

CABINET DECISIONS – 05 MARCH 2021

1. Cabinet has agreed to the introduction of the Mental Health Care (Amendment) Bill into the National Assembly. The main object of the Bill is to amend the Mental Health Care Act to provide that the duty, which is mainly a medical duty, of reviewing mental patients who are suspected of having committed a criminal offence or who are in the custody of the police or who are detainees in a reform institution referred to in the Reform Institutions Act shall be performed by the Managerial Committee instead of the Mental Health Commission. This would allow the Commission to devote more time to, and discharge more efficiently, its more important functions such as investigation into complaints and cases of breach of discipline.

The Bill also makes provisions for certain criminal offences such as failure to attend the Commission when required to do so or giving false or misleading evidence before the Commission.

2. Cabinet has agreed to the introduction of the Institute of Technical Education and Technology Bill into the National Assembly. The object of the Bill is to provide for –

- (a) the setting up of the Institute of Technical Education and Technology to operate and manage technical education centres; and
- (b) opportunities and pathways to students pursuing studies in technical and technology education.

3. Cabinet has agreed to drafting instructions being conveyed to the Attorney General's Office to bring amendments to the Medical Council Act to empower the Medical Council to register medical practitioners qualified in France as specialists, subject to these persons being successfully assessed by the Post Graduate Medical Education Board.

4. Cabinet has agreed to the Workers' Rights Act being amended to, inter alia, -

- (a) enable an effective application of the provisions with regard to compromise agreement between workers and their employers and holding of disciplinary committees;
- (b) provide for the exclusion of payment of severance allowance to contractual workers;
- (c) ensure the sustainability of the Wage Guarantee Fund; and
- (d) broaden the mandate, functions and proceedings of the Redundancy Board and render the issue of "protective orders" more effective in case of closure of an enterprise.

5. Cabinet has agreed to the promulgation of the *Contribution Sociale Généralisée* (Amendment) Regulations 2021 which make provision for –

- (a) Ministers, the Speaker and other Members of Parliament to contribute their share of *Contribution Sociale Généralisée* (CSG) at the rate of 3 percent of their allowances and Government at the rate of 6 percent;
- (b) Councillors to a Municipal City Council, a Municipal Town Council, a District Council or a Village Council to contribute their share of CSG at the rate of 1.5 percent and their Council at the rate of 3 percent;
- (c) broadening the definition of “public sector employee” (i.e. where the CSG contribution is borne in full by the employer) to include employees of companies specified in the First Schedule to the Statutory Bodies Pension Funds Act and employees of the Roman Catholic Education Authority (RCEA Schools); and
- (d) CSG not to be payable in respect of a non-citizen employee who is not a resident under the Income Tax Act.

6. Cabinet has taken note that the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Land Use Planning would promulgate the State Lands (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2021. With a view to safeguarding employment in the tourism sector, adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Regulations would be made to extend the waiver applicable to hotels already in operation regarding payment of annual rental for the period 01 July 2020 to 30 June 2021 to the following businesses –

- (a) a guest house, a tourist residence or domaine holding a tourist accommodation certificate issued under the Tourism Authority Act;
- (b) a holder of a tourist enterprise licence or an operator holding a licence under the Tourism Authority;
- (c) a hotel under construction; and
- (d) the operator of a seaplane or such other similar business.

7. Cabinet has taken note that the Eastern and Southern African Trade and Development Bank (PTA Bank) (Privileges and Immunities) (Amendment) Regulations 2021 would be promulgated under the International Organisations and Conferences (Privileges and Immunities) Act. The Eastern and Southern African Trade and Development Bank (TDB) was created in 1985 by members of the COMESA and it has an office in Mauritius. In April 2020, the Board of Governors of the TDB established two subsidiary of entities to be domiciled in Mauritius. The TDB has two other subsidiaries domiciled in Mauritius which were created in 2015. The TDB has now requested that Mauritius takes the necessary measures to extend the privileges and immunities enjoyed by the TDB to its subsidiaries.

