

CABINET DECISIONS – 11 FEBRUARY 2021

1. Cabinet has taken note that HE Dr Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, External Affairs Minister of India would be on official visit to Mauritius from 21 to 24 February 2021. During his visit, he would, among others, –

- (a) pay a courtesy call on the President of the Republic of Mauritius;
- (b) have a tête-à-tête with the Prime Minister followed by a working session;
- (c) have a meeting with the Minister of Land Transport and Light Rail, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade;
- (d) effect site visits to the Supreme Court Building, the ENT Hospital, the COVID Vaccination Centre at Victoria Hospital and a social housing project; and
- (e) effect a metro ride from Rose Hill to Port Louis.

Various Memoranda of Understanding/Agreements would be signed during the visit.

2. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of the following agreements -

- (a) a Loan Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Mauritius and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) for a concessional loan of JPY 30 billion (around Rs11.5 Billion);
- (b) an Exchange of Notes between the Government of the Republic of Mauritius and the Government of Japan in respect of the concessional loan; and
- (c) an Exchange of Notes between the Government of the Republic of Mauritius and the Government of Japan for a Grant Aid of JPY600 million (around Rs226 million).

The objective of the loan is to assist the Government of Mauritius in its efforts to dealing with the negative impact of COVID-19 pandemic on its economy, thereby contributing to the socio-economic stability and development efforts of Mauritius.

The Government of Japan has agreed to extend to Mauritius a grant of JPY 600 million (around Rs226 million) under its “Economic and Social Development Programme” for the acquisition of Maritime Safety and Security equipment

3. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of Phase 1 of the Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) feasibility study report prepared by PricewaterhouseCoopers India (PwC India). At the request of the LNG Steering Committee, set up at the level of the Economic Development Board, PwC India was appointed by the State Trading Corporation to undertake a feasibility study to assess the potential of Mauritius as an LNG hub for the region. Cabinet has agreed to PwC India proceeding with Phase 2 of the study.

4. Cabinet has agreed to the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change holding of a series of consultations from 16 February to 04 March 2021 in the context of the review process of the first Mauritius' Nationally Determined Contributions. The Ministry, along with the Consultants, would –

- (a) have consultations with high-level officials of sectoral Ministries;
- (b) hold some 11 sector specific dialogues led by respective Ministries on energy, waste management, agriculture, tourism, blue economy, fisheries, coastal zone management, infrastructure, transport, water, health, biodiversity and mobilisation of funding;
- (c) have consultations with the relevant Commissions in Rodrigues;
- (d) have a High-Level Ministers meeting to discuss on the sectoral targets and policies to increase climate change mitigation and adaptation ambitions; and
- (e) hold a National Workshop on the Nationally Determined Contributions.

5. Cabinet has agreed to the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change conveying drafting instructions to the Attorney General's Office for the preparation of the Environment Protection (Extended Producer Responsibility for Electrical and Electronic Equipment) Regulations. The Regulations aim at providing a legal framework and conditions for the implementation of a collective scheme for the management of Electrical and Electronic Equipment reaching their end-of-life. This would facilitate the operationalisation of a collective Extended Producer Responsibility scheme for electrical and electronic Wastes, packaging and end-of-Life vehicles, amongst others. The objectives of the proposed regulations are to provide for a mechanism within the legal framework for the implementation of the collective Extended Producer Responsibility scheme to –

- (a) promote E-waste prevention, re-use and recycling;
- (b) promote a circular economy approach in E-waste management;
- (c) promote environmental stewardship;

- (d) decrease final disposal;
- (e) internalise the costs of E-wastes management into the price of an electrical and electronic equipment; and
- (f) protect human health and the environment through the environmentally sound management of E-wastes.

6. Cabinet has agreed to the introduction of new policies for the management of post-consumer Polyethylene Terephthalate (PET) bottles and containers generated by the beverage and food industries in pursuit of the implementation of the vision of Government to make of Mauritius a plastic free country within the nearest possible delays. Various measures are being envisaged for implementation in a phased manner, for a better management of post-consumer PET bottles and PET containers. A moratorium would be granted to the economic operators.

Drafting instructions would be conveyed to the Attorney General's Office after consultations with key stakeholders and public bodies concerned.

7. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of the "Small Scale Funding Agreement" between the Ministry of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping and the United Nations Environment Programme in relation to the implementation of the project "Assessment of Blue Carbon Ecosystem (Seagrass) around the island of Mauritius: Relevance for Marine Spatial Planning." The project seeks to generate information necessary for the development of management strategies, to formulate policies geared towards conservation and rehabilitation of seagrass ecosystems and to be used for the Marine Spatial Planning strategy in Mauritius.

