

CABINET DECISIONS – 10 JUNE 2021

1. Cabinet has agreed to drafting instructions being conveyed to the Attorney General's Office for amendments to be brought to the Mauritius Standards Bureau Act. The main amendments proposed to the Mauritius Standards Bureau Act pertain to -

- (a) replacement of some existing interpretations which are outdated;
- (b) inclusion of two new objectives, namely to operate a National Enquiry Point in consultation with other Ministries and to conduct technical investigations in the field of conformity assessment;
- (c) formalisation of activities such as formulation of Mauritian Standards and Metrology/Calibration; and
- (d) provision for new activities of the Bureau, such as "Conformity Assessment" and "Inspection".

2. Cabinet has agreed to the Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change making an amendment to the Fourth Schedule of the Environment Protection Act by way of regulations under section 13(6) of the Act, to designate the Permanent Secretary responsible for the National Parks and Conservation Service as the enforcing agency in relation to wetlands.

3. Cabinet has taken note that the Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development would promulgate the Economic Development Board (e-Commerce Scheme) (Amendment) Regulations 2021. The Regulations would be amended to provide, inter alia, that a company which does not satisfy the conditions specified in paragraph (1) of the Regulations would be eligible to apply for an e-Commerce certificate provided it satisfies the following conditions –

- (a) minimum capital investment of at least 20 million rupees in Mauritius, including hardware, software and logistics;
- (b) at least 20 suitably qualified resident personnel, including two at senior management level, who shall conduct its core income generating activities in Mauritius;
- (c) engaging in e-Commerce activities in high priority sectors specified in the guidelines; and
- (d) incurring minimum expenditure proportionate to its activities.

A company which holds a Global Business Licence, other than a company which operates and undertakes e-Commerce activities, in the Business Process Outsourcing sector would be eligible to apply for an e-Commerce certificate subject to some specified conditions.

4. Cabinet has taken note that the Environment Protection (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2021 would be promulgated and would come into operation with effect from 12 June 2021. Amendments are being brought to the Ninth Schedule of the Environment Protection Act to reinforce the law, and to harmonise provisions and fines for dumping and littering offences.

5. Cabinet has taken note that the Minister of Health and Wellness would amend the Public Health (Prohibition on Advertisement, Sponsorship and Restriction on Sale and Consumption in Public Places of Alcoholic Drinks) Regulations 2008 to align it with the recommendations of the World Health Organization 2010 Global Alcohol Strategy. The National Action Plan to reduce the harmful use of alcohol 2020-2024 aims, inter alia, at reducing the harmful use of alcohol by at least 10 percent by year 2025 and to address alcohol related harmful effects through awareness campaigns. One of the recommendations of the National Action Plan is to strengthen and enforce the Public Health (Prohibition on Advertisement, Sponsorship and Restriction on Sale and Consumption in Public Places of Alcoholic Drinks) Regulations 2008.

6. Cabinet has agreed to the refund of the amount of training levy overpaid by employers in the tourism sector being made to those engaged in activities defined under Sub-Part B of Part I of the Twelfth Schedule to the Income Tax Regulations, pending appropriate provisions in the Human Resource Development Act. The employers in the tourism sector paid their respective training levy at the rate of 1%, instead of 0.5%, for the period April 2020 to June 2020. The amount overpaid by the employers would be refunded.

7. Cabinet has taken note of the proposal for funding from the Global Environment Facility Council through the United Nations Development Programme Mauritius Country Office for the implementation of a project aiming at “Promoting Low Carbon Electric Public Bus Transport in the Republic of Mauritius” with a view to expediting the introduction of modern and low emission buses. The objective of the project is to promote capital investments for developing a sustainable transport infrastructure in Mauritius in order to reduce transport-related Greenhouse Gas emissions and to mitigate climate change. The project also intends to engage and build technical capacities of transport-related policymakers, regulatory and other government agencies, financial institutions and the private sector. The project comprises the following components –

- (a) policy and regulatory framework for electric public (bus) transport in Mauritius;
- (b) financial incentive package for electric buses and charging infrastructure;
- (c) technical feasibility and capacity building;

- (d) awareness raising to address barriers related to lack of awareness on benefits of low-carbon electric public transport; and
- (e) knowledge management, monitoring and evaluation.

