

CABINET DECISIONS – 26 FEBRUARY 2021

1. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the discussions held during the *tête-à-tête* the Prime Minister had with HE Dr S. Jaishankar, External Affairs Minister of India during his recent visit to Mauritius. Various issues were discussed including the Chagos Archipelago, the Metro Express Project, the supply of vaccines, the signing of the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement (CECPA), the Double Taxation Avoidance Convention, (DTAC), the Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT)/Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement, Space Technology, and Enhancing Maritime Connectivity in the South West Indian Ocean Region.

During the visit, there was –

- (a) the signing of the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement (CECPA) between Mauritius and India;
- (b) the exchange of a Memorandum of Understanding on Consumer Protection and Legal Metrology;
- (c) the exchange of Contract for the design, supply, installation, testing and commissioning of a 8MW Solar Photovoltaic Farm at Tamarind Falls, Henrietta;
- (d) the exchange of an Agreement for a Line of Credit of US\$100 million from the Government of India;
- (e) the exchange of letters for the lease of one Passenger variant Dornier;
- (f) the exchange of letters for the lease of one advanced light helicopter; and
- (g) the exchange of letters for the construction of a Renal Transplant Unit at the J. Nehru Hospital under grant assistance.

2. Cabinet has taken note that the Flag Raising Ceremony for the National Day Celebrations which marks the 53rd Independence Anniversary and 29th Anniversary of the Republic would be held on Friday 12 March 2021 at the State House, Le Réduit. The Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage would set up a Heritage Village Project depicting Mauritian life during the pre-independence and post-independence period, at the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam Botanic Garden from 26 March to 04 April 2021.

3. Cabinet has agreed to drafting instructions being conveyed to the Attorney General's Office for amendments to be brought to the Construction Industry Development Board Act with a view to revamping the existing legislation to meet the requirements of the evolving construction sector.

Given the dynamic nature of the construction industry, it has become imperative to revamp the existing Construction Industry Development Board Act to address the deficiencies identified therein and empower the Board to take disciplinary actions against defaulting consultants and contractors.

4. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of the Agreement for Mauritius to participate in the second phase of the '*Observatoire de la CONFEMEN pour la qualité de l'Education*'. The CONFEMEN has the following three main objectives –

- (a) informing its members on the evolution of education systems and ongoing reforms;
- (b) providing key inputs for a reflection on topics of common interest in sight of collaborative action; and
- (c) propelling cooperation between Ministers and experts in order to elaborate common positions and propose recommendations to support regional and international policies in education.

'*L'Observatoire de la CONFEMEN pour la qualité de l'Education*' has been set up with a view to showcasing good practices in the field of education of the participating countries. The objective of the Agreement is to cooperate with a view to contributing to the implementation of the activities of the '*L'Observatoire de la CONFEMEN pour la qualité de l'Education*', in particular by exchanging information and documentation through reciprocal consultation and representation by carrying out joint actions.

5. Cabinet has taken note of the launching of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Policy, Strategic Framework and Action Plan 2020-2030 for the Republic of Mauritius on 02 March 2021, followed by a Capacity Building Workshop. The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Policy, Strategic Framework and Action Plan 2020-2030 has been developed in accordance with section 13 of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act, and with the support of the *Agence Française de Développement*, after consultation with relevant stakeholders in both the public and private sectors. The plan aims at addressing the national requirements set out in the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act and comprises the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Policy, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Strategic Framework and the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Action Plan 2020-2030.

6. Cabinet has taken note that the Government of the People's Republic of China has agreed to provide financial assistance to Mauritius as follows –

- (a) a grant of 40 million RMB Yuan which would be utilised to implement projects to be agreed upon between the two Governments; and
- (b) a remission of 32 million RMB Yuan on the 40 million RMB Yuan under the Economic and Technical Cooperation Agreement.

7. Cabinet has agreed to the review of the Aquaculture Policy for the implementation of new in-lagoon aquaculture projects. The framework to conceptualise aquaculture projects in Mauritius is being reviewed to ensure that the framework –

- (a) encourages responsible and sustainable aquaculture in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of the Republic of Mauritius;
- (b) promotes a decision-making process that is defined and efficient;
- (c) gives due regard to precautionary principle;
- (d) is consistent with applicable Mauritian legislation;
- (e) is fair to aquaculturists and other key stakeholders;
- (f) is conducted in a transparent manner; and
- (g) is adaptive where reasonably required and promotes opportunities for innovation, data collection, and training and capacity building.

8. Cabinet has taken note of the launching of the Enterprise Innovation Booster Scheme by the Mauritius Research and Innovation Council with a view to boosting the innovative drive of local businesses. The aim of the Scheme is to help Mauritian companies grow, transform and be better equipped through innovation for the future and for the global market. The Scheme is deemed to be a progression from developing internal core capabilities to innovating for productivity growth and finally, expansion. The objective is to support innovative projects, help business operations to upgrade through innovation and/or venture overseas.

The Mauritius Research and Innovation Council would support 75 percent of the project cost for an amount not exceeding Rs 2M per project and for a maximum project duration of nine months. The Scheme is scheduled to be launched in March 2021.

