

CABINET DECISIONS – 28 FEBRUARY 2020

1. Cabinet has taken note of the proposed programme of activities for National Day Celebrations 2020. The theme for the celebrations would be '*lanatir nou lavenir*'. The Official Programme would be held at Champ de Mars on 12 March 2020 as from 18 00 hours and would comprise –

- (a) the Flag Raising Ceremony;
- (b) a march-past by the Police Band, Disciplined Forces and Uniformed Organisations;
- (c) a fly-past as well as helicopter display and Queen Elizabeth College Majorettes; and
- (d) a cultural show around the theme '*dan larmoni lanatir*' which would be followed by a popular show by renowned local artists.

Cabinet has also taken note that the following arrangements would be made for those travelling by bus to Champ de Mars two hours before, and two hours after the official celebrations –

- (a) all fare-paying passengers to pay half the normal rate; and
- (b) children aged less than 13 years to travel free of charge.

Activities would also be organised at regional level by the local authorities.

2. Cabinet has agreed to Mauritius signing the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Protocol on the Inter-State Transfer of Sentenced Offenders. The Protocol on the Inter-State Transfer of Sentenced Offenders allows for the transfer of sentenced offenders to serve their sentences in their home countries. The aim of this Protocol is to contribute to the social reintegration of citizens who are sentenced offenders as a result of criminal offences they committed in foreign countries in the SADC region.

3. Cabinet has taken note that Mauritius has made an amended partial Submission for an Extended Continental Shelf in the Rodrigues Island Region to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf. The amended submission provides clearer evidence of the existence of the depth anomaly which is supported by an enormous amount of scientific evidence based on new data that has been recently acquired.

4. Cabinet has agreed to provide additional annual financial support to the five bus companies under the Bus Companies Recovery Account with effect from January 2019 to cater for the increase in wage compensation in view of the Consumer Price Index of January 2019. The payment of the monthly financial support to the five bus companies will be applicable as from January 2019.

5. Cabinet has taken note that SME Mauritius would implement five new schemes for furthering and enabling the progress of SMEs, in line with the recommendations of the 10-Year SME Master Plan, namely –

- (a) the Internal Capability Development Scheme to improve the efficiency of the value chain of small businesses and their responsiveness to customer requirements as well as market dynamics in any sector of economic activity;
- (b) the Technology and Innovation Scheme to encourage SMEs to continuously invest in technology and automated production capabilities and create technology based integrated and sustainable SMEs;
- (c) the SME Marketing Support Scheme which aims at supporting SMEs in improving their market accessibility and competitiveness in both local and export markets and respond to more stringent requirements of the diverse customer bases;
- (d) the Inclusiveness and Integration Scheme to encourage SMEs to favour inclusiveness, interlinkages and networking as well as collaborate and synergise for mutual benefit, which is a necessary pre-condition for the establishment of clusters in different key sectors; and
- (e) the SME Utility Connection Assistance Scheme which aims at supporting SMEs to connect their places of activity to mains of utility suppliers (CEB or CWA). The Scheme would assist SMEs to benefit from alleviation of upfront costs, ease entry and improve chances of SME survival.

6. Cabinet has taken note of the setting up of a Technical Committee to look into the emerging issues being encountered by the industry stakeholders for the carrying out of Fintech activities in Mauritius.

7. Cabinet has taken note of the status of the National SME Incubator Scheme (NSIS) since its launching in February 2017. The NSIS which is managed by the Mauritius Research and Innovation Council aims at promoting initiation and development of innovative start-ups in Mauritius through a network of private sector-led accredited business incubators. It also endeavours at consolidating the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Mauritius through a special public- private partnership in which Government and accredited private sector incubators work in partnership to foster the growth and development of innovative businesses. Since 2017 to date, the NSIS has produced 11 successful start-ups and has incubated 130 projects.

8. Cabinet has taken note of the status of the implementation of the first Mauritian Satellite project known as MIR SAT1 which is being developed by the Mauritius Research and Innovation Council. The project is being implemented by a team led by the Mauritius Research and Innovation Council under the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) and the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) KiboCUBE Programme 2018. The Mauritius Research and Innovation Council is currently working on Mauritian Space Programme which would be implemented by the Mauritian Space Unit.

9. Cabinet has agreed to drafting instructions being conveyed to the Attorney General's Office in order to –

- (a) review the Environment Protection (Banning of Plastic Bags) Regulations 2015;
- (b) introduce a new regulation for the banning of disposable non-biodegradable plastic products; and
- (c) review the Environment Protection (Polyethylene Terephthalate (PET) bottle Permit) Regulations 2001, under the Environment Protection Act.

The objectives of the above proposals are to –

- (i) reduce the number of plastic wastes being generated in the country;
- (ii) ban the disposable non-biodegradable plastic products; and
- (iii) reduce the number of PET bottles in our waste streams.

10. Cabinet has taken note that the Road Traffic (Bus Fares) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 would be promulgated for the feeder fares to be effective as from 1 March 2020 whereby the uniform flat fare of Rs15 would be applied. However, commuters connecting to the Metro Express and holding the ME card would pay the rebated fare of Rs10.