8. Cabinet has taken note that the Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development would promulgate the Freeport (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2021, following the recommendations of the Economic Development Board. In order to further promote Freeport trade and to position Mauritius as a logistics, marketing and distribution hub in the region, the existing Freeport Zone (FPZ) 11 in the First Schedule which is a portion of State Land located at Fort George inside the Port Zone of Port Louis, belonging to the Mauritius Ports Authority is amended to include two portions as additional areas in the FPZ 11.

9. Cabinet has taken note that the Minister of Health and Wellness has promulgated the Public Health (COVID-19 Vaccines for Emergency Use) Regulations 2021 in order to introduce a revised and simplified Consent Form.

10. Cabinet has agreed to the ratification of the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement (CECPA) between the Republic of Mauritius and the Republic of India and to the Indian side being notified of the ratification of the Agreement and the completion of all internal processes for its entry into force once these steps have been completed.

11. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Public Service, Administrative and Institutional Reforms and the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC). The Memorandum of Understanding aims at formalising and fostering cooperation and collaboration between ICAC and the Ministry to instill high integrity conduct in the Public Service through education and corruption prevention programmes and projects. It focuses on the following areas –

- (a) Management Support for the setting of clear anti-corruption agenda at the level of Ministries and Departments;
- (b) Capacity Building to promote a systematic and risk based approach towards the empowerment of public officers to recognise, resist, reject and report corruption;
- (c) Reinforcement of systems' integrity to implement the Public Sector Anti-Corruption Framework in all Ministries and Departments through the Anti-Corruption Committees; and
- (d) Reinforcement of ethical infrastructure to conduct joint activities to commemorate the International Anti-Corruption Day and the Public Service Day.

12. Cabinet has agreed to the implementation of coastal protection, landscaping and infrastructural works at four sites at Vieux Grand Port, namely, at the two public beaches at Sattan Babooa and two débarcadères (Sattan Babooa débarcadère and the one behind the church).

13. Cabinet has agreed to the reopening of the restricted areas from Pointe du Diable to Pointe d'Esny in the aftermath of the MV Wakashio oil spill for recreational activities only, namely swimming, diving, surfing and boating and to declare two exclusion areas inside and outside the lagoon at Pointe d'Esny as restricted areas, in the context of the MV Wakashio aft removal operations.

14. Cabinet has taken note that the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Land Use Planning would issue a Planning Policy Guidance for light rail corridor/ex-railway lands. A Planning Policy Guidance establishes a set of performance criteria and design guidance on any aspect of land use planning and development and their relationship to and impact on economic and social development including the form, scale, intensity, built form, location and general development criteria for different classes of development. The main features of the Planning Policy Guidance cater for, inter alia –

- (a) setbacks from the light rail corridor both on land and at elevated viaducts;
- (b) setbacks along ex-railway lands for future extensions of the light rail system; and
- (c) railway-specific environment factors such as noise, vibration, access onto the light rail corridor, stormwater drainage, ventilation, vegetation, utility services, hazardous materials, earth stability and electromagnetic compatibility around the light rail corridor.

15. Cabinet has taken note that a two-day National Policy Dialogue on Green Economy under the SWITCH Africa Green project would be organised on 22 and 23 March 2021 by the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change in collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme. The objective of the National Policy Dialogue is to improve understanding of green economy, enhance policy coordination on greening the three key sectors and increase awareness on sustainable consumption and production. Some 100 participants are expected to attend the Policy Dialogue.

16. Cabinet has taken note that sixth Small Scale Funding Agreement (SSFA) would be signed by the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change and the United Nations Environment Programme under the SWITCH Africa Green project. The SWITCH Africa Green project is an initiative designed and funded by the European Union to facilitate the transition of African countries to sustainable development.

The sixth SSFA (SSFA 6) to the tune of USD28,710 for the period March to December 2021 would be signed to pursue implementation of the policy recommendations relating to the following activities -

- (a) strengthening the capacity of the National Environmental Laboratory in establishing a framework for pesticide residue testing in environmental media in view of supporting sustainable agriculture and to protect the environment; and
- (b) conducting laboratory testing and analysis by the Food and Agricultural Research and Extension Institute to determine the quality of treated manure as soil conditioner at experimental units in two agro-climatic zones and its impact on crop production.

