

CABINET DECISIONS – 19 February 2021

1. Cabinet has taken note that the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement (CECPA) between Mauritius and India would be signed during the visit of HE Dr S. Jaishankar, External Affairs Minister of India. The CECPA covers key components such as Trade in Goods and Trade in Services.

Under the Trade in Goods component, Mauritius would benefit from preferential market access on a list of 615 products, including sugar, tuna, rum, fruit wine, tropical fruits, medical devices and garments. Mauritius would provide preferential access on a list of 310 products including tea, spices, bed linen, material of steel and furniture, amongst others. On Services, the CECPA would provide market access in sectors such as financial services, tourism, education, distribution, ICT and professional services. It also provides for professional bodies to conclude mutual recognition of qualification in sectors such as architecture, engineering, medical, dental, accounting and auditing.

2. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the Republic of Mauritius in the field of Consumer Protection and Legal Metrology. The Memorandum of Understanding provides for collaboration in the field of consumer protection and legal metrology, namely –

- (a) the establishment of periodical exchange of information and documents relating to legal metrology, consumer protection, welfare and awareness of consumers;
- (b) the development of training programmes for officials and non-officials dealing with the subjects of legal metrology and consumer protection/ welfare;
- (c) the exchange of officials, experts and professionals in the areas of legal metrology and consumer protection/welfare to carry out specific programmes of mutual cooperation; and
- (d) assistance in the alignment of national standards to international standards.

3. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a Line of Credit Agreement of USD100M with the Government of India. The Line of Credit would be accompanied by a grant of USD5M. The loan proceeds and the grant would be used to procure defence related equipment, including a New Coastal Surveillance Radar System, a Passenger Variant Dornier, Advanced Light Helicopters and a Fast Interceptor Boat.

These equipment would allow the strengthening of operational capabilities of the Mauritius Police Force and the National Coast Guard in safeguarding the Exclusive Economic Zone of Mauritius and would be instrumental in combating illicit drug trafficking and illegal fishing in the territorial waters.

4. Cabinet has taken note that a Contract Agreement would be signed by the Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd and the CEB (Green) Co Ltd for the 8MWac Solar PV Farm Project at Tamarind Falls, Henrietta (Phase II). The project would be funded under a Line of Credit from the Government of India supported by the Export-Import (EXIM) Bank of India. The Solar PV Farm is expected to generate more than 12 GWh of electricity, powering some 8,000 households and avoiding around 11,000 tons of CO₂ annually. The Contract Agreement would be exchanged during the visit of the External Affairs Minister of India.

5. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Health and Wellness was implementing the construction of the Renal Transplant Unit at J. Nehru Hospital with a grant assistance of USD10 million from the Government of India. An exchange of letter between the Government of India and the Government of Mauritius on the support towards the construction of the Renal Transplant Unit would take place during the visit of the External Affairs Minister of India.

A Joint Project Monitoring Committee comprising representatives of the Indian Authorities and the Ministry of Health and Wellness would be set up to monitor the implementation and smooth operation of the Project.

6. Cabinet has agreed to the promulgation of –

- (a) the Road Traffic (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2021. The First Schedule of the Road Traffic Act would be amended to make provision for the payment of a road tax which would be applicable whilst registering an electric auto/motorcycle in Mauritius and Rodrigues; and
- (b) the Road Traffic (Construction and Use of Vehicles) (Amendment) Regulations 2021 to make provision for specific registration mark for electric auto/motorcycles.

Cabinet has also agreed to –

- (i) provide a 50 percent waiver on the applicable registration charges for existing owners of electric auto/motorcycles so as to reduce the financial burden of owners who have purchased their electric auto/motorcycles before the cut-off date of 31 March 2021; and
- (ii) amend the Fifth Schedule of the Road Traffic (Registration of Motor Vehicles and Trailers) Regulations 1963 with a view to introducing a fee amounting to Rs1,000 for the first registration of an electric autocycle *in lieu* of the one-off payment of Rs2,000.

7. Cabinet has agreed to the promulgation of the Radiation Safety and Nuclear Security (Control of Import and Export of Radiation Sources and Other Controlled Items) (Amendment) Regulations 2021, so as to align the HS Codes of the radiation sources and other controlled items with the latest HS Codes of the Customs Tariff Schedules (Integrated Tariff). The Regulations would be effective as from 15 March 2021.

8. Cabinet has agreed to the revamping of the Mauritius National Identity Card System (MNIC), as the existing hardware and software of the whole system have reached their end-of-support and end-of-life. The current MNIC would be revamped by a state-of-the-art technology with enhanced security features which may be used to provide a wider spectrum of customised e-services.