8. Cabinet has taken note that following the representations of Mauritius about the reference to the so-called “British Indian Ocean Territory” in paragraph 4 of Article 774 of the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement, the European Commission has made on behalf of the European Union a Declaration on that issue. The Declaration, which has been published in the Official Journal of the European Union on 01 June 2021, reads as follows –

“The European Union declares that the reference to the British Indian Ocean Territory in paragraph 4 of Article 774 of the Agreement is to be interpreted and implemented in full respect of applicable international law”.

On 03 June 2021, the EU Delegation to the UK transmitted the Declaration to the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office.

9. Cabinet has taken note of the main findings and recommendations contained in the report submitted by PriceWaterhouseCoopers Ltd and the UNDP consultant, for the establishment of a Business Continuity Plan for the Government.

Cabinet has agreed to the implementation of three digitalisation projects financed jointly by the UNDP and the Government namely -

- (a) implementation of an Electronic Document Management System (eDMS) on a pilot basis at the level of the Ministry of Public Service, Administrative and Institutional Reforms. The eDMS would be a single repository that would be used to organise, share, retrieve, reuse and manage documents. Based on the outcome of this pilot project, the system would be replicated and deployed to all Ministries and Departments;
- (b) implementation of a Parliamentary Electronic Document Management System which would be used as a central repository to store and manage critical document and electronic voting facilities relating to the Sitting of the National Assembly; and
- (c) automation of the Data Capture Process at the Registrar General Department to facilitate the processing and recording of documents electronically.

10. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Seafarers’ Welfare Fund and the Mauritius Sailors’ Home Society. The Memorandum of Understanding provides for an improved cooperation between the two organisations and also to better promote social and economic welfare of seafarers and their families through appropriate schemes and projects. The Mauritius Sailors’ Home Society would use the monthly grant given by the Seafarers’ Welfare Fund for the provision of various facilities to seafarers and their families.

11. Cabinet has agreed to the Mauritius Standards Bureau signing a Memorandum of Understanding with –

- (a) the Tanzania Bureau of Standards of the Republic of Tanzania; and
- (b) the Instituto Nacional de Normalização e Qualidade of the Republic of Mozambique.

The objective of the Memoranda of Understanding is to promote and facilitate bilateral trade through the elimination of Technical Barriers to Trade. It would cover, amongst others, co-operation in Standardisation, Quality Assurance, Metrology, Conformity Assessment Services and Training.

12. Cabinet has taken note that the District Council of Moka would sign an agreement with the National Computer Board for implementation of the Innovative Council Project. The goal of the project is to set up the necessary infrastructure at the Government Online Centre to host the Geospatial data of Local Authorities as well as develop the software and interface to allow users to add, edit and update assets of the Local Authorities.

13. Cabinet has agreed to amendments being made to the Consumer Protection (Scrap Metal) Regulations 2019 in order to exceptionally allow the exportation of scrap copper which has been legally traded and acquired. Scrap copper cables are normally processed into ingots or finished products before exportation. However, a small quantity of these scrap copper cables cannot be processed locally due to shortage of labour, expertise and equipment. They remain an eyesore and constitute a loss of revenue for the scrap metal dealers and exporters.

14. Cabinet has agreed to the submission of the 24th and 25th Combined Periodic Report of the Republic of Mauritius to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD). The ICERD is the principal international treaty for the elimination of racism, racial discrimination and other forms of intolerance.

The report covers the period July 2017 to May 2021 and has been worked out in consultation with the Committee members of the National Mechanism for Reporting and Follow-Up comprising representatives of Ministries/Departments, NGOs and the civil society.

15. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security would sign a Letter of Intent with the Chinese Academy of Tropical Agricultural Science of the People's Republic of China to establish cooperation in the fields of training, research, technology and policy development related to tropical agriculture. The areas and types of cooperation would include, among others -

- (a) collection and conservation of plant and animal genetic resources;

- (b) environment protection;
- (c) breeding and dissemination of improved crop varieties, especially dwarf fruit cultivars;
- (d) development and recommendation of sustainable farming systems;
- (e) control of pests, diseases and weeds in crop farming;
- (f) research and development in animal health and production; and
- (g) use of ICT and artificial intelligence including drones in agriculture.

16. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the call for applications following the launching of the Enterprise Innovation Booster Scheme by the Mauritius Research and Innovation Council.