The main objectives of the project are to reduce impacts from land-based sources and to sustainably manage critical coastal-riverine ecosystems through the implementation of the Nairobi Convention – Western Indian Ocean Strategic Action Programme. The main outcome of the project would be the production of a map depicting the distribution and diversity of seagrass species in the lagoons of Mauritius, the establishment of long-term monitoring stations and the collection of data on seagrass and the carbon storage capacity of the different species of seagrass around Mauritius.

8. Cabinet has agreed to the implementation of the e-Social Security Project in a phased manner. The existing information system is used for the payment of contributory pensions to around 180,000 beneficiaries and non-contributory pensions to around 280,000 beneficiaries on a monthly basis. The existing system dates back to 25 years and has served its time. An Integrated System for e-Social Security would be procured to cater for the payment of basic pensions, contributory pensions and other benefits. The e-Social Security system would also be accessible to the Commission for Social Security and other relevant stakeholders in Rodrigues.

9. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Mauritius Standard Bureau and the Gambia Standards Bureau. The Memorandum of Understanding aims at creating an enabling environment for cooperation in the area of standardisation and conformity assessment procedures and foster free trade through the harmonisation of standards and removal of technical barriers. It also aims at ensuring that standards are harmonised, technical regulations are fair and the conformity assessment procedures comply with international and regional best practices.

10. Cabinet has taken note that the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade would promulgate the Africa50 - Project Development (Privileges and Immunities) Regulations 2021 and Africa50 - Project Finance (Privileges and Immunities) Regulations 2021, under the International Organisations and Conferences (Privileges and Immunities) Act. Africa50 is an infrastructure fund established by the African Development Bank (ADB). It is owned by 28 governments (including Mauritius), two central banks and the ADB. On 31 July 2018, Mauritius signed the share Subscription Agreement for Africa50. The Subscription Agreement provides that Mauritius must enact laws to give effect to the provisions regarding the immunities, exemptions and privileges as set out in the Articles of Association of the two Africa50 entities.

11. Cabinet has taken note of the status regarding the implementation of the Premium Visa as at January 2021. As at 31 January 2021, some 313 applications for Premium Visa had been received. So far, 209 applications have been approved and 44 have not been entertained. Other applications are under process.

12. Cabinet has agreed to the review of the existing Public Service Excellence Award framework to provide equal opportunities to all public institutions to compete on a level playing field. Three categories of Awards are being created for this year's edition, open to -

- (a) Ministries/Departments (other than disciplined forces);
- (b) Disciplined Forces; and
- (c) Local Authorities.

The criteria for the Awards would be based on leadership and team spirit, problem solving strategies, enhancement of safety at workplaces, responsiveness to citizen needs, application of innovative technologies in delivery of public services and optimal use of public resources. The theme chosen for the coming edition is "Promoting an agile and responsive Public Service". Five Special Awards are being introduced in the following areas –

- (i) Human Resource;
- (ii) Occupational Safety and Health;
- (iii) Good Governance;
- (iv) Green Practices in the Public Service; and
- (v) Adaptability to the New Normal.

13. Cabinet has taken note of the alarming situation of the COVID-19 pandemic prevailing across the world and the spread of the new variants of the virus. With regard to Mauritius, there has been no local transmission in the community since 26 November 2020. As at 11 February 2021, 595 cases of COVID-19 had been registered. There were currently 34 active cases of COVID-19 in Mauritius. The public should continue to observe strict sanitary precautions.

Cabinet has also taken note that as at 10 February 2021, 2,130 frontliners have been vaccinated against COVID-19.

14. Cabinet has taken note that the 34th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union, held virtually on 6 and 7 February 2021, adopted a Decision on Decolonisation of Mauritius following the Judgment of the Special Chamber of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) on 28 January 2021. The Assembly adopted the Decision which, inter alia, welcomes the Judgment of the Special Chamber of the ITLOS and condemns the continued illegal occupation of the Chagos Archipelago by the United Kingdom in disregard of the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice. The Chair of the African Union intervened and fully supported the draft Decision tabled by Mauritius.

15. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Chagossian Welfare Fund with Mr Louis Olivier Bancoult, OSK, as Chairperson.

16. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Council of the National Social Inclusion Foundation with Mr Medavy Pillay Munien as Chairperson.
