

**CABINET HIGHLIGHTS – FRIDAY 29 OCTOBER 2021**

1. Cabinet has agreed to the Mauritius Ports Authority promulgating the Ports (Security) Regulations 2021. The main objectives of these Regulations are to –

- (i) implement measures aiming at enhancing security of vessels and port facilities against threats posed by international unlawful acts;
- (ii) consolidate the image and credibility of Port Louis Harbour as the preferred regional maritime gateway; and
- (iii) establish and define the new responsibilities and functions of the National Maritime Harbour Security Committee and the Port Security Committee.

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2. Cabinet has agreed to instructions being conveyed to the Attorney General's Office for the drafting of the Mauritius Food Standards Authority Bill. The Mauritius Food Standards Authority would be responsible to coordinate and review the food control system and communicate food safety messages to both food businesses and consumer stakeholders.

The proposed aims of the Mauritius Food Standards Authority would be to, inter alia, –

- (i) formulate and undertake review of policy, risk assessment and management, and development of food Standards/Regulations;
- (ii) coordinate food control activities across both Government and food control stakeholders;
- (iii) monitor the food control system and develop guidelines for audit of the food control system;
- (iv) communicate on food safety matters with stakeholders; and
- (v) act as the key contact point for international food control communication matters, including Codex Alimentarius.

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3. Cabinet has agreed to an amendment being made to the Consumer Protection (Control of Fairs) Regulations 2016 by suspending Regulation 3(3) from 01 November 2021 to 30 June 2022 by revocation, so that authorisation for the holding of Trade Fairs may be granted and to allow the organisation of Trade Fairs in open space and subject to strict adherence to sanitary protocols.

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4. Cabinet has taken note that the Minister of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping would promulgate the Fisheries and Marine Resources (Conservation of Sharks) Regulations 2021, with a view to protecting shark resources by preventing the fishing and targeting of sharks within the territorial waters of the Republic of Mauritius and prohibit shark finning.

Cabinet also noted that the Regulations would enhance compliance with the conservation and management measures set by the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission on sharks.

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5. Cabinet has, after taking note of the sharp increase in the price of fertilisers, agreed to provide an additional amount of Rs51 million under the Advance Fertiliser Scheme for Crop 2021 so as to ensure that planters cultivating up to 100 ha of sugarcane could benefit, under the Scheme, from an advance of 50 percent for the purchase of fertilisers.

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6. Cabinet has taken note that the CGS Barracuda which was sent for refit to Garden Reach Ship Builders and Engineers, Kolkata, India has returned to Mauritius.

The refit of CGS Barracuda was carried out by the Government of India, on *gratis* basis.

Cabinet has further taken note that a handing over ceremony took place on 27 October 2021 in the presence of the Minister of Land Transport and Light Rail, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, and the High Commissioner of India to Mauritius.

The CGS Barracuda has reintegrated the fleet of the National Coast Guard and is fully operational. It will enhance the operational capabilities of the National Coast Guard for maritime surveillance.

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7. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of an agreement between the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change and the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The Agreement would enable the Ministry to benefit from funding for the training and capacity building of officers of its Department of Climate Change and other relevant Ministries/Departments, including those in Rodrigues, on the formulation of project write-ups with the ultimate aim to enhance access to climate finance.

Cabinet has also taken note of a proposal to hold two-days workshop in Mauritius and Rodrigues for the delivery of training by local resource persons and international experts on project preparation and structuring of proposals in relation to climate finance.

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8. Cabinet has agreed to the hosting of the 8th Political Dialogue between the Government of Mauritius and the European Union (EU) on Thursday 11 November 2021. The aim of this dialogue is to exchange information, foster mutual understanding and facilitate establishment of agreed priorities and shared agendas between Mauritius and the EU. It will also facilitate consultations and strengthen cooperation on a number of issues of mutual interest to both parties.