11. Cabinet has agreed to Mauritius conveying its no objection to the amendment of Article XIV of the African Regional Co-operative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology (AFRA) of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The objectives of the AFRA are to strengthen and enlarge the contribution of nuclear science and technology to socio-economic development on the African continent. The sixth AFRA Agreement is due for renewal in April 2020. In order to eliminate the administrative process of renewing the Agreement every five years, the AFRA Meeting of Representatives agreed in September 2019 that the forthcoming Agreement be endorsed indefinitely through an amendment to Article XIV.

12. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation would organise the second edition of the reality show “*Zenes Montre To Talan*” as from March 2020 with a view to discovering, showcasing and promoting uniqueness of young Mauritian talents in any field. The reality show would be open to candidates or group of candidates aged between 12 and 35 years. The pre-selection exercise/castings would be held on a district-wise basis.

13. Cabinet has agreed to the setting up of a Mauritius Vulnerability Assessment Committee at the level of the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change, under the Regional Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis Programme which is an initiative of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in response to the calamities in the Southern African region. The mandate of the National Vulnerability Assessment Committee is to maintain communication and coordination between Government and key stakeholders for better understanding of vulnerability and its underlying causes. It is expected to collect secondary data from various stakeholders for annual vulnerability assessment and analysis and will also coordinate annual assessment trainings at national level.

14. Cabinet has taken note of the main recommendations contained in the report submitted by the e-Governance Academy of Estonia for the establishment of an Electronic Document Management System at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade and agreed to the enlistment of the services of e-Governance Academy of Estonia by that Ministry for the implementation of the second phase of the Electronic Document Management System.

15. Cabinet has agreed to Mauritius tabling the initial market access offer of Mauritius on Trade in Services, in the context of ongoing negotiations for the establishment of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). The main objectives of the AfCFTA are to –

- (a) create a single continental market for goods and services with free movement of business persons and investments;
- (b) expand intra-Africa trade; and
- (c) enhance Africa’s competitiveness and support its economic transformation.

16. Cabinet has agreed to the submission of the Country Chapter of the Republic of Mauritius in the context of the preparation of a Regional Outlook on Marine Protected Areas in the Western Indian Ocean, by the Secretariat of the Nairobi Convention. The Chapter provides a general description and takes stock of the various Marine Protected Areas of the Republic. The Nairobi Convention aims at preventing the degradation of the marine environment and destruction of critical habitats in the Western Indian Ocean. The Convention is a partnership between governments, civil society and the private sector and, inter alia, aims at working towards a prosperous Western Indian Ocean region with healthy rivers, coasts and oceans.

17. Cabinet has taken note of the activities being organised by the Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities and the Central Water Authority in the context of World Water Day, commemorated on 22 March, which would include –

- (a) a Youth Forum on Water and Climate Change on 19 March 2020 at the Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Tower, Ebene with the participation of some 200 students;
- (b) an Open Day at Bagatelle Dam and Bagatelle Water Treatment Plant together with an exhibition on the theme of “Water and Climate Change” from 23 to 24 March 2020; and
- (c) planting of some 1,000 endemic plants at Bagatelle Dam site on 27 March 2020.

The theme for World Water Day 2020 is ‘**Water and Climate Change**’.

18. Cabinet has taken note of the organisation of –

- (a) a Cybersecurity Strategy Seminar, in Mauritius, from 3 to 4 March 2020, by the EU under the EU Cyber Resilience for Development (Cyber4D) Programme, in collaboration with the Ministry of Technology, Communication and Innovation. The objectives of the Cybersecurity Strategy Seminar are to discuss on the gaps of existing cybersecurity and cybercrimes strategies and propose the best practices based on the Estonian experience and on the basis of the inputs received from the seminar, to formulate a comprehensive National Cybersecurity Strategy; and
- (b) a Security Workshop on 4 March 2020 on Security Operation Centre in collaboration with International Business Machines (Mauritius) Ltd (IBM). The Security Workshop would help the Ministry of Technology, Communication and Innovation to operate the QRadar Security Intelligence (SIEM) solution of the Government Online Centre.

19. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change to the Republic of Congo where he participated in the Third Conference of the Parties to the Bamako Convention. The Bamako Convention of the Ban of the Import into Africa and the Control of Transboundary Movement and Management of Hazardous Wastes within Africa is a treaty of African nations which prohibits the import of any hazardous waste including radioactive waste. It also prohibits the dumping or incineration into the oceans and inland waters of hazardous wastes including, radioactive waste. The theme of the Conference was “*From Decisions to Action: Working for Africa with a Safe Chemicals and Waste Future*”. The Conference focused, among others, on the need for a more effective implementation of the Bamako Convention in Africa by giving Parties a platform to discuss appropriate legal, administrative and other measures to prohibit the import into Africa and control of transboundary movement of hazardous wastes within Africa.

20. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Board of the Tourism Authority with Mr Avinash Gopee as Chairperson.
