

CABINET DECISIONS – 13 May 2021

1. Cabinet has agreed to the introduction of the Mauritius Emerging Technologies Council Bill into the National Assembly. The object of the Bill is to –

- (a) provide for the establishment of the Mauritius Emerging Technologies Council; and
- (b) promote high quality research in emerging technologies.

The Mauritius Emerging Technologies Council Bill makes provision for the setting up of the Mauritius Emerging Technologies Council which would act as a centre of excellence for driving the promotion, development and adoption of emerging technologies in Mauritius with a view to boosting the national economy.

2. Cabinet has agreed to the implementation of the COVID-19 Socioeconomic Response Plan (SERP) which has been developed by the UN Country Team (UNCT) in Mauritius in line with the Global UN framework for immediate socioeconomic response to COVID-19. The SERP proposes interventions in three strategic areas, namely health; social protection, cohesion and resilience; and macroeconomic recovery planning. The priority interventions across the three strategic areas were reviewed by Sub-Committees co-chaired by Government and UNCT, costed and aligned to national priorities.

3. Cabinet has agreed to the Ministry of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping requesting the insurer of MV Wakashio to provide an additional compensation to fishers affected by oil spill following grounding of MV Wakashio.

4. Cabinet has agreed to the proposals made by the Ministerial Committee, chaired by the Prime Minister, to look into the teaching of Kreol Morisien at the upper secondary level. Accordingly, the Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology would work on the implementation of the proposals for the teaching of Kreol Morisien in Grade 10 as from the academic year 2021-2022.

5. Cabinet has taken note that the Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development would promulgate the Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (Kingdom of Lesotho) Regulations 2021. The Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement with the Kingdom of Lesotho would –

- (a) provide certainty to investors in their dealings with Mauritius or Lesotho, as the case may be;

- (b) create a conducive environment for greater cross-border investment flows between the two countries; and
- (c) provide mechanisms to –
 - (i) combat tax evasion and other malpractices; and
 - (ii) resolve tax disputes that may arise.

6. Cabinet has taken note that the Minister of Health and Wellness has made the COVID-19 (Horse Race Meeting at Champ de Mars) Regulations 2021 under the Quarantine Act 2020. In view of the prevailing COVID-19 situation, horse racing would be held in camera. The Mauritius Turf Club Sports and Leisure in consultation with the Ministry of Health and Wellness, has worked out COVID-19 protocols which include the recommendations and restrictions before, during and after the race day.

7. Cabinet has taken note of the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic prevailing across the world. With regard to Mauritius, as at 13 May 2021, 1,307 cases (including imported cases) of COVID-19 had been registered. There were 105 active cases of COVID-19 in Mauritius, out of which 88 were local cases and 17 imported cases. Following the detection of twelve cases in the region of Bonne Terre, an Order has been made on 8 May 2021 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, including the wearing of masks. In addition, the Police has been sensitising the public on the need to wear masks and it would ensure strict adherence to this sanitary protocol. The Police has set up three hotlines for reporting cases of breach to Regulations made under the Quarantine Act, namely –

- (i) 183;
- (ii) 5940 8999; and
- (iii) 5942 8999.

The public is being encouraged to use WhatsApp to share any relevant information, in that connection.

Cabinet has further 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. In this respect, Cabinet has taken note that on 9 May 2021, Mauritius received a consignment of 38,400 doses of AstraZeneca vaccine through the COVAX facility.

8. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity had administered 36,195 doses of anti-influenza vaccines in 48 different localities across Mauritius from 22 April 2021 to 11 May 2021. As at date, 1,281 vaccines had been administered to inmates of charitable institutions and private licensed homes. Moreover, 8,583 doses of vaccines had been administered to beneficiaries of domiciliary visits.

The Ministry of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity has initiated the necessary procedures to despatch 5,000 doses of the anti-influenza vaccines to Rodrigues.

9. Cabinet has taken note that according to the Commission for Agriculture, Environment, Forestry and Marine Parks, Rodrigues Regional Assembly, no new cases of Foot and Mouth Disease have been recorded outside the two red zones (St Gabriel and Baie Malgache/Mont du Sable).

A consignment of 180,000 doses of vaccine would reach Mauritius on 15 May 2021. The procurement of the vaccine has been effected by the Indian Ocean Commission and funded by the Agence Française de Développement. Part of the vaccines would be conveyed to Rodrigues by the next available flight. The two Veterinary Officers from Mauritius had meetings with the Commission for Agriculture to take stock of the Foot and Mouth Disease situation in Rodrigues. They would carry out a sero-surveillance of the disease over a period of about two weeks and would also provide assistance for the vaccination programme.

