

CABINET DECISIONS – 28 MAY 2021

1. Cabinet has agreed to the promulgation of the Education (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2021 to provide for a registered candidate who has not been able to sit for the Primary School Achievement Certificate (PSAC) Assessment 2020-2021 in April 2021 to take the PSAC re-assessment papers, subject to conditions and criteria specified in the Annual Programme for the PSAC Assessment 2020-2021, and that such a candidate would not qualify for a further re-assessment. The Regulations would take effect as from 27 May 2021.

Cabinet has also agreed to the issue of the Government Notice on the addendum to the Annual Programme for the Primary School Achievement Certificate Assessment 2020 - 2021 to provide for the following categories of candidates who were absent for the PSAC April 2021 Assessment to be allowed to take the re-assessment paper(s) –

- (a) candidates who were in quarantine, or in COVID-19 treatment centres, and who did not sit for any paper or some papers;
- (b) primary school candidates who did not sit for any paper or some of the papers; and
- (c) secondary school candidates who sat for at least one paper in April 2021.

Candidates would be informed of their eligibility to participate in the re-assessment, as the case may be, according to a prescribed time table, when they receive their result slip. There would be no further re-assessment for PSAC 2020-2021.

2. Cabinet has agreed to the implementation of a new sanitary protocol for St Brandon and Agalega in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The objective of the protocol is to prevent the introduction of COVID-19 in these islands.

The protocol for St Brandon is applicable to civil servants on tour of service, staff employed by Raphael Co. Ltd, the fishermen community living on Raphael Island, crew members of fishing vessels as well as Mauritians and foreigners sailing on board pleasure crafts and catamarans on St Brandon waters for leisure. The Protocol makes provision for PCR tests and quarantine to be carried out. In the wake of the current sanitary restrictions, pleasure crafts and catamarans are prohibited to proceed to the outer islands until further notice. No fishing vessel is allowed to onboard any Mauritian and foreigner for recreational fishing.

With regard to Agalega, the Protocol would apply to civil servants on tour of service, Mauritian and Agalean passengers, foreign workers, personnel and crew members of MV Trochetia. Local passengers would have to undergo 14 days' quarantine in a centre identified by the Ministry of Health and Wellness in Mauritius and undergo three PCR tests. Foreign workers would have to undergo 21 days' quarantine with four PCR tests before embarking for Agalega.

3. Cabinet has agreed to drafting instructions being conveyed to the Attorney General's Office for amendments to be brought to the Mauritius Research and Innovation Council Act 2019 to enlarge its scope, mandate and objects to enable it not only to coordinate, promote and advise on research, development and innovation but also to be instrumental to lead, develop and implement research, development and innovation strategies.

4. Cabinet has taken note that the Minister of Health and Wellness has promulgated the COVID-19 (Horse Race Meeting at Champ de Mars) (Amendment) Regulations 2021 to provide for the holding of Horse Race Meetings (in camera) in the month of June 2021, in accordance with the established sanitary protocols.

5. Cabinet has taken note of the results of the PSAC Assessment 2021. Out of the 14,103 school candidates of the Republic of Mauritius who took part in the PSAC Assessment for the first time, 10,423 have met the requirement for the PSAC, representing a percentage of 73.91%, as compared to 73.86% in 2019. 73.87% of candidates have met the PSAC requirements in the Island of Mauritius, 74.53% in Rodrigues and 33.3% in Agalega. With regard to the performance in the ZEP schools in Mauritius and Rodrigues, 40.45% of candidates have met the PSAC requirements.

6. Cabinet has agreed to Polytechnics Mauritius Ltd signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the Rodrigues Regional Assembly for the setting up of a Campus in Rodrigues. The setting up of a Polytechnics Mauritius Campus at Citron Donis would have as main focus the revamping of the Technical and Vocational Training Sector for the development of a skilled workforce which is required in areas deemed as high importance to the socio-economic development of Rodrigues.

Pending the completion of works and launching of operations at the Citron Donis Campus, Polytechnics Mauritius Ltd proposes to, in collaboration with the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, proceed with a soft launch of several programmes at diploma level in the fields of Cybersecurity, Interactive and Digital Media, Leisure Management and Industrial Logistics that would be conducted at the Antoinette Prudence Human Resource Development Centre in Malabar and at the ICT Centre for Excellence in Port Mathurin.

