary precautions have been maintained to prevent any imported case and the resurgence of COVID-19 within the Mauritian territory.

5. Cabinet has agreed that the allowance under the Wage Assistance Scheme and the Self-Employed Assistance Scheme to workers and self-employed individuals in the tourism sector would continue to be paid until the borders are opened. Appropriate Regulations would be made under the Income Tax Act.

6. Cabinet has agreed to the extension of the services provided to persons with no fixed abode by the Non-Governmental Organisation, "*Association Pour Personnes En Larmes*" (APPEL), at Abattoir Road, Roche Bois. The Ministry of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity would put at the disposal of APPEL another floor of the building at Roche Bois to allow the NGO to extend its services for the rehabilitation of additional persons with no fixed abode.

7. Cabinet has agreed to the Minister of Labour, Human Resource Development and Training making Regulations to prescribe the period during which an employer should seek

financial assistance before notifying the Redundancy Board of any intended reduction of workforce or before terminating the employment of any of his workers, to be 01 June 2020 to 31 December 2020. With a view to preserving jobs, Government has set up various schemes under the Mauritius Investment Corporation Ltd, the State Investment Corporation Limited and the Development Bank of Mauritius Ltd to provide financial assistance to enterprises adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

8. Cabinet has taken note that upon the recommendations of the Procurement Policy Office, the Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development would make the Public Procurement (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2020 and the Public Procurement (Amendment) Regulations 2020 to -

- (a) include the Economic Development Board (EDB) in Part II of the First Schedule of the Public Procurement Act to enable it to undertake its procurement of up to an amount of Rs50 million instead of Rs15 million; and
- (b) exempt the EDB from the provisions of the Public Procurement Act in respect of procurement of legal, lobbying, consultancy or other services required to protect the national interest by strengthening the position of Mauritius at international level.

These Regulations would enable the EDB to promptly procure services that are critical for the economic survival/recovery to protect the national interest of Mauritius. The EDB would establish its own rules for conducting procurement exercises for which it is exempted from the Public Procurement Act.

9. Cabinet has taken note of the recent participation of the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology in the virtual European Union (EU) – African Union (AU) Research & Innovation Ministerial Meeting. The discussion focused on research and innovation activities that would address human health impacts and the far-reaching socio-economic effects of COVID-19. These activities would be undertaken within the EU-AU collaborative framework. Short, medium, and long-term research and innovation activities were identified and clustered into four domains, namely Public Health, Green Transition, Innovation and Technology, and Capacities for Science.

10. Cabinet has taken note that the Minister of Health and Wellness would promulgate the Nursing Council (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2020 under the Nursing Council Act

with a view to consolidating the independence and autonomy of the Nursing Council of Mauritius.

11. Cabinet has taken note that the Minister of Health and Wellness would make Regulations under the Dental Council Act for the recognition and listing of a dental institution, namely Sharda University, India, as recommended by the Dental Council of Mauritius.

12. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Prisons Board of Visitors with Mrs Ida Dookhy-Rambaran, Vice-President, Intermediate Court (Criminal Division) as Chairperson.

13. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Construction Industry Development Council with Mr Tarkaswar Cowaloosur as Chairperson.

14. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Opticians Registration Board with Mr Chettandeo Bhugun, Senior Chief Executive, Ministry of Health and Wellness as Chairperson.

15. Cabinet has taken note of the appointment of three new members on the Dental Council of Mauritius.