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9. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a “*Convention de Partenariat*”, between the Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities, the *Agence Française de Développement*, the *Agence de l’Environnement et de la Maîtrise de l’Energie* and the Rodrigues Regional Assembly under the “*Fonds d’Expertise Technique et d’Echanges d’Expériences*” (FEXTE) for assistance in the field of Renewable Energy in Rodrigues. The FEXTE is a tool for financing technical cooperation in middle-income countries and for promoting sustainable development as well as for the transfer of French know-how and expertise.

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10. Cabinet has agreed to a Financing Agreement being entered between the Ministry of Health and Wellness and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) under the Support to Resilience through Digital Transformation and Capacity Development Project.

Under this Financing Agreement, the UNDP would provide support for -

- (i) the supply, installation, testing and commissioning of armoured cables at Victoria Hospital;
- (ii) the procurement and installation of a 500 Litre autoclave for the treatment of healthcare waste; and
- (iii) the legal drafting of a Digital Health Law.

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11. Cabinet has taken note of the signing of a research contract between the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security and the International Atomic Energy Agency for funding of a Coordinated Research on “Improving rearing and control techniques with the integrated use of Sterile Insect Techniques for *Bactrocera dorsalis*, *Bactrocera zonata* and *Zeugodacus cucurbitae*”, to be implemented by the Entomology Division of the Ministry.

Cabinet also noted that the main objective of the Research Programme is to optimise and harmonise through applied research the use of Sterile Insect Techniques and related technologies for management of the three fruit fly species.

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12. Cabinet has taken note of the yearly implementation of the White Grub Protocol for period 01 November 2021 to 15 January 2022, which is aimed at protecting crops in Mauritius against the White Grub beetle.

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13. Cabinet has agreed to the National Land Transport Authority varying the Public Service Vehicle Licence held by contract bus operators involved in the conveyance of tourists up to 30 June 2022 in order to allow them to carry employees, in view of the prevailing COVID-19 situation.

Cabinet has also agreed to the provision of a one-off allowance of Rs10,000 to every contract bus operator (Individual) involved in the conveyance of tourists.

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14. Cabinet has taken note that the Central Electricity Board (CEB) and the Central Water Authority have made necessary arrangements to ensure uninterrupted electricity service and adequate water supply, for the upcoming Divali festival.

Cabinet has also taken note that the CEB had issued a Communiqué on security precautions to be taken during the festival and energy consumption.

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15. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent meetings held virtually in relation to the AGOA under the theme “Building Back a Better US-Africa Trade and Investment Relationship”, namely the AGOA Ministerial Consultative Group; the Private Sector Forum; and the US–Sub-Saharan African Virtual AGOA Ministerial Forum.

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16. Cabinet has taken note of the organisation of an awareness campaign entitled ‘nou kapav’ by the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation, in the context of the International Day for Persons with Disabilities, through a series of sports, youth and recreational activities to be held on four consecutive Saturdays from 06 to 27 November 2021 at Flacq Coeur de Ville, Grand Baie Coeur de Ville, La City Trianon and Bo Vallon Mall. The main objectives of the campaign would be to raise public awareness about persons with disabilities and to encourage them to participate in physical, youth and recreational activities on a regular basis while emphasising inclusiveness and fostering a sense of community. The activities would be organised in collaboration with the Mauritius Sports Council and several associations seeking to empower persons with disabilities.

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17. Cabinet has taken note of the progress report on the status of the implementation of the Health Sector Strategic Plan (HSSP) 2020-2024 by the Ministry of Health and Wellness. The HSSP 2020-2024 makes provision for the submission of half yearly reports on the status of progress made on the implementation of Strategic Actions. In this respect, 21 Thematic Working Groups have been set up at the level of the Ministry of Health and Wellness, to act as coordination mechanisms and develop Operational Plans for the 26 Strategic Goals of the HSSP 2020-2024. 26 Operational Plans have thus been elaborated with some 603 activities identified by the different Thematic Working Groups. These Operational Plans chart out the roadmap for health sector development and outline activities that would address health challenges and would revamp health service delivery in the country.