7. Cabinet has taken note that an amount of Rs199.37M has been collected from distiller-bottler contribution from January 2020 to April 2021 and has been credited to the account of the Mauritius Sugar Syndicate for payment to sugar cane planters.

8. Cabinet has taken note of the state of progress regarding the establishment of a Dispute Settlement Body in the context of the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Agreement. With the entry into force of the AfCFTA Agreement on 30 May 2019, the Protocol on the Rules and Procedures on the Settlement of Disputes and its Annexes, also entered into force. The Protocol sets out a clearly defined mechanism for the resolution of trade disputes arising from the implementation of the AfCFTA Agreement. The Protocol provides for the establishment of a Dispute Settlement Body as the supreme organ, with the mandate to monitor implementation of rulings and recommendations of Dispute Panels and the Appellate Body.

9. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the 35th Council of Ministers of the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) which was held virtually. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade stressed on the need for the IOC to continue assisting the Member States in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic and to assist in their economic recovery. The issues discussed by the Council of Ministers were, inter alia, as follows –

- (a) Maritime Security - The mandates of the Regional Maritime Information Fusion Centre and the Regional Coordination of Operations Centre were being expanded to fight against marine pollution and illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing;
- (b) Blue Economy - A Regional Action Plan on Blue Economy has been adopted which consists of regional actions which would support the development of the blue economy; and
- (c) Response to Pandemics - The *Agence Française de développement* and the European Union have provided €4M and €9.35M respectively to the IOC to assist Member States to contain the COVID-19 pandemic.

10. Cabinet has taken note of the conduct of a National Innovation Campaign which would culminate into the organisation of “*Les Assises de la Recherche et de L’Innovation*” by the Mauritius Research and Innovation Council. The aim of a National Innovation Campaign is to rekindle the innovation spirit amongst economic agents, as well as the Mauritian population in general, of the opportunities available at the Mauritius Research and Innovation Council to facilitate their path in their innovation journey.

The main aim of “*Les Assises de La Recherche et de L’Innovation*” is to set the foundations for the development of a National Strategy for Research and Innovation. The objectives of holding this event, among others, are as follows -

- (a) identification and elimination of barriers for innovation;
- (b) co-ordination of disparate policies related to research, technology commercialisation, investments, education, trade, Intellectual Property, and regulatory policies in an integrated manner; and
- (c) chart incentives for fostering innovation in informal and non-traditional sectors.

11. Cabinet has taken note of the recent participation of the Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation as Panellist in the Ministerial Round Table of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Forum 2021. The WSIS Forum, organised jointly on an annual basis by the International Telecommunication Union, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, United Nations Development Programme and United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, is the world's largest annual gathering of the "ICT for Development" Community. It provides an inclusive global multi-stakeholder platform for all participants to exchange knowledge and information, enhance collaborative networks and to share best practices in the information and communication technologies sector.

The theme of the 2021 edition was "*ICTs for Inclusive, Resilient and Sustainable Societies and Economies (WSIS Action Lines for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals)*". The Ministerial Round Table participants emphasised on the importance of the WSIS Action Lines framework as a key UN framework and the importance of investment in Information Communication technologies to close the digital gaps and divides. They further stressed on the importance of resilient and secure ICT infrastructure in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

12. Cabinet has taken note of the judgment delivered on 27 May 2021 by the Supreme Court in *Seegum vs The State of Mauritius 2021 SCJ 162*. The judgment declares unconstitutional section 46(h)(ii) of the Information and Communication Technologies Act, as it then stood, prior to its amendment in 2018. Cabinet has further taken note that in its judgment, the Supreme Court observed as follows –

"Although our Constitution protects the right to freedom of expression, it does not mean that it gives carte blanche for the transmission of communications which contravene the basic standards of our society;....."

13. Cabinet has taken note of the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic prevailing across the world. With regard to Mauritius, as from March 2020 to 28 May 2021, 1,391 cases (including imported cases) of COVID-19 had been registered. There were 124 active cases of COVID-19 in Mauritius, out of which 115 were local cases and nine 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, including the wearing of masks.

Cabinet has also taken note of progress in the implementation of the national COVID-19 vaccination programme.

Cabinet has further taken note that the Prime Minister has made Orders under the Quarantine Act 2020 –

- (a) to extend the prohibition of entry of aircraft and ships into Mauritius until 31 July 2021, except for those aircrafts and ships as he may approve. The Notice to Airman (NOTAM) regarding the prohibition of entry and use of Mauritius as alternative aerodrome has been extended until 30 June 2021 by the Director of Civil Aviation; and
- (b) to declare Vallée Pitot as a Red Zone until 7 June 2021.

