

CABINET DECISIONS – 4 DECEMBER 2020

1. Cabinet has agreed to the introduction of the Landlord and Tenant (Amendment) Bill into the National Assembly. The object of the Bill is to amend the Landlord and Tenant Act so as to extend to 31 December 2021 the period up to which the Act shall continue to apply to business premises let on or before 1 July 2005. The Bill also provides that –

- (a) the Fair Rent Tribunal will not entertain any new application made on or after 1 January 2021 by a landlord or tenant;
- (b) any application made before 1 January 2021 by a landlord or tenant will be dealt with, and determined, by the Fair Rent Tribunal not later than 30 June 2021 or, in exceptional or unforeseen circumstances, not later than such later date as may be prescribed; and
- (c) all applications falling under the jurisdiction of the Fair Rent Tribunal will, as from 1 January 2021, be made before the District Court exercising jurisdiction in the district or other area where the relevant business premises are situated.

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2. Cabinet has agreed to the introduction of the Central Electricity Board (Amendment) Bill 2020 and the Electricity (Amendment) Bill 2020 into the National Assembly. The object of the Central Electricity Board (Amendment) Bill is to amend the Central Electricity Board Act to, mainly –

- (a) harmonise the Central Electricity Board Act and the Electricity Act 2005 for the proper functioning of the electricity sector;
- (b) amend and clarify the functions of the Central Electricity Board;
- (c) remove from the Central Electricity Board the powers conferred upon it to grant permits for the supply of electricity and to fix the prices to be charged for electricity and thereby align the Act with the Electricity Act 2005 which gives the Utility Regulatory Authority the power to issue licences and determine tariffs for electricity services; and
- (d) clarify some provisions of the Act.

The object of the Electricity (Amendment) Bill is to amend the Electricity Act 2005 to, mainly –

- (i) harmonise the Electricity Act 2005 and the Central Electricity Board Act for the proper functioning of the electricity sector;
- (ii) bring amendments to some of the types of licences which may be issued under the Act;

- (iii) eliminate the concept of “eligible customer”; and
- (iv) clarify some provisions of the Act.

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3. Cabinet has agreed to drafting instructions being given to the Attorney General’s Office for the drafting of the Optical Council Bill, to replace the Opticians Registration Act. The objective of the Optical Council Bill would be to provide for the establishment of the Optical Council of Mauritius and for better regulation of the profession of opticians.

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4. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the State Visit of HE Mr John Wavel Ramkalawan, President of the Republic of Seychelles, to Mauritius from 29 November to 01 December 2020. During his visit, the President paid a courtesy call on HE the President of the Republic of Mauritius and visited the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site and Le Morne Cultural Landscape World Heritage Site.

The President of Seychelles had a *tête-à-tête* with the Prime Minister and discussed, inter alia, ways to strengthen the diplomatic ties through enhanced bilateral cooperation. During a working session with the Prime Minister, several issues were discussed, including the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Commission on Bilateral Cooperation, the Joint Management Area of the Extended Continental Shelf, Trade and Investment, Defence and Security, Arts and Culture and Regional and Multilateral issues.

Two Memoranda of Understanding were signed, namely on Cooperation in the field of Security and Crime Combating between the Seychelles Police Force and the Mauritius Police Force, and on Cooperation in Information and Communication Technology between the Government of the Republic of Mauritius and the Government of the Republic of Seychelles. In the margins of the State Visit, the Economic Development Board organised a Breakfast Business Meeting on 01 December 2020 on the theme ‘Fostering business relations between Mauritius and Seychelles’. The President also had a working session at the Indian Ocean Commission.

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5. Cabinet has agreed to the Minister of Land Transport and Light Rail promulgating the Road Traffic (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2020 which provides for the following -

- (a) extension of the validity period of the licence from March 2021 to March 2026 for holders of a provisional driving licence for auto/motorcycles obtained prior to March 2018;
- (b) changes in the driving tests of competence for autocycles and motorcycles; and
- (c) classification of the electric motorcycles according to different power output for the issue of driving licences.

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6. Cabinet has agreed to the Minister of Land Transport and Light Rail promulgating the following Regulations with a view to imposing stricter penalties for offences in order to improve road safety -

- (a) the Road Traffic (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2020;
- (b) the Road Traffic (Construction and Use of Vehicles) (Amendment) Regulations 2020,
- (c) the Road Traffic (Use of High Visibility Clothing) (Amendment) Regulations 2020; and
- (d) the Road Traffic (Control of Vehicle Emissions) (Amendment) Regulations 2020.