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18. Cabinet has taken note of the finalisation of the annual Health Statistics Report (HSR) for the year 2020 for the islands of Mauritius and Rodrigues by the Ministry of Health and Wellness. The HSR 2020 contains information on population and vital statistics, health infrastructure, health personnel, maternal and child health, notifiable diseases, private health institutions, morbidity, infant and child mortality, mortality (all ages), and other services as well as statistics on COVID-19.

Cabinet also noted that the HSR 2020 would be made available on the website of the Ministry of Health and Wellness.

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19. Cabinet has taken note of the 2019 Report on “Statistics in Mauritius: A Gender Approach” which has been prepared by the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family Welfare in collaboration with Statistics Mauritius. The Report is based on sex-disaggregated data for the year 2019, collected on the demographic characteristics relating to health and education as well as economic characteristics, public life and decision making.

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20. Cabinet has taken note of the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic prevailing across the world. Some 245.9 million cases have been reported globally, of which 222.9 million persons have been successfully treated.

With regard to Mauritius, as at 28 October 2021, there were 766 active cases of COVID-19, out of which 36 were admitted at New ENT Hospital. Over the period 21 October to 27 October 2021, 29 deaths were attributed to COVID-19.

Cabinet has also taken note that there were seven active cases in Rodrigues and all were asymptomatic.

Cabinet has further taken note of progress in the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme, including the administration of the booster dose.

As at 29 October 2021, 903,935 persons had received a first dose of vaccine (representing 71.3 percent of the population). 853,726 persons had been fully vaccinated (representing 67.3 percent of the population). 16,604 persons had received a booster dose. 29,059 adolescents aged between 15 to 17 years had received a first dose of vaccine.

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21. Cabinet has taken note of the report of the Mauritius Meteorological Services with regard to the seasonal outlook for summer 2021-2022 for Mauritius and Rodrigues. The main forecasts for the Summer Season 2021-2022 are as follows –

- (a) between nine to eleven named storms would likely evolve in the South West Indian Ocean tropical cyclone basin and around five of these formations would likely intensify into tropical cyclones;
- (b) the onset of summer rain would most likely be around the second fortnight of December 2021 with cumulative summer rainfall likely to be slightly below normal with around 1150mm in Mauritius, representing 85 percent of the long term mean rainfall;
- (c) the cumulative rainfall for Rodrigues would likely be around 560 mm of rainfall, which is 80 percent of the normal summer rain;
- (d) on certain days, it would be likely that temperatures would exceed the monthly average by more than two degrees Celsius in some locations. Maximum day temperature might exceed 35 degrees Celsius at Port Louis and in coastal areas during peak summer months;
- (e) for Rodrigues, maximum temperatures were likely to reach 32 degrees Celsius along coastal areas on certain occasions; and
- (f) during January to March 2022, atmospheric conditions would become conducive to the occurrence of certain extreme weather events.

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22. Cabinet has taken note of the activities that would be organised by the Ministry of Land Transport and Light Rail on 21 November 2021, in the context of the World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims. The chosen motto and theme for this year are '*Remember. Support. Act.*' and '*Act for Low Speeds/Act for Low Speed Streets*', respectively, thus, emphasising on the reduction of traffic speeds which has the potential to prevent deaths and serious injuries.

In this context, the Ministry of Land Transport and Light Rail would organise a series of activities in the third week of November in order to sensitise the population on road safety issues.

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23. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the 48th Session of the Human Rights Council which took place recently in Geneva. In her annual report, the High Commissioner for Human Rights provided, inter alia, an update on the global human rights situation and updates on country-specific situations.

Cabinet also noted that 26 Resolutions were considered by the Human Rights Council. Mauritius co-sponsored nine Resolutions, including one on the 'Negative Impact of the Legacies of Colonialism', which was adopted by 27 votes, none against and 20 abstentions. The other Resolutions co-sponsored by Mauritius related to, inter alia, Right to Development; Global Call for Concrete Action against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance; Human Rights Implications of the COVID-19 pandemic on Youth; Mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in the context of Climate Change; and Enhancement of Technical Cooperation and Capacity-Building in the field of Human Rights.

