

CABINET DECISIONS – 24 APRIL 2020

1. Cabinet has taken note of the situation pertaining to the outbreak of COVID-19 and the measures taken to contain the pandemic, namely –

- (a) as at 23 April 2020, out of 12,835 tests carried out, 331 persons had been tested positive;
- (b) as at 23 April 2020, there were 53 patients in the Treatment Centres and the number of persons successfully treated was 266;
- (c) the screening of health workers, Police Officers, Prison Officers, prisoners, foreign workers and staff and inmates of Homes and Shelters was being carried out;
- (d) a repatriation plan is being worked out to airlift stranded Mauritians in a phased manner. All returning passengers would be placed in quarantine; and
- (e) a number of patients who have been successfully treated, have volunteered to donate their plasma.

Cabinet has taken note of actions taken by the Ministry of Health and Wellness for the procurement of medical and non-medical items to deal with the present COVID-19 situation, namely for the prevention, testing and treatment of persons infected with COVID-19. The Ministry of Health and Wellness has also received donations of equipment and drugs, inter alia, from the Government of India, the Embassy of the United States of America, Jack Ma Foundation and the People's Republic of China.

2. Cabinet has agreed to the extension of the Wage Assistance Scheme to cover, during the COVID-19 curfew period, a charitable institution approved by the Director-General of the Mauritius Revenue Authority or registered under the Registration of Associations Act.

3. Cabinet has agreed to the Ministry of Commerce and Consumer Protection controlling the price of certain identified essential food items and sanitary products under the Consumer Protection (Price and Supplies Control) Act and the Consumer Protection (Consumer Goods) (Maximum Mark-Up) Regulations 1998. Since the imposition of the curfew, representations have been received by that Ministry regarding unfair and abusive practices by some traders, including the non-affixing of prices on items put for sale and charging of substantially higher than normal prices, especially for essential commodities.

The Schedule to the Consumer Protection (Price and Supplies Control) Act 1998 and the Consumer Protection (Consumer Goods) (Maximum Mark-Up) Regulations 1998 would be amended accordingly.

4. Cabinet has taken note of the actions initiated by the Ministry of Tourism to revamp the tourism strategy to mitigate the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the industry. The United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) has appealed to Governments to consider, in collaboration with the relevant stakeholders, a set of 23 recommendations, to support jobs and economies through Travel and Tourism. In line with the UNWTO's recommendations to, inter alia, incentivise job retention, sustain the self-employed, and protect the most vulnerable groups, Government has already put in place schemes to support the economic sectors, including the Travel and Tourism sector namely, the COVID-19 Wage Assistance Scheme, the Self-Employed Assistance Scheme and the Loan Support Scheme. The Ministry of Tourism has already established a Joint Working Group, consisting of both public and private stakeholders, to brainstorm and propose a comprehensive recovery action plan to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Travel and Tourism.

5. Cabinet has taken note that the Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development would make –

- (a) the Finance and Audit (COVID-19 Projects Development Fund) Regulations 2020; and
- (b) the Finance and Audit (Amendment of Schedule) (No. 2) Regulations 2020.

The Finance and Audit (COVID-19 Projects Development Fund) Regulations 2020 would provide for the setting up of a COVID-19 Projects Development Fund whose objects are to contribute to the financing of –

- (a) projects specified in the Public Sector Investment Programme;
- (b) such other projects, or such schemes or programmes, as the Minister may approve; and
- (c) consultancy, preparatory or advisory services in relation to projects, schemes and programmes referred to above.

A COVID-19 Projects Development Committee, under the chair of the Financial Secretary or his representative, would be set up to administer and manage the Fund. The Finance and Audit (Amendment of Schedule) (No. 2) Regulations 2020 would amend the Schedule to the Finance and Audit Act so as to include the COVID-19 Projects Development Fund as a new item.

6. Cabinet has taken note that the Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development would promulgate –

- (a) the Companies (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2020. The Fifth Schedule of the Companies Act was amended in 2019 such that a notice of general meeting is sent 21 days before a meeting, instead of 14 days previously to give more time to shareholders; and
- (b) the Insolvency (Administration) (Equal Treatment to Classes of Creditors) Regulations 2020. Section 232 of The Insolvency Act was amended through the Business Facilitation (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2019 to ensure that creditors are categorised into classes for the purpose of voting in a reorganisation plan and creditors in each class vote independently.

These regulations are being made, inter alia, to improve the performance of Mauritius in the context of World Bank Ease of Doing Business Report.

7. Cabinet has taken note that the interim payment of an increase of 7.9 percent on the current Comprehensive Grant Formula to Private Secondary Schools would be extended for period January to October 2020, in the context of the review exercise.