Cabinet has also taken note that mass screening exercises were being carried at Rivière des Anguilles, Tyack, Camp Diable and Bonne Terre and in the light of the results obtained, a decision would be taken to remove these localities from the Red Zone, or otherwise.

14. Cabinet has taken note that the United Arab Emirates has donated 5,000 doses of Hayat-Vax COVID-19 Vaccines to Mauritius. The consignment reached Mauritius on 22 May 2021.

15. Cabinet has taken note of the activities that would be organised by the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change to mark World Environment Day 2021 celebrated on 5 June every year. The global theme for this year is “Ecosystem Restoration”. The World Environment Day would also serve as the formal launch of the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030. The Ministry would kick start the activities with the launching of a video clip, a radio spot along with a poster on littering and illegal dumping through a press conference on 4 June 2021. A 600 metre health track project with all associated amenities, including an outdoor gymnasium at *La Citadelle* would be completed shortly.

Other activities proposed include tree planting at *La Citadelle* in collaboration with the Islamic Cultural College, *Fondation Ressources et Nature* and Friends of the Environment. The Ministry in collaboration with the Contractor of the Metro Express Ltd, would plant some 200 plants in the region of Quatre Bornes. Cleaning of some beaches would be effected in collaboration with the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority, the Beach Authority and other stakeholders of the tourism sector. The sensitisation of the general public on the theme of World Environment Day 2021 would also be carried out through radio and TV programmes.

16. Cabinet has taken note of the activities being organised by the Ministry of Health and Wellness in the context of World No Tobacco Day, celebrated on 31 May every year, namely –

- (a) the inauguration of a Tobacco Cessation Clinic at Dr Yves Cantin Community Hospital at Grande Rivière Noire with ten invitees;
- (b) validation workshops with 30 participants in three batches of ten on amendment to the Public Health (Restrictions on Tobacco Products) Regulations 2008;
- (c) launching of a competition for children aged 5 to 10 years on ill effects of tobacco smoking;
- (d) radio and TV programmes by health professionals; and
- (e) broadcast of TV spots on ill effects of tobacco smoking.

The theme chosen for this year is “Commit to Quit”.

17. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade recently organised jointly with the African Union Commission (AUC) and the African Union Development Agency – New Partnership for Africa’s Development (AUDA-NEPAD), a virtual Training Workshop on “*Capacity Strengthening on the Preparation of Progress Report for Agenda 2063*”. The aim of the Training Workshop was for the AUC and the AUDA-NEPAD to provide technical guidance to relevant Ministries and Departments regarding data collection and analysis for the purpose of preparing the first Country-level report on the status of implementation of the Agenda 2063. The Agenda 2063 is Africa’s blueprint for socio-economic and political transformation of the Continent. The Training Workshop focused mainly on knowledge and skills required to prepare the first Country-level Report based on the topics of Agenda 2063.

18. Cabinet has taken note of the remarkable performance of Mauritian athletes who have participated in international sports events. On 22 May 2021, Ms Noemi Alphonse, specialist in wheelchair racing, established another African record in the 100m T54 in the Swiss Nationals. On 24 May 2021, she set a new African record in the 800m wheelchair race. In the Daniella Jutzeler Memorial Competition held in Arbon, Ms Brandy Perrine also established a new African record in the 400m wheelchair race, progressing to the fifth place in the world ranking.

Four national records have been broken in their respective events by Ms Brandy Perrine, Ms Anais Angeline and Mr Roberto Michel.

Mr Remi Feuillet won the bronze medal in the men’s – 90 kg category in the African Senior Judo Championships held in Dakar, Senegal.

19. Cabinet has agreed to the appointment of two members to the Environment and Land Use Appeal Tribunal, namely Mr Suffee Mohamad Suffee Ismet and Mr Vishayen Pourbalen Veerappapillay as Assessors.

20. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Board of Directors of the Financial Services Institute Company Ltd, with Mr Veeren Manikion, as part-time Chairperson.

21. Cabinet has taken note that of the reconstitution of the Board of Trustees of the Mauritius Marathi Cultural Centre Trust, with Mr Arjoon Putlajee as part-time Chairperson.