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24. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the 39th Ordinary Session of the African Union Executive Council held recently at the African Union Headquarters in Addis Ababa.

Cabinet has further taken note that Mrs Ourveena Geereesha Topsy-Sonoo of the Attorney General's Office, a Mauritian candidate, has been elected as member of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights and Mrs Nandita Devi Suneechur, also from Mauritius, has been elected as member of the African Union Advisory Board on Corruption.

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25. Cabinet has agreed to Mauritius supporting, in the context of the forthcoming 26th Session of the Conference of Parties (COP26) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to be held from 31 October to 12 November 2021 in Glasgow, United Kingdom, the following initiatives –

- (i) Climate Emergency Declaration;
- (ii) Global Coal to Clean Power Transition Statement;
- (iii) Statement on Public Support for the Clean Energy Transition;
- (iv) Global (Green Grids Initiative) – One Sun One World One Grid; and
- (v) Declaration on Forests and Land Use.

Cabinet has also taken note that the Prime Minister would lead a delegation comprising, inter alia, the Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change to the World Leaders' Summit to be held in Glasgow, Scotland. The World Leaders' Summit would kick off the COP26.

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26. Cabinet took note of the recent virtual participation of the Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity in the 2021 Global Rural Development Forum, which was held in Beijing under the theme "Global Sustainable Development Cooperation: Promoting Poverty Alleviation and Rural Development".

The High-level Forum was organised by the China National Rural Revitalisation Administration, in collaboration with the International Poverty Reduction Centre of China, in the context of the 29th International Day for the Eradication of Poverty and the 8th China's Poverty Alleviation Day.

The main objective of the Forum, which saw the participation of, inter alia, various Ministers and High-Level officials from international agencies, was to bring together leaders of Governments, development organisations and scholars from around the world to share knowledge, experiences and best international practices on poverty reduction and to work together towards the realisation of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

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27. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Labour, Human Resource Development and Training, Minister of Commerce and Consumer Protection to Turkey, in the context of the 3rd Turkey-Africa Economic and Business Forum where he attended, inter alia, a Ministerial Meeting on the theme 'Deepening Turkey Africa Partnership through Trade, Investment, Technology and Logistic'. The Forum saw the participation of 49 African States, with 36 Ministers and more than 3,000 public officials and business persons present in Istanbul.

The Forum also consisted of Business to Business (B2B) and Government to Business (G2B) meetings, which, inter alia, sought to analyse trade and economic relations between Africa and Turkey and at evaluating Turkey's approach to investment in Africa. It also emphasised the need for greater interaction between business communities and Turkish Investors.

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28. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent participation of the Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare in the International Women Entrepreneur Show organised by the International Women Entrepreneur Society (IWES) in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE), in the context of the Expo 2020 Dubai. The IWES is an international platform that inspires professionals and entrepreneurs to meet and learn more about their industry, to exchange ideas and formulate new strategies and partnerships and, most importantly, meet like-minded women. The International Women Entrepreneur Show, which is an annual event, was held this time as a side event to the Expo 2020 Dubai and was themed as 'Together, we can rise and thrive'.

Cabinet further noted that during her mission, the Minister had the opportunity to address the IWES members at the Show and elaborated on the facilities provided to women entrepreneurs for setting up their businesses in Mauritius. The Minister also discussed avenues to deepen collaboration between the UAE and Mauritius.

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29. Cabinet has agreed to the reconstitution of the Law Reform Commission for the period 2021 to 2023, with Mr G. Ramdewar, as Chairperson.

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30. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Board of the Mauritius Institute of Health with Mrs D. Allagapen, Senior Chief Executive of the Ministry of Health and Wellness, as part-time Chairperson.

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