

CABINET DECISIONS – 16 APRIL 2021

1. Cabinet has agreed to the Ministry of Financial Services and Good Governance conveying drafting instructions to the Attorney General's Office for the preparation of the Variable Capital Companies Bill. With a view to further enhancing the competitiveness of the Financial Services Sector and diversifying the product base of the Mauritius International Financial Centre, a set of measures was announced in the Budget Speech 2020–2021 in line with the recommendations of the 10-Year Blueprint for the Sector which, inter alia, comprises the introduction of a new sphere of activity to be carried out by Variable Capital Companies in Mauritius.

Cabinet has also noted that a technical team has been constituted to ensure that the proposed Bill complies with the Anti Money Laundering/Combatting the Financing of Terrorism requirements.

2. Cabinet has agreed to the Ministry of Financial Services and Good Governance conveying drafting instructions to the Attorney General's Office for the preparation of the Securities (Amendment) Bill. The proposed amendments to be brought to the Securities Act aim at -

- (a) bringing in the concept of "retail investor" compared to "sophisticated investor" in the legislation;
- (b) enabling the licensing of other exchanges and depository institutions over and above the Stock Exchange of Mauritius and the Central Depository and Settlement Ltd;
- (c) recognising foreign funds whose securities are marketed to retail investors in or from Mauritius; and
- (d) waiving the requirement for foreign reporting issuers to be registered with the Financial Services Commission.

3. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping and the Curtin University, Australia, on cooperation in the field of marine science research. The Memorandum of Understanding would provide for cooperation among the Fisheries Division of the Ministry of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping, the Mauritius Oceanography Institute and the Curtin University. It would also cater for the development of research activities that would build knowledge of the officers of the Ministry and the Curtin University in the field of marine science.

4. Cabinet has taken note that upon a request from the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change, samples of seawater had been collected on

12 April 2021 by the National Environment Laboratory along the shoreline at Mahebourg Waterfront, Pointe Jerome, Pointe d'Esny and Blue Bay public beach. In addition, the Albion Fisheries Research Centre collected seawater samples at six locations around the MV Wakashio wreck. The analysis did not reveal the presence of oil, grease or Total Hydrocarbons in any of the samples collected.

5. Cabinet has taken note that in order to cater for the expected shortage of frozen fish on the local market during the forthcoming winter months, the Ministry of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping would authorise the import of some 400 tonnes of 'Capitaine/La Perle' by registered importers of fish and fish products for 2021. The authorisation would be valid till end of July 2021.

6. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Tourism has enlisted the services of Reef Conservation, a non-governmental organisation, for the implementation of a project for the control of the population of crown of thorns (*acanthaster mauritiensis*) in Mauritius. The crown of thorns is a large multi-armed coral eating starfish which is a marine invasive species which has the capacity to decimate extensive areas of coral reefs.

The Programme of Works submitted by Reef Conservation, in relation to the project, comprises, inter alia, the control of the population of crown of thorns, training of divers from diving centres on the control methodology, control and monitoring of affected sites for recovery and sensitisation of the general public, including tourism stakeholders to raise awareness on these marine species and enlist their support in the control actions, among others. The project would be implemented strictly in accordance with the protocol established by the Ministry of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping, for the control of crown of thorns around Mauritius.

7. Cabinet has taken note of relief measures that the Central Water Authority and Central Electricity Board propose to extend to their consumers, regarding payment of utility bills for the months of March and April 2021, which fall within the confinement period.

8. Cabinet has taken note that Mauritius would ratify the Agreement amending the Mauritius-EU Schengen Agreement on Short Stay Visa. The Amending Agreement essentially provides for technical amendments to update the definition of short stays from "three months" to "90 days in any 180-day period". This was necessary as with the entry into operation of the Entry Exit System, the stay of third country nationals on EU territory would be encoded in days, and it would no longer be possible to compute the length of stay in months. The changes are part of EU's efforts to modernise and strengthen the management of its external borders.

9. Cabinet has taken note of the technical assistance provided under the Southern Africa Migration Management (SAMM) Project funded by the European Commission in the areas of migration management to the Government of Mauritius.

The overall objective of the SAMM project is to improve the management of migration in the Southern Africa and Indian Ocean region, including Mauritius. The technical assistance under the SAMM project relates to the following -

- (a) supporting relevant Government services to capture and manage harmonised cross-border and disaggregated data on mixed migration flows and vulnerable groups of migrants (trafficked, smuggled, disabled, children and youth);
- (b) ensuring that existing regional and national platforms can conduct consultations, exchanges, and capacity building on irregular/mixed migration issues; and
- (c) supporting the Government of Mauritius to assess the feasibility of setting up a pilot Southern Africa skills mobility programme in Mauritius. The skills mobility programme would be a central feature to foster cooperation and partnership within and between countries to fill labour market gaps/shortages with skills mobility being considered as a vehicle for sustainable development in the region.

10. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity would carry out the anti-influenza vaccination campaign across the island as from Thursday 22 April 2021. The vaccine would be administered to elderly persons above the age of 60 and children attending Special Education Needs schools.

11. Cabinet has taken note of measures taken to contain the Foot and Mouth Disease in Rodrigues, namely procurement of vaccines through the Indian Ocean Commission and by providing the assistance of Veterinary Officers to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly. The Officers proceeding to Rodrigues would observe the required quarantine procedures put in place by the Ministry of Health and Wellness.

12. Cabinet has taken note of the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic prevailing across the world. With regard to Mauritius, as at 16 April 2021, 1,216 cases (including imported cases) of COVID-19 had been registered since the outbreak of the pandemic in March 2020. There were currently 241 active cases of COVID-19 in Mauritius, out of which 237 were local cases and four 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.

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.

13. Cabinet has taken note of progress achieved so far in regard to the projected construction of 12,000 residential units as announced in Budget Speech 2020/2021. The

New Social Living Development Ltd has issued a Request for Proposal for the appointment of Project Management Consultants in Construction.

14. Cabinet has taken note that the National Land Transport Authority (NLTA) would, in the context of the COVID-19, proceed with the extension of the delay for renewal of Motor Vehicle Licences having expired in March 2021 and those which would lapse in April 2021, up to 31 August 2021. The extension would allow vehicle owners whose licences have lapsed or would lapse during the months of March and April 2021, respectively not to be penalised as they would be provided with a reasonable timeframe to renew their licences. They would, in addition, not be liable to the applicable surcharge on the condition that the renewal is made not later than 31 August 2021. However, upon renewal, arrears would have to be paid as from the expiry date of the licence. The renewal of the Motor Vehicle Licence would be subject to the vehicle having a valid Insurance Cover and a Certificate of Fitness.

15. Cabinet has agreed to the setting up of a Human Resource Management System (E-HR) using open-source software and an internal development team. An incremental approach would be adopted for the deployment of a system across Ministries/Departments. In this respect, in the first phase, the project would be implemented on a pilot basis at the Ministry of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation and the Ministry of Public Service, Administrative and Institutional Reforms.

Following the successful implementation of the pilot project, the System would be rolled out to other Ministries/Departments.

16. Cabinet has taken note that following the case of death of a baby at Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam National Hospital, the Medical Negligence Standing Committee, chaired by Me Lockraj Nuckchady, has been entrusted to investigate into the alleged case of medical negligence.

17. Cabinet has taken note that the Minister of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation participated in a virtual meeting with Mr John May, OBE, DL, Secretary General of the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award. It was part of a series of meetings that Mr May proposes to have with different Ministers from around the world with a view to promoting and positioning the Duke of Edinburgh's Award programme as a leader in non-formal education and learning. The meeting focused on non-formal education and learning.