9. Cabinet has taken note of the implementation of an electronic queue management system, "*Mo Rendez Vous*", by the Ministry of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation with a view to enhancing public service delivery in the context of the digital transformation of Mauritius and as mentioned in the Budget Speech 2020/2021. The Ministry is implementing an electronic queue management system, on a pilot scale at three sites, namely the Passport and Immigration Office, the Work Permit Unit of the Ministry of Labour, Human Resource Development and Training and the Pharmacy Unit of Dr Bruno Cheong Hospital, Flacq. The platform developed comprises, inter alia, a queue and service counter for effective service delivery, ticket dispensing through digital kiosks or online means, notification features and a reporting/statistic module for user Ministries or Departments to enhance service delivery. "*Mo Rendez Vous*", would help eliminate traditional queueing systems, rendering public service delivery more effective and citizen friendly. "*Mo Rendez Vous*" is expected to be operational during the first week of March 2021 at the three sites.

10. Cabinet has agreed to the implementation of recommendations following the completion of the pilot mapping and profiling survey of the Mauritian Diaspora in Australia, Canada and United Kingdom. The survey was funded by the International Organisation for Migration Development Fund and was conducted by IOM Consultants namely, Dr Martin Russell and Ms Emira Ajeti from August to November 2020. According to figures from the European Union Global Diaspora Facility, there are approximately 188,300 Mauritians living abroad. The survey forms part of the project entitled '*Building the capacity of the Mauritian Government to strengthen linkages with the Mauritian Diaspora*' which the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade is implementing in conjunction with the IOM Office in Mauritius. The survey revealed that there is a deep commitment of the diaspora towards Mauritius and there is a wish to contribute positively to the development of the country.

11. Cabinet has taken note of the status of the project for the setting up of a plant for composting of green market waste at Henrietta. Emphasis is being laid on the optimal adherence to the three R's principle, that is, Reduce, Re-use and Recycle. The University of Mauritius would also provide theoretical and practical training on large scale composting to the operators of the plant. The composting plant has been designed for the collection of leachates in retention tanks and all precautionary measures have been taken to prohibit the percolation thereof in the soil. The project is expected to start in July 2021.

12. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the implementation of the recommendations of National Export Strategy (NES), for period March 2017 to February 2021. The recommendations of the NES have been made in respect of -

- (a) seven priority sectors, namely, Agro-Processing, Cultural Tourism, Financial Services, Fisheries and Aquaculture, Jewellery, Medical Devices and Software Development;
- (b) five cross-sectoral themes, particularly, Branding, Innovation, Institutional Alignment, Skills Development, SME Internationalisation; and
- (c) a dedicated strategy for Rodrigues.

The NES Action Plan is nearing its implementation time frame in February 2021 and the NES has contributed positively in the export of manufactured products.

13. 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 in various countries. With regard to Mauritius, there has been no local transmission in the community since 26 November 2020. As at 26 February 2021, 610 cases of COVID-19 had been registered. There were currently 14 active cases of COVID-19 in Mauritius. The public should continue to observe strict sanitary precautions. Passengers coming from Brazil, Japan and South Africa or those who have transited through these countries during the last 15 days would not be allowed to enter Mauritius until 31 May 2021. The restriction on passengers from UK would be lifted as from 01 March 2021.

Cabinet has also taken note that the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme would be extended to pensioners aged 60 and above.

14. Cabinet has taken note that the quarantine period in Mauritius would be extended from 31 March to 31 May 2021. The Minister of Health and Wellness would issue a Notice under section 4(1) of the Quarantine Act 2020 and make the Quarantine (COVID-19) (Amendment) Regulations 2021.

Cabinet has also taken note that the Prime Minister would amend the Order made under section 3(1)(a) of the Quarantine Act 2020 to extend the prohibition of entry of aircrafts and ships into Mauritius until 31 May 2021, except for those aircrafts and ships as the Prime Minister may approve.

15. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the official visit of the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Land Use Planning, Minister of Tourism to Rodrigues. The primary purpose of the visit was to discuss with the Rodrigues Regional Assembly (RRA) and other relevant stakeholders on how to work together to ensure a proper land use planning and State Land management in Rodrigues, and promote the development of the tourism sector, as well as domestic tourism.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Land Use Planning, Minister of Tourism had a meeting with the Chief Commissioner and his team. As regards State Land and Land Use Planning matters, the Ministry of Housing and Land Use Planning agreed to, inter alia, provide assistance to the RRA in various areas including the finalisation of a land use planning framework for Rodrigues, the drafting of a master plan for Port Mathurin and the drafting of the Terms of Reference for the enlistment of the services of consultants to set up a digitalised land register in Rodrigues.

Various requests made by the RRA in regard to the tourism sector would also be considered by the Ministry of Tourism.

The official launching of the Safe Travel Certificate for operators in the tourism sector was also scheduled during the visit.

16. Cabinet has taken note that the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade participated virtually in the High Level Segment of the 46th session of the Human Rights Council. The Minister outlined the efforts of Government to enhance the protection of children in line with international benchmarks and also referred to the threat of COVID-19 and the challenges of Climate Change. He recalled the judgments of the International Court of Justice and the International Tribunal on the Law of the Sea which recognised the sovereignty of Mauritius over the Chagos Archipelago.

17. Cabinet has taken note that the Review Panel under the Financial Intelligence and Anti-Money Laundering Act has been set up with Mr Joseph Gérard Angoh, former Judge as Chairperson.

18. Cabinet has taken note that the President of the Republic has appointed Dr Mitrajeet Dhaneshwar Maraye as Ombudsperson for Financial Services.