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7. Cabinet has taken note that the Minister of Health and Wellness would promulgate the Medical Council (Additional Qualifications) Regulations 2020 to enable inclusion of additional qualifications obtained by a registered medical practitioner in the register. The inclusion of additional qualifications in the Register would be an incentive for medical practitioners to increase their knowledge, skills and aptitude in a particular field of medicine and will provide useful information for employers.

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8. Cabinet has taken note of the reopening of the Blue Bay public beach and Ile aux Aigrettes in the aftermath of the MV Wakashio oil spill. The lifting of restriction at Blue Bay public beach would be for recreational activities only. These activities are swimming, diving, surfing and boating. Ile aux Aigrettes would be reopened to visitors.

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9. Cabinet has agreed to the resumption of off-lagoon fishing activities in the regions affected by the MV Wakashio oil spill as from 12 December 2020. The ban on in-lagoon fishing would maintained. In view of the wreck removal operation that is due to start shortly, fishers would not be allowed within a defined perimeter of the wreck removal site.

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10. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change would hold a National Consultative Workshop on National Environmental Policy on 16 and 17 December 2020. The objectives of the Workshop are –

- (a) to consult stakeholders and to conduct a pre-validation exercise regarding the recommendations retained from the '*Assises de l'Environnement*' and the post-Assises working sessions on the '*Master Plan for the Environment*';

- (b) to initiate public consultations on the review of the Environment Protection Act with a view to providing a basis to the Consultants to come up with a revised draft Environment Protection Act; and
- (c) to initiate plenary consultations on the gaps and needs identified on the Nationally Determined Contribution in line with the Paris Agreement.

Some 125 participants from public institutions, private sector, academia, research institutions, NGOs and the civil society are expected to participate in the workshop.

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11. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International trade, in collaboration with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), would organise a national workshop on the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) National Response Strategy on 9 December 2020. The workshop will aim at sensitising private operators on the market opportunities and challenges under the AfCFTA and to brainstorm on the development of a response strategy. The overarching long-term goal of the project is to deepen the level of trade integration of Mauritius within the African continent. Some 80 participants from both the public and private sector would be invited to participate in the workshop.

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12. Cabinet has agreed to Creative Properties Ltd constructing at its own cost, a football ground, a petanque court, an outdoor gym, a kid's corner and related amenities and infrastructure on a plot of land at Vingt Pieds Road, Cap Malheureux which is vested in the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation. The project is in accordance with the Economic Development Board (Property Development Scheme) Regulations 2015 which stipulates that the company has to contribute Rs200,000 per unit sold to implement social programmes and provide for social amenities and infrastructure for the neighbouring community. The sport facility would be used by the inhabitants of Cap Malheureux and nearby regions.

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13. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Tourism would launch a promotional campaign in favour of domestic tourism as from 12 December 2020. The Ministry of Tourism and the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority would also facilitate the organisation of a 'Salon on Domestic Tourism' to enable the operators to showcase and market their products on 12 and 13 December 2020 at the Swami Vivekananda International Convention Centre.

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14. Cabinet has taken note of the alarming situation of the COVID-19 pandemic prevailing across the world. With regard to Mauritius, the last local case had been recorded on 26 November 2020. Currently, there were 27 active cases of COVID-19 in Mauritius. As at 4 December 2020, 508 cases of COVID-19 had been registered in Mauritius. The public should observe strict sanitary precautions.

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15. Cabinet has taken note of the outcomes of the Innovation for All: Summit 2020 held recently in Mauritius. The main outcomes of the Summit were, inter alia, as follows –

- (a) it was agreed that digital innovation would greatly impact the lives of people across the world and there was a need to accelerate the digitalisation of services that would ease the life of people;
- (b) emerging technologies such as Robotics, Artificial Intelligence, Cloud Computing, Blockchain and Internet of Things, should be adopted in different relevant sectors for greater value-added economic activities and creation of more gainful employment as well as chart the way for Mauritius to become a smart nation;
- (c) the adoption of international best practices in ICT would help Mauritius become a preferred ICT destination to attract digital nomads as well as ICT firms of repute in the country;
- (d) data protection legislation should be in pace with development in the ICT sector and the resulting data sharing;
- (e) cybersecurity should be perpetually enhanced to maintain trust given that cyber criminals are always lurking around to create chaos and or to commit fraud;
- (f) the capacity of internet connectivity should be enhanced as the take up to Internet of Things would so require; and
- (g) the regulatory framework should be made lean but solid to ensure certainty, transparency and stability.

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16. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Board of Trustees of La Clinique Mauricienne for the year 2021.

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