

CABINET DECISIONS – 08 JANUARY 2021

1. Cabinet has agreed to –
 - (a) changes being brought to the Environment Protection (Control of Single Use Plastic Products) Regulations 2020 so as to –
 - (i) allow a moratorium until 15 January 2022 in respect of the banning of non-biodegradable single use plastic bowls, cups and trays used by the local food industry for packaging of fresh, pre-cooked/ cooked food products;
 - (ii) include a definition for ‘plastic bowl’, ‘plastic cup’ and ‘plastic tray’;
 - (iii) provide a further moratorium until 15 April 2021 in respect of stand-alone non-biodegradable single use plastic straw; and
 - (b) amendments being made to the Third Schedule of the Consumer Protection (Control of Imports) Regulations 2017 so as to prohibit the import of specific non-biodegradable single use plastic items as packaging of other products.

2. Cabinet has taken note that the Local Government (Fees) (Amendment) Regulations 2021 would be promulgated to provide for electronic means of payment through the Companies and Business Registration Integrated System for the following entities –

- (a) audit firms;
- (b) company service providers;
- (c) companies with turnover of 50 million rupees or more;
- (d) law firms;
- (e) management companies or companies with a management licence issued under the Financial Services Act; and
- (f) registered agents.

The Regulations would ensure that the relevant Local Authority is legally accountable for collection of trade fees arrears prior to 3 January 2020. The Regulations shall be deemed to be effective as from 4 January 2021.

3. Cabinet has agreed to the introduction of a Sandbox Framework to promote the adoption of emerging and innovative technologies in Ministries and Departments. The broad objectives of the Framework are to –

- (a) encourage and stimulate Ministries and Departments to implement innovative technology solutions through proof of concept models on a non-committal and without prejudice basis to Government;
- (b) foster collaboration between the public sector and private sector in the development and testing of innovative solutions;

- (c) attract local or international service providers as well as incubators to share their expertise on innovative technologies or systems such as Artificial Intelligence, Internet of Things, Blockchain, ePayment, Electronic Document Management System, Collaborative Software and eSignature;
- (d) provide deeper insights into the technology solution before deployment on a larger scale; and
- (e) provide opportunities for public organisations to try innovative technology solutions to a particular problem with minimal potential risks.

The Sandbox Framework would provide public organisations with the flexibility to have recourse to the services of innovative companies and start-ups to develop applications in response to a particular problem without going through the lengthy process of existing procurement procedures.

4. Cabinet has taken note of the implementation of the Construction of Verdun Bypass – Phase 1 project which would include the construction of access ramps of about 570 metres to Motorway M3 and improvement works at the existing junction M3/A7 at Saint Pierre to alleviate traffic congestions.

5. Cabinet has agreed to the extension of the temporary lifting of restriction at Pointe d'Esny in the aftermath of the MV Wakashio oil spill, from Friday 08 January until Sunday 31 January 2021.

6. Cabinet has taken note that a Memorandum of Understanding would be signed between the National Audit Office of Mauritius and the Office of the Auditor General of Seychelles, with a view to strengthening, promoting and developing co-operation between the two countries in the field of public sector auditing. The Memorandum of Understanding would provide for co-operation in the following areas -

- (a) exchange of information, experiences and best practices on public sector auditing procedure and methodology, including audit realisation issues through trainings and study visits;
- (b) professional training for the improvement of professional standards of personnel; and
- (c) any other areas of cooperation in the field of public sector auditing.

7. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent Consultative Workshop on 'National Environmental Policy' organised by the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Country Office. The Human Development Report 2020 entitled 'The next frontier Human Development and the Anthropocene' was launched by the UNDP Resident Representative for Mauritius and Seychelles.

During the first session, the Workshop focused on approaches for the review of the Nationally Determined Contributions, that is, national climate plans including targets, measures and policies that would need to be agreed upon for implementation in order to reduce national emissions and adapt to climate change. Other sessions were also held on the overarching strategic policy orientation for the 'Master Plan for the Environment of the Republic of Mauritius' as well as on the eight themes of the *Assises de l'Environnement* held in December 2019, namely, *La Culture Environnementale, Contrôle des Déchets Plastiques, Urbanisme et Politique Environnementale, Zones Côtières et Environnement Marin, Biodiversité et Ressources Naturelles, Lutte Contre La Pollution, Changement Climatique and La gestion des Déchets*. Participants have been invited to submit their views and comments on the draft Master Plan following which further consultations would be held with key stakeholders. The review of the Environment Protection Act was also discussed.

8. Cabinet has taken note of the alarming situation of the COVID-19 pandemic prevailing across the world and the new variant of the virus which has been detected in UK and South Africa. A new variant has also been detected in Nigeria and the Ministry of Health and Wellness is closely monitoring the situation. With regard to Mauritius, no local case has been recorded since 26 November 2020. Currently, there were 15 active cases of COVID-19 in Mauritius. As at 8 January 2021, 539 cases of COVID-19 had been registered. The public should continue to observe strict sanitary precautions. Passengers coming from UK and South Africa or those who have transited through these countries during the last 15 days would not be allowed to enter Mauritius until 31 January 2021.

9. Cabinet has taken note that a National Health Accounts Committee would be constituted for the preparation of the National Health Accounts Report 2020 for the Republic of Mauritius for the period 01 January to 31 December 2019. The Report would provide detailed information on the financial flows associated with the delivery and consumption of healthcare goods and services within the country. It would be an important tool in the healthcare planning process to formulate policy decisions at the national level.

10. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Board of the Sugar Insurance Fund Board with Mr Chaitanand Jheengun as Chairperson.
