

CABINET DECISIONS – 22 JANUARY 2021

1. Cabinet has taken note that the Government of the Republic of India would donate 100,000 doses of Astrazeneca vaccines to the Government of Mauritius and the consignment would reach Mauritius on the evening of 22 January 2021.

2. Cabinet has agreed to the implementation of the National Deployment and Vaccination Plan for COVID-19 Vaccines in the Republic of Mauritius. The Plan highlights the regulatory preparedness, the planning and coordination of the introduction of the vaccine, its supply chain management, service delivery and healthcare waste management and includes human resources management and training.

A National Coordinating Committee for COVID-19 Vaccine has been set up to, inter alia, coordinate/support implementation of the National Deployment and Vaccination Plan for COVID-19 Vaccines.

3. 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, no local case has been recorded since 26 November 2020. As at 22 January 2021, 556 cases of COVID-19 had been registered. There were currently 22 active imported cases of COVID-19 in Mauritius. The public should continue to observe strict sanitary precautions.

4. Cabinet has taken note of the constitution of the National COVID-19 Vaccination Programme Fund Managing Committee with Mr Dharam Dev Manraj, G.O.S.K, Financial Secretary, as Chairperson.

5. Cabinet has agreed to the promulgation of the Private Secondary Schools (Amendment) Regulations 2021. Following closure of schools as from 19 March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the initial school calendar was adjusted and the third term 2020 would now end on 26 March 2021 instead of October/November.

The Private Secondary Education Regulations have to be aligned with the Education (Amendment) Regulations 2021 to allow students who would have attained the age of 20 by 31 December 2020 to complete their school year. The Regulations are also being amended to allow students who have not attained the age of 19 on 1 June (instead of 1 January) of the year of his proposed admission to be admitted to Grade 12.

6. Cabinet has taken note that the Ports (Fees) (Amendment) Regulations 2021, would be promulgated under the Ports Act, so as to enable the Mauritius Ports Authority to charge, under the First Schedule of the Regulations, a 10 percent increase on quay fees on laden import containers for the period 01 January 2021 to 30 June 2021.

7. Cabinet has taken note that the following Regulations would be promulgated –

- (a) Customs Tariff (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2021;
- (b) Customs (Export to the African Continental Free Trade Area) Regulations 2021;
- (c) Excise (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2021; and
- (d) Excise (Amendment) Regulations 2021.

The Regulations provide for the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), the extension of the safeguard customs duty on margarine and spread and the removal of the excise duty of Rs2 per unit on non-biodegradable plastic products following the ban on their use.

8. Cabinet has agreed to the Ministry of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity conveying drafting instructions to the Attorney General's Office for the preparation of a Disability Bill. The Disability Bill would provide, inter alia, for the following –

- (a) the incorporation in the domestic law of the Articles of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to which Mauritius is a party as far as possible;
- (b) the promotion of full enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms by persons with disabilities;
- (c) the accessibility to physical, social, economic and cultural environment and to health, education, information, communication and technology for persons with disabilities;
- (d) the provision for the regulation and registration of organisations that provide services to persons with disabilities; and
- (e) the establishment of a National Agency for Persons with Disabilities which would bring under a single umbrella the existing Training and Employment of Disabled Persons Board, the National Council for the Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons and the Loïs Lagesse Trust Fund.

9. Cabinet has agreed to Mauritius signing the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Older Persons in Africa. The Charter is an international human rights instrument which is intended to promote and protect human rights and basic freedoms of individuals in the African continent.

The Protocol makes provision for different measures regarding the protection and care of elderly persons, including -

- (a) elimination of discrimination against elderly persons;
- (b) protection against discrimination in employment;
- (c) social protection;
- (d) protection from abuse and harmful traditional practices;
- (e) care and support for the elderly;
- (f) residential care;
- (g) support for older persons taking care of vulnerable children; and
- (h) access to education.

10. Cabinet has taken note of the status of implementation of the National Multi Hazard Emergency Alert System by the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Centre (NDRRMC). The implementation of the project would allow the NDRRMC to operate a central high-performance system with minimal downtime to coordinate, control and administer the different interfaces for mass communication and the identified channels would allow multiple and simultaneous means of communicating rapidly to a maximum number of people in a minimum of time, using available technology.

11. Cabinet has taken note of the activities being organised by the Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage on 01 February 2021 in collaboration with Le Morne Heritage Trust Fund, the Nelson Mandela Centre for African Culture, ISM Mauritius Ltd, the National Heritage Fund and the Creole Speaking Union, to commemorate the 186th Anniversary of the Abolition of Slavery in Mauritius. The theme retained for this year's commemoration is '*Resiliants*' to showcase the achievements of the descendants of slaves who have withstood all adversities and bounced back despite the trauma of slavery.

A wreath laying ceremony would be held at –

- (a) the 'Monument aux Esclaves', Pointe Canon, Mahebourg on 31 January 2021; and

- (b) at the International Slave Route Monument, opposite Le Morne Public Beach on 1 February 2021, followed by an official programme at Le Morne Village, opposite Le Morne Government School.

12. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation would set up a Unit within the Ministry to be known as the Team Mauritius. This would be in line with the creation of an amateur to an elite sports environment, as recommended by the National Sport and Physical Activity Policy. The Team Mauritius would be the sole Unit that would drive the talent and elite sport landscape to inspire Mauritians in the pursuit of excellence on the world stage. It would be entrusted with the following key responsibilities –

- (a) strategic planning of high-performance sport;
- (b) merging of the existing Grassroots and Elite sports Sub-Directorates while developing the elite sport environment and the athlete development pathway, where human and financial resources would be optimised;
- (c) allocating elite sport funding and providing necessary support to National Sports Federations;
- (d) overseeing preparation for elite competitions and training camps;
- (e) developing partnerships with the private sector with regard to the development of high-performance sports; and
- (f) maintaining a database on the performance of elite athletes.

13. Cabinet has taken note of the activities being organised by the Ministry of Health and Wellness in the context of World Cancer Day, observed on 4 February. The theme for the Day is '**I am and I will**'. The launching event would be held on 04 February 2021 at the New Cancer Hospital, Phoenix where screening for breast and cervical cancer would be carried out. Talks and an exhibition on cancer, healthy lifestyle and healthy diet would also be organised. Other activities would include -

- (a) the broadcast of programmes on MBC TV on the theme of the World Cancer Day;
- (b) the dissemination of information on the causes of cancer in order to raise awareness about the potential risk of cancer;
- (c) talks and sensitisation campaigns at Community Health Centres, Women Centres, Social Welfare Centres, schools, urban/rural community settings on the risk factors of cancer and the preventive measures to be taken; and

- (d) consultative meetings with all stakeholders for the elaboration and finalisation of a National Cancer Control Programme Action Plan 2021-2025.

14. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the “Human Rights Day” organised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade in collaboration with the United Nations Resident Coordinator Office in Mauritius in December 2020. The event was held to mark the 72th anniversary of the Universal Declaration for Human Rights and to reaffirm the importance of human rights, especially in re-building the economy during and after the COVID-19 crisis. The theme chosen by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), was *“Build back better by putting Human Rights at the core of the recovery”*.
