

**CABINET DECISIONS – 25 JUNE 2021**

1. Cabinet has agreed to the setting up of a Commission of Inquiry to be presided by a Judge to inquire into, inter alia, the circumstances in which the contract for transport of petroleum products to Mauritius (Contract of Affreightment) was awarded to Betamax Ltd and the circumstances which subsequently led to the termination of the said contract.

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2. Cabinet has taken note of the Public Statement issued by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) with regard to Mauritius after its Plenary that ended that very day and has, inter alia, highlighted the high-level political commitment of Mauritius to work with the FATF and ESAAMLG to strengthen the effectiveness of its AML/CFT regime. The FATF has indicated that it intends to effect an on-site assessment at the earliest possible date, to verify the implementation of Mauritius's AML/CFT reforms.

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3. Cabinet has agreed to the industry stakeholders being consulted on the proposals contained in the draft Virtual Asset Business Bill and to drafting instructions being subsequently conveyed to the Attorney General's Office for finalisation of the Bill. The object of the Bill is to provide for a regulatory framework for virtual asset service providers and the issuers of initial token offerings. The Bill accordingly makes provisions for –

- (a) the licensing, supervision and monitoring of virtual asset service providers;
- (b) the registration procedures and requirements for the issuance of initial token offerings;
- (c) the technical requirements, governance structures, risk management and information disclosure issues for virtual asset service providers;
- (d) the protection of the interests of clients of virtual asset service providers; and
- (e) compliance with international standards of the Financial Action Task Force on anti-money laundering and combatting the financing of terrorism and activities related to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

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4. Cabinet has taken note that the Minister of Health and Wellness has made the Public Health (COVID-19 Vaccines for Emergency Use) (Amendment No. 4) Regulations 2021 to enable vaccination of persons below the age of 18, in accordance with the directives and specifications to be issued by the Ministry of Health and Wellness on the types of vaccines to be administered.

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5. Cabinet has taken note of the main outcomes of the recent virtual sessions organised jointly with the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and the Progress Harmony and Development (PHD) Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The objective of these sessions was mainly to apprise Indian businesses on the trade and investment opportunities under the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement (CECPA), which entered into force on 01 April 2021. The session organised by CII was presided by Dr Anish Shah, Chairman and CEO of the Mahindra Group. The event was attended by more than 100 Indian businesses. The Economic Development Board, the Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Mauritius Exporters Association and Business Mauritius also participated. The inaugural session included an interactive session with key Indian businesses in various sectors including financial services, chemicals, light rail and tourism. The session was followed by a business seminar.

The PHD event was chaired by Mr Naveen Seth, Assistant Secretary General of the PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry. More than 170 Indian businesses attended the session. The main takeaways of these sessions were, inter alia, –

- (a) Mauritius offers a sound environment for Indian businesses to tap both the African Market and the other countries with whom Mauritius has concluded FTAs such as the EU, UK, US and China;
- (b) Indian operators could avail of warehousing facilities in the Mauritius freeport to service the African Market; and
- (c) the possibility of developing a special economic zone in Mauritius for Indian operators could be explored, allowing Indian businesses to enjoy preferential access both on the African continent and in India.

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6. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Economic Development Board and the Seychelles Investment Board. The Memorandum of Understanding has four main objectives –

- (a) enhancing cooperation between the Economic Development Board and the Seychelles Investment Board;
- (b) establishing a practical framework agreeable to both parties for cooperation with regard to investment and export promotion and facilitation;
- (c) strengthening institutional relations and capacity building through mutual cooperation; and
- (d) facilitating Outward Direct Investment to Seychelles from Mauritius through the creation of a dedicated desk within the Seychelles Investment Board. The Seychelles Investment Board would also provide aftercare services to operational businesses to support them with business expansions/re-investments.

There would be an investment desk at the Seychelles Investment Board and an investment officer of the Seychelles Investment Board would liaise with the Economic Development Board Global Outreach Directorate.

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7. Cabinet has agreed to the request from India to support the inclusion of an item for consideration by the United Nations General Committee, for granting Observer Status to the International Solar Alliance at the United Nations General Assembly. The International Solar Alliance was launched by India and France during the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 21) of the UN Framework on Climate Change in Paris in 2015 with the objective to address key common challenges in scaling up solar energy among Member States and to support developing countries to boost their solar energy production capacity. Mauritius is among the founding members of the International Solar Alliance.

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8. Cabinet has taken note that a Coordination Committee would be set up to look into and to formalise the establishment of a mechanism for the promotion of Mauritian expertise. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade has been studying a proposal for the establishment of a mechanism to manage a database of Mauritian experts for assignment as consultants in other countries.

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9. Cabinet has agreed to the proposal for the Municipal City Council of Port Louis to submit its application to UNESCO for potential inclusion of the City of Port Louis in the UNESCO Creative Cities Network in the field of Music. The UNESCO Creative Cities Network was launched in 2004 to promote cooperation with and amongst cities having recognized creativity as a major factor in their sustainable urban development. The network covers seven creative fields which are Crafts and Folk Arts, Media Arts, Film, Design, Gastronomy, Literature and Music. The common mission of these cities is to work together while placing culture and creativity at the core of their urban development.

