

CABINET DECISIONS – 21 AUGUST 2020

1. Cabinet has taken note of developments in respect of the MV Wakashio oil spill, namely –

- (a) MV Wakashio broke into two distinct parts on 15 August 2020. Following the advice of technical experts and NGO experts, the scuttling operations of the forward section of the vessel are ongoing. The rear section of the vessel is still aground on the reef of Pointe d'Esny and a salvage plan is being worked out for its removal;
- (b) as at date, around 14.9km of booms have been deployed at all the affected sites. Some 2.2km of booms have also been deployed at Ile aux Aigrettes. River booms have been placed at Rivière La Chaux, Rivière des Créoles, Rivière Champagne and Grande Rivière Sud Est;
- (c) Le Flock Depollution, the international contractor appointed by Protection & Indemnity Club, has started clean-up operations, together with 56 fishers at Bois des Amourettes public beach, Vieux Grand Port public beach and Rivière des Créoles public beach as well as at Pointe d'Esny and La Case du Pêcheur;
- (d) as regards removal and disposal of waste, 991 metric tons of oily waste have been collected at 14 sites as at 18 August 2020 and have been sent to recyclers. Some 597 metric tons of solid waste and contaminated debris have been collected and transferred at the Hazardous Waste Interim Storage Facility at La Chaumière for interim storage and subsequent exportation. Some 582 cubic metres of saturated booms have been carted away to La Laura Transfer Station;
- (e) since 08 August 2020, 13 air monitoring exercises have been conducted regularly by the National Environmental Laboratory, at 25 sites, including 18 schools;
- (f) coastal water quality monitoring is also being carried out by the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change;
- (g) around 30 foreign experts are currently in Mauritius to assist Government in different areas and ten experts are providing assistance remotely;
- (h) a joint team comprising officers of the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change, the National Coast Guard and the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation had conducted surveys for a better mapping of the affected sites from the lagoon side, including mangroves and other sensitive areas; and
- (i) the University of Mauritius had a working session with experts at local and international levels to advise on scientific matters relating to clean up and restoration of affected areas.

2. Cabinet has taken note of the situation of COVID-19 pandemic prevailing worldwide and in the region. As at 20 August 2020, there were two imported active cases of COVID-19 in Mauritius. The Ministry of Health and Wellness has strongly advised that sanitary precautions should be maintained in order to avoid any importation or resurgence of COVID-19 within the Mauritian territory.

3. Cabinet has agreed to the Minister of Industrial Development, SMEs and Cooperatives promulgating the Jewellery (Dealer's Registration and Transactions) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 following the amendments made to the Jewellery Act under the Anti-Money Laundering and Combatting the Financing of Terrorism (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2020. The amendments were brought with a view to reinforcing the existing legal provisions to further counter money laundering and the financing of terrorism in the Jewellery Sector and pertaining to –

- (a) the definition of dealer to include any person who processes, buys, sells or imports precious metals, besides from a person who deals in jewellery and precious stones;
- (b) the definition of precious metals to include palladium apart from gold, silver and platinum; and
- (c) the definition of jewellery to include an article made of gold, platinum and palladium or their alloys, which exceeds one gramme.

4. Cabinet has taken note of the implementation of a Flood Emergency Plan for Dr A.G. Jeetoo Hospital which is located in a flood prone area. The Plan has the following objectives –

- (a) defining actions and responsibilities at different stages that should be taken by hospital staff and other stakeholders in the event of flooding at Dr A.G. Jeetoo Hospital so as to enable business continuity without any disruption and risks;
- (b) providing for general preparedness measures in terms of setting up of a Hospital Disaster Management Committee;
- (c) elaborating on the response measures, including watch stage and the relevant actions to be taken; and
- (d) defining the roles and responsibilities of the Ministry of Health and Wellness and the Energy Services Division of the Ministry of National Infrastructure and Community Development, as well as other external stakeholders.

5. Cabinet has taken note of the initiative of the Mauritius Research and Innovation Council to launch a Special Call for Proposals, aimed at supporting research and innovative projects that can improve and accelerate the Government and national response to the challenges posed by the oil spill resulting from the grounding of the MV Wakashio. A maximum award of Rs2 million per selected project is envisaged. Non-Governmental Organisations, enterprises, private organisations, public and private institutions, academia and research institutions would be invited to submit proposals that could address issues of immediate concern as well as those that would need to be considered in the medium to longer terms. Thematic areas to be considered for funding would include the following –

- (a) oil spill tracking;
- (b) development of healthy ecosystem and related indicators;
- (c) restoring coastal, marine, and wetland resources;
- (d) restoring coral reefs and sea-grass beds;
- (e) identification of the best remediation techniques to deal with oil spillage in the sea;
- (f) societal impact and building community resilience;
- (g) enhancing beaches and shorelines;
- (h) assessing and addressing the impact of oil spill on human health;
- (i) oil spill waste management; and
- (j) understanding ecological impacts.

6. Cabinet has taken note that the My.T money payment facility would be integrated to the National Electronic Licensing System platform at the Economic Development Board, for the payment of Building and Land Use Permits.

7. Cabinet has agreed to the ratification of the Articles of Association of two entities of Africa50, namely the Africa50 Project Development and the Africa50 Project Finance. Africa50 is an infrastructure investment fund established by the African Development Bank. It was founded in response to the existing infrastructure deficit on the African continent with the ability to act as a bridge between Government shareholders and private investors to channel and catalyse funding. Its focus is on high-impact national and regional projects in the energy, transport, ICT and water sectors. The primary objective of the Africa50 Project Development business segment is to make skilled experts available to projects from an early stage of development. The Africa50 Project Finance provides primarily equity and quasi equity with flexible exit options, while accessing preferential debt from the Africa Development Bank and Development Finance Institutions.

8. Cabinet has taken note of the National AIDS Spending Assessment (NASA) Report 2018 of the Ministry of Health and Wellness. The NASA is an internationally standardised framework developed by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) based on a system of classification and guidelines to track the resources spent on the HIV/AIDS response from all sources to beneficiary populations in a given year. The Report is based on the country's third round of HIV/AIDS spending assessment and tracks national healthcare spending on HIV and AIDS for the period 01 January to 31 December 2018 in Mauritius and Rodrigues. According to the NASA Report 2018, an estimated amount of Rs237.27M was spent for the HIV/AIDS response in 2018 out of which Rs229.50M was spent in Mauritius and Rs7.77M in Rodrigues.

9. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Executive Committee of the National Youth Council with Ms Diksha Ramdonee as Chairperson.