9. Cabinet has taken note of the launching of the second edition of the National Innovation Challenge (NIC) to be organised by the Mauritius Research and Innovation Council. The second edition of the NIC aims at unravelling and fostering local innovations from academia, private sector, start-ups, micro companies, SMEs, communities, backyard shed/home inventions and any other relevant stakeholders. One of the goals of the NIC is to inculcate and nurture an innovation culture among the Mauritian population while finding practical innovative solutions to common life problems. The competition would focus on indigenous/grassroots innovation driven by Mauritians for the betterment of life and livelihood of citizens.

10. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation would launch an Expression of Interest from organisations having experience in setting up and operating Data Centres for the provision of rack space and other facilities in a Tier IV Data Centre in Mauritius. The Government Online Data Centre which has been in operation since March 2005 is classified as a Tier III Data Centre. There is an urgent need for a new Data Centre with greater space and yet more resilience to cater for existing systems as well as future needs which are increasing exponentially.

11. Cabinet has taken note of the status of implementation of the first Mauritian Satellite project. The Mauritius Research and Innovation Council is implementing the Mauritius Imagery and Radio-Satellite (MIR-SAT1) project under the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) and the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) KiboCUBE Programme 2018.

The construction and testing of the satellite have been completed at AAC-Clyde Space in Glasgow and the nano-satellite has reached JAXA in Japan on 15 February 2021. A live official online handing-over event of the satellite to JAXA would be organised jointly with representatives of JAXA, AAC-Clyde Space, UNOOSA, the Mauritius Research and Innovation Council and the Ministry of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation and is tentatively scheduled for the third week of March 2021. The expected deployment in space from International Space Station is scheduled for June/July 2021.

12. Cabinet has taken note that the Mauritius launching of the “50 Million African Women Speak Project” (50 MAWSP) was held on 11 February 2021 during a virtual meeting attended by representatives of COMESA, the African Development Bank and the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family Welfare. The Project was conceived in July 2016 as an online multinational networking platform for women entrepreneurs, with a view to providing women entrepreneurs in the African Region with access to different financial and non-financial services. It is being fully funded by the African Development Bank and implemented in 36 countries of the COMESA, East African Community and Economic Community of West African States. It aims at creating and deploying a social media platform to enable women entrepreneurs to –

- (a) connect with one another in ways that will foster peer-to-peer learning, knowledge exchange/transfer, mentoring, the sharing of information and knowledge within communities;
- (b) access market opportunities across borders and between countries; and
- (c) develop market intelligence skills to stay abreast with business development trends within their contexts, regionally and globally to ensure sustainability of their businesses.

13. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family Welfare would mark the International Women’s Day 2021 by a national event at the Swami Vivekananda International Convention Centre, Pailles, on Sunday 28 February 2021. The UN Women has retained, for this year, the theme “**Women in leadership: Achieving an equal future in a COVID-19 World**” to celebrate the tremendous efforts made by women and girls around the world in shaping an equal future and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. The Ministry of Gender Equality and Family Welfare has retained a national theme, namely “**Post COVID-19: Women’s Voices and Choices**”. Other side events would include –

- (a) the Best Woman Entrepreneur Award to be organised by the National Women Entrepreneur Council. It aims at supporting existing Women Entrepreneurs to further innovate their business and upgrade the quality of their products;
- (b) launching of a project “Motherhood in Childhood” which aims at sensitising young girls on the sexual and reproductive health, and their roles and responsibilities; and
- (c) sensitisation programmes and awareness campaigns to be organised in collaboration with Mauritius Family Planning and Welfare Association, *Mouvement d’Aide à la Maternité*, PILS and Brigade pour la Protection des Mineurs.

14. 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 19 February 2021, 603 cases of COVID-19 had been registered. There were currently 30 active cases of COVID-19 in Mauritius. The public should continue to observe strict sanitary precautions.

15. Cabinet has taken note of the list of activities planned by the Public Officers' Welfare Council for the calendar year 2021, namely –

- (a) Karaoke Competition;
- (b) Basic Training in Dramatic Arts;
- (c) Trails;
- (d) *Mölkky* – One-day Festival;
- (e) Dictation Competition;
- (f) Walk-in football festival; and
- (g) Domino tournament.

16. Cabinet has taken note of developments regarding the Urban Terminal Project at Rose Hill. Arrangements are being made for the acquisition of additional land for inclusion in the Request for Proposals.

17. Cabinet has taken note of the constitution of the National Youth Environment Council with Dr Zaheer Allam, OSK, as Chairperson.

18. Cabinet has agreed to the constitution of the Board of the Institute for Judicial and Legal Studies with Mr Joseph Gérard Angoh, as Chairperson.