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10. Cabinet has taken note that in the context of the forthcoming Eid-UI-Adha festival, the price of live cattle has been fixed at Rs 151 per kilo. The Consumer Protection (Control of Sale of Imported Live Animals for Home Slaughter) Regulations would be amended accordingly.

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11. Cabinet has taken note that following the MV Wakashio Oil Spill, the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change arranged for the collection, transportation and storage of the Heavy Fuel Oil-contaminated solid and sludge wastes arising from the clean-up operations. These wastes are classified as hazardous wastes under the First Schedule of the Environment Protection (Standards for hazardous wastes) Regulations 2001 and cannot be disposed of locally. The wastes would be shipped in batches of ten 40ft shipping containers. The first shipment is scheduled for 02 July 2021 and the remaining wastes are expected to be shipped by the end of August 2021.

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12. Cabinet has taken note of the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic prevailing across the world. Some 180.7 million cases have been reported globally, of which 165.4 million persons have been successfully treated. With regard to Mauritius, as from March 2020 to 25 June 2021, 1,887 cases (including imported cases) of COVID-19 had been registered. There were 391 active cases of COVID-19 in Mauritius, out of which 369 were local cases and 22 imported cases. Contact tracing exercises and random testing are being carried out in accordance with the established protocol.

Cabinet has also taken note of progress in the implementation of the national COVID-19 vaccination programme. The milestone of 500,000 vaccinated persons with a first dose of vaccine had already been reached.

Cabinet has further taken note of the reopening of certain activities as from 01 July 2021, subject to strict sanitary precautions being taken, including wearing of masks, social distancing, regular washing of hands and use of sanitiser. Appropriate Regulations would be promulgated.

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13. Cabinet has taken note that three para-athletes would participate in the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games, namely –

- (a) Miss Noémi Alphonse, wheelchair specialist, in the 100m WC T54, 400m WC T54, 800m WC T54, 1500m WC T54 and 5000m WC T54;
- (b) Miss Anaïs Angéline in 100m T37, 200m T37 and Long Jump T37; and
- (c) Mr Eddy Capdor in Long Jump T20.

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14. Cabinet has taken note of the re-election of former Chief Justice Mr Y. K. J. Yeung Sik Yuen, GOSK, on the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination during the 29<sup>th</sup> Meeting of States Parties to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. His third term of office would start on 20 January 2022 and would end on 19 January 2026.

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15. Cabinet has taken note of the activities being organised by the Ministry of Health and Wellness to commemorate the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, observed on 26 June. The theme chosen for this year is “Share Facts on Drugs, Save Lives.” The following activities would be held –

- (a) sensitisation of the population at large on the dangers of illicit drugs through talks on MBC radio and TV in creole and bhojpuri; and
- (b) interventions by health professionals in “*Priorité Santé*” on MBC TV.

Cabinet has also taken note that a half-day workshop would be organised by the National Drug Secretariat, under the aegis of the Prime Minister’s Office, on 26 June 2021 at the Prison Training Academy, Beau Bassin. The Prime Minister would be the Chief Guest and would launch the workshop. The participation of NGOs engaged in the prevention of drug use as well as Ministries/Departments concerned would be enlisted.

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16. Cabinet has taken note of the arrangements being made for the International Day of Cooperatives 2021 celebrated on the first Saturday of July. The theme chosen for this year is “*Rebuild better together*”. The Cooperatives Division of the Ministry of Industrial Development, SMEs and Cooperatives would, in collaboration with the National Cooperative College, Cooperative Federations and other stakeholders, organise a gathering for co-operators at the National Cooperative College Auditorium at Terre Rouge on Saturday 03 July 2021, while observing all sanitary protocols. Other activities include –

- (a) a wreath laying ceremony to be held at the stele of cooperatives at “*Jardin de la Compagnie*”, Port Louis, in collaboration with the Mauritius Cooperative Alliance Limited, the apex body of the cooperative movement; and
- (b) the message of the Minister of Industrial Development, SMEs and Cooperatives on MBC TV to the nation on the International Day of Cooperatives 2021.

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17. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent virtual meeting between the Ministers of Trade of the African Union and the Director General of the World Trade Organization (WTO). The Minister of Land Transport and Light Rail, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade was invited to chair the virtual meeting in his capacity as Coordinator of the African Group at the WTO and also to make an opening statement. He emphasised, inter alia, the following points –

- (a) there should be a balanced and equitable distribution of vaccines;
- (b) all export restrictions on vaccines should be lifted; and
- (c) the request of a waiver tabled by India and South Africa to increase the production of vaccines should be expeditiously considered and agreed by the WTO Member States.

The WTO Director General indicated that since taking office in March 2021, her focus has been on revitalising and rebranding the WTO in order to bring it back to the centre of the global economic governance.

During the virtual meeting, the African Ministers highlighted the need for the WTO to come forward with practical measures to ensure that international trade contributes to the economic recovery of its Members, and facilitate their integration in global supply chains. Many delegations stated that the digital divide became even more apparent during the pandemic.

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18. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Board of the Public Officers' Welfare Council with Mr Jaylall Mulloo, as Chairperson.

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