As at the closing date of 30 March 2021, a total of 79 projects were received and after undergoing through stringent evaluation, seven innovative applications, were recommended for funding for a total project value of around Rs16.5 million, of which around Rs11 million would be funded by the Mauritius Research and Innovation Council. Payments would be staggered and made only on achievements of agreed deliverables. The selected projects relate to the following emerging sectors –

- (a) Blue economy and smart tourism;
- (b) Smart health;
- (c) Internet of things;
- (d) Fintech; and
- (e) Digital Wallet.

17. Cabinet has taken note that three projects under the Technical Assistance and Information Exchange have been accepted by the European Union, namely -

- (a) setting up of a Children's Court in Mauritius;
- (b) amendments to be brought to the Protection from Domestic Violence Act; and
- (c) setting up of the child victim/witness support service and the Guardian Ad Litem Programme.

18. Cabinet has taken note that Mauritius has been elected to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) on 07 June 2021 along with 17 other countries for the term 2022 to 2024. The ECOSOC is one of the six main organs of the United Nations. It is mandated to, inter alia, promote international cooperation on economic, social and cultural issues, and provide a platform for engagement with non-governmental organisations.

Cabinet has also taken note that HE Mr Abdulla Shahid from Maldives has been elected on 07 June 2021 as the President of the 76th Session of the United Nations General Assembly.

19. Cabinet has taken note that the Mauritius Imagery and Radio-Satellite (MIR-SAT1) was transported on board the *Space X-22 Falcon* rocket which was launched from Kennedy launching pad in Florida, USA, on 03 June 2021. The launch was a success and the NASA described the Mauritian satellite as one of the items of scientific interest being transported to the International Space Station, the orbiting laboratory. The deployment of the Mauritian satellite in orbit is expected to be carried out on 22 June 2021. Once the Mauritian nano-satellite would be successfully deployed in space and starts orbiting the earth, the Mauritius Research and Innovation Council, through its Ground Station, would be able to send commands to the satellite to capture pictures of the Mauritian region.

20. Cabinet has taken note that the Prime Minister participated, through a pre-recorded statement, in the GAVI COVAX Advance Market Commitment Summit on 02 June 2021, co-hosted by GAVI and the Government of Japan. He pledged an amount of USD2,500 to GAVI, with a view to assisting GAVI's endeavour to ensure universal access to the vaccines.

21. Cabinet has taken note of the status regarding the management of landslide prone and other hazard areas in Mauritius. A Steering Committee would be set up at the level of the Ministry of National Infrastructure and Community Development to look into the issues pertaining to landslide and other related slope disasters management, such as slope failures, rock fall, debris flow and stream erosions and subsequently propose a Landslide Management Plan which would include the responsibilities of every stakeholder involved, identify and map new regions affected by slope failures, formulate appropriate plans to tackle such disasters, advise on revision of Planning Policy Guidance and Outline Planning Schemes.

22. Cabinet has taken note of the new calendar of radio programmes "*Ansam avek CSU*" which would start as from 12 June 2021 in the MBC Kool FM studio from 09 00 hrs to 10 00 hrs.

23. Cabinet has taken note of the activities that would be organised by the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family Welfare in collaboration with the National Children's Council, in the context of the Day of the African Child 2021 celebrated on 16 June 2021. The theme chosen by the African Union for this year is '*30 years after the adoption of the Charter: accelerate implementation of Agenda 2040 for an 'Africa Fit for Children'*'. The local theme retained is "*Pran Kont Lavenir Nou Zanfan*". The official launching of the commemoration of the Day of the African Child on 16 June 2021 would be held in the Conference Room of the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family Welfare. A leaflet on Drugs and Substance Abuse would be launched and would be disseminated in schools through Information, Education and Communication campaigns and affixed in public places.

A Webinar on the theme '*a Mauritius Fit for Children*' would be held.

24. Cabinet has taken note of the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic prevailing across the world. With regard to Mauritius, as from March 2020 to 10 June 2021, 1,572 cases (including imported cases) of COVID-19 had been registered. There were 248 active cases of COVID-19 in Mauritius, out of which 245 were local cases and three imported cases. Contact tracing exercises and random testing are being carried out in accordance with the established protocol. The public should observe strict sanitary precautions, including the wearing of masks.

Cabinet has taken note that La Valette, Bambous has been declared as a Red Zone on 04 June 2021. Vallée Pitot was declared as a Red Zone on 24 May 2021.

