

CABINET DECISIONS – 29 JANUARY 2021

1. Cabinet has taken note of the judgment delivered by the Special Chamber of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea on 28 January 2021 in the case brought by Mauritius against Maldives under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.

The Special Chamber overruled all the preliminary objections raised by Maldives and held that it has jurisdiction to delimit the maritime boundary between Mauritius and Maldives in the region of the Chagos Archipelago.

The Special Chamber also confirmed that Mauritius has undisputed sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago and that the United Kingdom's claim to sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago is contrary to the determinations made by the International Court of Justice in its Advisory Opinion of 25 February 2019 that the detachment of the Chagos Archipelago from Mauritius was unlawful and that the United Kingdom's continued administration of the Chagos Archipelago constitutes an unlawful act of a continuing character.

2. Cabinet has agreed to the Ministry of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping conveying drafting instructions to the Attorney General's Office for a Fisheries Bill that would replace the Fisheries and Marine Resources Act. The draft Bill would also address regional and international obligations, especially in the field of Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing, cater for the conservation and management of fisheries resources and also address several shortcomings in the current legislation.

New challenges that have emerged in the wake of climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic and the Wakashio event would also be addressed as well as the recommendations of the Report of the Commission of Enquiry on Drug Trafficking.

3. Cabinet has taken note that the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology would promulgate the Special Education Needs Authority (Registration of Special Education Needs Institutions) Regulations 2021, which would provide, among others, for the –

- (a) registration and renewal of certificate of registration for Special Education Needs (SEN) institutions based on their compliance with various requirements in terms of premises, health and safety, sanitary conditions, as well as furniture and equipment;
- (b) registration of managers, teachers, teacher assistants, SEN carers and other members of the staff based, inter alia, on qualifications, medical fitness and submission of a certificate of character;
- (c) roles and responsibilities that staff members are expected to abide by, such as keeping of records, register and financial records for managers, weekly plan of work and lesson plans for teachers and programme of activities for teacher assistants, amongst others;
- (d) payment of fees for registration; and

- (e) extension of existing SEN institutions within the same premises.

4. Cabinet has agreed to the promulgation of –

- (a) the Road Traffic (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2021. The First Schedule of the Road Traffic Act is being amended to provide for the payment of a road tax which would be applicable whilst registering an electric auto/motorcycle in Mauritius and Rodrigues. In order to encourage commuters to opt for electric auto/motorcycles, the road tax to be imposed would be reduced by 50 percent; and
- (b) the Road Traffic (Construction and Use of Vehicles) (Amendment) Regulations 2021. The Regulations are being amended to provide a distinctive registration mark for electric auto/motorcycles. The dimensions of the registration plates as well as the width and height of the characters to be displayed in the plates are being specified.

5. Cabinet has agreed to the setting up of a permanent Sustainable Development Unit (SDU) at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade to coordinate, monitor and assess the implementation of the 17 goals under UN Agenda 2030. The SDU would define the roadmap with time lines and biennial reviews to implement the Sustainable Development Goals over the next ten years which fall under the different Ministries for effective and tangible outcomes by 2030. The SDU would also enable the Ministry to monitor and evaluate progress in achieving the targets agreed under the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway, the African Union Agenda 2063, the African Peer Review Mechanism and the Strategic Partnership Framework Agreement.

6. Cabinet has taken note of the preliminary findings of a study to mitigate flooding in the City Centre of Port Louis. GIBB (Mauritius) Ltd, Consultant, was appointed on 20 July 2020 to carry out a study with a view to identifying causes of flooding and propose remedial solutions to mitigate flooding in the City Centre of Port Louis. The Consultant has proposed various measures to mitigate flooding. The final report is expected by end of March 2021.

7. 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 29 January 2021, 569 cases of COVID-19 had been registered. There were currently 24 active cases of COVID-19 in Mauritius. The public should continue to observe strict sanitary precautions.

8. Cabinet has taken note of the activities being organised by the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security to mark World Wetlands Day 2021, celebrated on 2 February. The theme for World Wetlands Day 2021 is "Wetlands and Water".

An event would be held at Pointe D'Esny Ramsar Site on 4 February 2021 and would comprise, inter alia, -

- (a) the signing of the "Mauritius Ridge to Reef", a project financed by the European Union;
- (b) a video projection on wetlands in Mauritius and distribution of posters and factsheets;
- (c) the launching of restoration work at Pointe D'Esny; and
- (d) a tree planting ceremony.

9. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the official visit of the Minister of National Infrastructure and Community Development to Rodrigues. The purpose of the visit was to take stock, *de visu*, of progress with regard to various ongoing and planned infrastructure projects in Rodrigues and also to discuss the possibilities of enhancing collaboration and exchange/transfer of knowledge and experience between the technicians of the Ministry of National Infrastructure and Community Development, the Road Development Authority, the Land Drainage Authority and those of the Commission for Public Infrastructure of Rodrigues.

The Minister had a meeting with the Chief Commissioner. During the meeting, a copy of the Digital Elevation Model and the Aerial Photograph for the island of Rodrigues was handed over to him. These tools have been produced by the Land Drainage Authority and are essential for the identification of flood prone areas and conception of land drainage projects. A meeting was also held with the Commission of Public Infrastructure regarding, among others, the need for the classification of roads in Rodrigues. Visits were effected on sites of ongoing land drainage projects undertaken by the National Development Unit at the flood prone sites at Port Mathurin and Baie Malgache as well as road construction sites.

10. Cabinet has taken note of the constitution of the Board of the National Anti-Doping Organisation with Mr Doorgeshsing Jawaheer, Pharmacist at the Ministry of Health and Wellness, as Chairperson.