17. Cabinet has agreed to the submission of the Follow Up Information to the Concluding Observations on the Fifth Periodic Report of the Republic of Mauritius to the United Nations Committee on the International Covenant on Economic, Cultural and Social Rights.

18. Cabinet has agreed to the logo for the National Day Celebrations 2021 for the 53rd Anniversary of the Independence and the 29th Anniversary of the Republic.

19. Cabinet has taken note of the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic prevailing across the world and the spread of the new variants of the virus in various countries. With regard to Mauritius, as at 5 March 2021, 622 cases of COVID-19 had been registered. There were currently 21 active cases of COVID-19 in Mauritius. One local case has been detected in the community on 4 March 2021. A contact tracing exercise is being carried out in accordance with the established protocol. The public should continue to observe strict sanitary precautions.

Passengers coming from Brazil, South Africa, Reunion Island and Mayotte or those who have transited through these countries during the last 15 days would not be allowed to enter Mauritius until 31 May 2021. The restriction on passengers coming from Japan has been lifted and is effective as from 5 March 2021.

Cabinet has also taken note that the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme would be extended to the whole population as from 8 March 2021.

20. Cabinet has taken note that the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has donated 50 tons of processed packed dates to the Government of Mauritius for free local distribution.

21. Cabinet has taken note of the activities being organised to commemorate World Water Day 2021 on 22 March 2021, namely -

- (a) a half-day Conference on the theme “Valuing Water - A new vision for water supply” on Monday 22 March 2021 at the Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Tower, Ebène;
- (b) tree planting at Bagatelle Dam site, La Nicolière Reservoir and the site earmarked for the Rivière des Anguilles Dam Project, as a Sustainability Initiative;
- (c) showcasing successful water infrastructure projects; and
- (d) launching of an Education Tour at La Marie Water Treatment Plant and kickstarting of an all-year round sensitisation campaign on water saving/conservation.

The theme for World Water Day 2021 is “Valuing Water”.

22. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation would organise, in collaboration with the Mauritius Sports Council, a series of recreation activities for the benefit of the youth during the third term school holidays 2021. The programme of recreation, named ‘*Vakans Zen 2021*’, would comprise –

- (a) *Zenes Keep Fit*;
- (b) *Explosion Artistik 2.0*;
- (c) *Zenes Koste Amize*; and
- (d) activities to be organised by the Mauritius Sports Council.

In addition to the abovementioned activities, the Mauritius Sports Council, through Active Mauritius, would organise the following programmes for those aged between 7 to 13 years –

- (a) ‘Holiday Sports Activity’ in collaboration with the National Social Inclusion Foundation;
- (b) ‘*Colonies de Vacances*,’ in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology;
- (c) ‘School Holidays Camp’; and
- (d) ‘School Holidays Swimming Programme – *Nager C Vital*’.

For youngsters aged between 14 to 24, Active Mauritius has devised the following programmes –

- (a) Line Up Live Up and Health-Related Fitness;
- (b) Swimming Sessions For Youth; and
- (c) 'A l'Assaut du Morne'.

23. Cabinet has taken note that the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade recently participated in an online Panel Discussion at the 5th Asia Economic Dialogue organised jointly by the Ministry of External Affairs of India and the Pune International Centre. The Minister participated in a session on "Perspectives on India's International Development Cooperation". He shared the perspective of Mauritius on India's international development co-operation and highlighted the contribution of India in the field of International Development Cooperation.

24. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent official visit of the Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change to Rodrigues in the context of the preparation of the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) for the Republic of Mauritius. Consultations were held with key stakeholders, including the relevant Commissions in Rodrigues. The Minister took the opportunity to sensitise participants on the NDC review process and on the ambitious mitigation and adaptation measures that would need to be implemented to achieve carbon neutrality by 2070 and hence, avoid the negative impacts of global warming. The Minister also participated in the "COP26: Voices and Ambitions of Rodrigues" upon the invitation of the British High Commissioner. The purpose was to raise awareness and to inspire climate action ahead of the COP26 among participants from the public and private sectors, NGOs, academia, youths and the civil society in Rodrigues.