Cabinet has also taken note of progress in the implementation of the national COVID-19 vaccination programme.

25. Cabinet has taken note of the prevention and control measures in respect of the Dengue fever in Mauritius. As at 31 May 2021, there had been no reported case of Dengue. Control measures were still being undertaken at the level of each Health Office around the island to bring down the mosquito population, namely *Aedes Albopictus*. Larviciding was being carried out to treat breeding places with a view to eliminating the mosquitoes at their larval stage. Public Health and Food Safety Inspectors were effecting regular inspections to identify and eliminate mosquito breeding places through serving of notices to individuals as well as through statements of nuisances to Local Authorities and other statutory bodies.

The Communicable Diseases Control Unit of the Ministry of Health and Wellness was ensuring regular monitoring of larviciding and fogging operations in the regions as well as implementing various strategies for vector control and vector surveillance. Vector Studies, Surveillance and Strategic Control were being carried out. An established Protocol to deal with positive cases of Dengue fever has been worked out by the Ministry of Health and Wellness.

26. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the 38th Session of the Heads of State and Government Orientation Committee of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) held virtually under the chair of the President of the Republic of Rwanda. The main items on the agenda of the meeting were the 2020 Annual Report of the African Union Development Agency - New Partnership for Africa's Development (AUDA-NEPAD), the status of ratification of the African Medicine Agency and the appointment of a new Chief Executive Officer of AUDA-NEPAD. In the interventions made by members of the Heads of State and Government Orientation Committee, the pivotal role played by AUDA-NEPAD in the implementation of development projects in Africa was emphasised. They also praised the remarkable efforts and work accomplished in regard to the continental responses to the COVID-19 pandemic.

27. Cabinet has taken note of the recent participation of the Minister of Industrial Development, SMEs and Cooperatives in the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) 4th Meeting of the Ministerial Committee on Industry held virtually. The 4th Ministerial Committee was convened to –

- (a) deliberate and adopt the draft Implementation Strategy for the domestication of the COMESA Local Content Policy Framework;
- (b) consider the draft COMESA Framework of Managing Special Economic Zones and Industrial Parks; and
- (c) adopt Guidelines on Increasing Industrial Production during and after the COVID-19 pandemic in an inclusive and sustainable way.

Member States adopted the Declaration of the Virtual Meeting of the COMESA Ministers of Industry which consisted of twenty-five commitments/pledges, including –

- (i) greater collaboration in the development of sustainable value chains with a view to increasing intra-regional trade in manufactured goods; and
- (ii) development and implementation of policies and strategies to improve the quality, safety and standards of manufactured goods in the region.

28. Cabinet has taken note of the results of the National Certificate of Education (NCE) Assessment 2021. Out of the 14,044 school candidates of the Republic of Mauritius who took part in the 2021 NCE assessment, 10,051 have met the requirements for the NCE representing a percentage of 71.6%. There were 13,087 candidates who took part in NCE Assessment 2021 in the Island of Mauritius, out of whom 9,554 have met the NCE requirements, (73%). As for Rodrigues, 950 candidates took part in NCE assessment and 495 candidates have attained the NCE requirements, (52.1%). In Agalega, out of the seven school candidates who took part in the NCE Assessment 2021, two have attained the NCE requirements.

29. Cabinet has taken note of arrangements made for the resumption of schools in a staggered manner. Remote Learning would take place from 21 June to 02 July 2021. Classes would be held on school premises as from 05 July 2021, subject to strict sanitary protocols being observed.

30. Cabinet has taken note of the measures taken to prevent any oil spill following the grounding of Fishing Vessel Sea Master on the reef of Albatross Island of St Brandon. No oil spill has been reported and the relevant authorities are monitoring the situation. Cabinet has also taken note that a Wreck Removal Notice had been issued in line with section 140 of the Merchant Shipping Act.

31. Cabinet has taken note of the appointment Mr Devendre Kumar Heerah as Chairperson of the Radiation Safety and Nuclear Security Board.

32. Cabinet has taken note of reconstitution of the Council of Registered Professional Engineers of Mauritius for the period 2021-2023.

33. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the ICT Advisory Council with Mr Kritanand M. Bundhoo as Chairperson.

34. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Board of Trustees of the Mauritius Tamil Cultural Centre Trust with Dr Adi Sankara Peruman, OSK, as Chairperson.