10. Cabinet has taken note that the Conference of Indian Industry, in collaboration with the High Commission of Mauritius in New Delhi would organise a virtual session on business opportunities between India and Mauritius on 7 June 2021 in the context of the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CECPA) which came into force on 1 April 2021. The Conference would provide an excellent opportunity to showcase Mauritius as an investment destination and an ideal location which could be used by the Indian business community to mount investment projects, engage in processing activities and provide services targeting the African Continent and the regional markets.

11. Cabinet has taken note that following the submission by Mauritius of the FATF Third Progress Report and additional information provided by the competent authorities in Mauritius, a virtual face to face meeting was held on 12 May 2021 by co-chairs Mrs Giovanna Perri and Ms Fikile Zitha, members of the Africa Middle East Joint Group and representatives of the FATF, the Executive Secretary of the ESAAMLG, representatives of other FATF Style- Regional Bodies and FATF Observers. In the virtual face to face meeting, the Mauritian delegation headed by the Governor of the Bank of Mauritius, provided further clarifications in respect of the Third Progress Report. Subsequently, the report would be circulated to the FATF members for consideration at the Plenary, starting as from 11 June 2021.

12. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade has issued a Press release to express concern on the escalation of violence between Israel and Palestine which has led to several casualties through bombardments and launch of rockets and expressed its sympathy to all the victims of the violence. All parties concerned have been called upon to exercise maximum restraint and to urgently put an end to the violence and civil casualties. Mauritius supports the two-state solution, with Israel and Palestine existing side by side, and calls for renewed international efforts to find a just and lasting solution to the longstanding conflict in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions.

13. Cabinet has taken note of the Stamp Issue Programme for the year 2021. The Stamp Advisory Committee has recommended the issue of four postage stamps for the year 2021 under two different themes namely –

- (a) Theme 1: Science – One stamp would be issued in August 2021 to commemorate the launching of the First Mauritian Satellite (MIR-SAT1) which is expected to be launched in space around August 2021; and
- (b) Theme 2: Anniversaries and Events – Three stamps would be issued in September, October and December 2021, respectively. The first stamp would be issued in September 2021 to commemorate 50 years of the inauguration of Ferney Hydro Electric Power Station. The second stamp would mark the Birth Centenary of Sir Edouard Lim Fat who has contributed significantly in the establishment of the Export Processing Zone (EPZ) in Mauritius in October 2021. The third stamp would be issued to mark the International Anti-Corruption Day on 09 December 2021 in order to raise awareness about the ill-effects of corruption and to reinforce the commitment of Mauritius in the international arena to achieve a corruption free society.

14. Cabinet has taken note of the activities being organised to celebrate the International Day of Families 2021 observed on 15 May. The UN theme retained for this year is “Families and New Technologies”. The theme retained at national level is “mofami#molazwa”. The following activities would be organised by the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family Welfare to mark the Day –

- (a) a video clip on resilience of families post COVID-19 would be broadcast on MBC and social media platforms to sensitise the public;
- (b) a short educational video clip has been developed to sensitise the public on “Communication within the Family”; and
- (c) officers of the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family Welfare would participate in radio programmes focusing on parenthood, inter-generation relationship, internet safety for children and conflict management, amongst others, with a view to sensitising the public at large.

15. Cabinet has taken note of the report of the Mauritius Meteorological Services (MMS) with regard to the Seasonal Outlook for Winter 2021 for Mauritius and Rodrigues. The main forecast for the Winter 2021 is, inter alia, as follows –

- (a) the observed trends of meteorological parameters in the region indicate that the onset of winter would be around the second week of May and would last till the end of October;
- (b) rainfall over Mauritius is expected to be slightly above normal for the first half of the season, and slightly below the normal for the second half;
- (c) the normal winter day temperature over the high grounds is normally around 22°C, and around 26°C along the coasts. The night temperature is normally around 16°C over the central plateau and around 19°C along coastal regions; and
- (d) due to intra-seasonal variation, on certain occasions when the Mascarenes would be under the influence of strong anticyclones, both Mauritius and Rodrigues might experience below normal day temperatures.

The Winter 2021 Seasonal Outlook Report would be released to the general public and would also be updated by the MMS upon the availability of fresh information.

16. Cabinet has taken note that according to the Mauritius Meteorological Services, an earthquake of magnitude 6.7 occurred on Wednesday 12 May 2021 at 1805 hours Mauritius Local Time at about 414 km to the north-east of Rodrigues. The depth of the epicentre was 10.0 km. For Mauritius, the epicentre of the earthquake was at distance of 979.85 km to the east-north-east of Port Louis. According to the Mauritius Meteorological Services, reports from Rodrigues indicated that the earthquake was not felt on the island. The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Centre, which had been monitoring the situation, has indicated that no abnormal wave height and no incidents were reported.
