

CABINET DECISIONS – 07 MAY 2021

1. Cabinet has agreed to the introduction of the Local Government (Amendment) Bill into the National Assembly. The object of the Bill is to, inter alia, amend the Local Government Act so as to provide that, at any time, when –

- (a) a period of public emergency is in force in Mauritius; and
- (b) there is, or there is likely to be, an epidemic of a communicable disease in Mauritius and a quarantine period is in force in Mauritius,

the President, acting in accordance with the advice of the Prime Minister, shall, by Proclamation, extend, during such periods, from time to time the life of 6 years of the entire Municipal City Council and Municipal Town Councils, or entire Village Councils, by not more than one year at a time, provided that the life of the Councils shall not be extended for more than 2 years.

2. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development would promulgate the Gambling Regulatory Authority (Personal Management Licence) (Amendment) Regulations 2021 to provide for a requirement for additional senior officers of all GRA licensees to hold a Personal Management Licence. The objective is to ensure that only fit and proper persons are appointed in these positions, given the high-risk nature of the gambling sector. The amendment would ensure compliance with the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) Recommendation 28 on Anti-Money Laundering and Combating Financing of Terrorism.

3. Cabinet has taken note that the Bank of Mauritius would promulgate with the approval of the Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development, the Banking (Processing and Licence Fees) (Amendment) Regulations 2021 which would allow the Bank of Mauritius to consider the possibility of waiving the payment by financial institutions of licence fees, or their refund where -

- (a) the Central Bank has, on account of an exceptional event, authorised a temporary cessation of the operations of the financial institution or the closure of one or more of its branches for a period of more than three months; or
- (b) the financial institution is able to demonstrate to the Central Bank that it has experienced a period of reduced business activities for more than three months due to an exceptional event.

The Banking Act was amended through the Finance (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2020 to remove the licensing and supervision of money lenders from the purview of the Bank of Mauritius and transfer this responsibility to the Financial Services Commission. Provision is being made in the Banking (Processing and Licence Fees) (Amendment) Regulations 2021 to also revoke Regulations 9 and Part VIII of the Schedule to the Banking (Processing and Licence Fees) Regulations 2015, which relates to the moneylender licence.

The Banking (Processing and Licence Fees) (Amendment) Regulations 2021 would be deemed to have come into operation on 01 July 2020.

4. Cabinet has taken note of the measures contained in the Roadmap for 2021-2024 for Improving Water Supply Service, particularly in water-stressed regions, during the dry season. The Roadmap has been formulated by the Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities in collaboration with the Central Water Authority. It aims at addressing the service deficiency, particularly in the dry spell and is based on the following strategies –

- (a) Strategy 1: Redesign the water supply chain;
- (b) Strategy 2: Interconnect as much as possible water supply zones to enhance water supply security;
- (c) Strategy 3: Minimise use of Dam water in the wet season, except in case of overspilling;
- (d) Strategy 4: Divert excess water from rivers into existing Dams;
- (e) Strategy 5: Use tailrace water of CEB hydro plants for potable purposes;
- (f) Strategy 6: Wider use of water treatment technologies and new storage technologies; and
- (g) Strategy 7: Upgrade the relevant supply network infrastructure to reduce non-revenue water.

The Roadmap recommends implementation of projects for optimal water mobilisation, treatment and new distribution network, in each of the six District Water Supply systems, while taking into account water supply shortages in the dry periods, the demand for water over period 2020-2024 and the supply gaps, including losses in the network.

5. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between -
- (a) the Mauritius Meteorological Services and Société Virieux; and
 - (b) the Mauritius Meteorological Services and Bioculture (Mauritius) Ltd
- with the objective of setting up Automatic Rain-Gauge Stations.

The Mauritius Meteorological Services has 30 Automatic Rain-Gauge Stations across Mauritius which are used to collect data to make reliable forecasting and projections. There is a need for such stations in the eastern and southern parts of Mauritius.

6. Cabinet has agreed to the Small Farmers Welfare Fund providing financial assistance of Rs2,000 per arpent in favour of planters, under the Agricultural Calamities Solidarity Scheme, who have suffered losses following the torrential rainfall which occurred in March 2021 and as from 16 April 2021. In addition, a one-off compensation of Rs4,000 per arpent would be granted to planters in order to provide better support to planters in restarting their plantations, taking into consideration the factors of production that would be required immediately namely seeds, land preparation and fertilisers.

7. Cabinet has taken note of the proposed actions for implementation of flood mitigation measures following the recent floods which impacted several high risk regions. In the context of the Land Drainage Master Plan initiated by the Land Drainage Authority, the south eastern coast has been studied in a holistic approach and actions have been recommended for long term and sustainable solutions.

Cabinet has also taken note of the status of implementation of drain projects by the National Development Unit.

8. Cabinet has taken note of the implementation of the Comprehensive Grant Formula by the Private Secondary Education Authority, especially in respect of the disbursement of grants to private secondary schools for the next quarter, i.e. April to June 2021.

9. Cabinet has taken note of the publication of an Indicative Schedule of Rates for construction works by the Construction Industry Development Board. The rates have been determined after an extensive market survey and consultations amongst stakeholders of the construction industry.

10. Cabinet has taken note of the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic prevailing across the world. With regard to Mauritius, as at 7 May 2021, 1,251 cases (including imported cases) of COVID-19 had been registered. There were 62 active cases of COVID-19 in Mauritius, out of which 47 were local cases and 15 imported cases. However, five cases have been detected in the region of Camp Diabie on 6 May 2021 and an Order has been made to declare that region as a Red Zone. Contact tracing exercises and random testing are being carried out in accordance with the established protocol. The public should observe strict sanitary precautions.

Cabinet has also taken note of progress in the implementation of the national COVID-19 vaccination programme and arrangements being made to administer the second dose of vaccine.

11. Cabinet has agreed to the participation of a Mauritian delegation comprising three judokas and a coach in the 42nd Senior African Judo Championships to be held in Dakar, Senegal, from 20 to 23 May 2021.

12. Cabinet has taken note of the status of Working From Home practice in the Public Service during the last confinement period. Out of 14,000 public officers providing non-essential services and excluding those in the Education Sector, 2,214 public officers are working from home in 42 Ministries/Departments, representing 16 percent of Public Officers in the non-essential sector. Appropriate measures were being taken to promote the Work-From-Home culture which would be part of the new normal in the post COVID-19 era.
