

HIGHLIGHTS OF CABINET MEETING – 08 OCTOBER 2021

1. Cabinet has agreed to the Ministry of Health and Wellness implementing the project for the construction of a State-of-the-Art Cardiac Centre on a “Design, Finance, Build and Maintain” model at Côte d’Or. The new Cardiac Centre would have new specialties such as pediatric and congenital cardiac surgeries, interventional pediatric and congenital cardiology, interventional and open vascular surgery, thoracic surgery and hybrid cardiac surgery.

2. Cabinet has agreed to the existing Toys (Safety) Regulations 1994 being repealed and a new Toys (Safety) Regulations 2021 being promulgated in order to make adequate provisions for the importation of toys taking into account up to date norms and best practices including the need to streamline the procedures to avoid delays and ensure that importers are not unduly penalised.

3. Cabinet has agreed to the Mauritius Qualifications Authority (MQA) making new Regulations, namely the MQA (Approval of Non-Award Courses for Employers) Regulations 2021 and the MQA (Training Institutions) (Amendment) Regulations 2021. The MQA Act has been amended on 05 August 2021, through the Finance (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2021, to entrust the MQA with the function to approve non-award courses dispensed by training institutions and employers, and to implement same with effect from 15 October 2021 through necessary Regulations. The Regulations provide for –

- (a) the approval of non-award courses run by training institutions as well as by employers; and
- (b) the accreditation process in respect of training programmes for award courses.

4. Cabinet has agreed to Mauritius initiating discussions with the United Arab Emirates (UAE) on a Mauritius-UAE Free Trade Agreement (FTA). The intended objective of the FTA is to remove obstacles to trade in goods and services, thereby, creating the best possible conditions to increase bilateral trade and investment, as well as to promote the movement and employability of Mauritian professionals in the UAE.

5. Cabinet has agreed to the launching of an Expression of Interest for local and international companies to invest in demersal fishing and processing facilities. Demersal fishing is carried out mostly by local fishers and companies in the lagoon, shallow waters and on fishing banks within the Exclusive Economic Zone of Mauritius.

6. Cabinet has taken note of a Model Contract Agreement for House Construction produced by the Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB). One of the functions of the CIDB is to develop standard forms of construction agreements and contracts. The Model Contract Agreement is meant especially for house construction works, but might be adapted to suit any small works, other than house construction. It spells out the basic undertakings and responsibilities of each party, such as the scope of works, contract price, payment terms, completion period, remedying of defects and dispute resolution procedures.

7. Cabinet has taken note of the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic prevailing across the world. Some 237.1 million cases have been reported globally, of which 214.2 million persons have been successfully treated.

With regard to Mauritius, as at 07 October 2021, there were 995 active cases of COVID-19, out of which 28 were admitted at New ENT Hospital including two on ventilators. Over the period 30 September to 6 October 2021, 19 deaths were attributed to COVID-19.

Cabinet has also taken note of progress in the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme. As at 07 October 2021, 871,793 persons had received a first dose of vaccine (representing 68.9 percent of the population). 821,287 persons had been fully vaccinated (representing 64.9 percent of the population). 3,776 persons had received a booster dose. 12,398 adolescents aged between 15 to 17 years had received a first dose of vaccine.

Cabinet has further taken note that the vaccination exercise in Agalega had been completed.

8. Cabinet has taken note that a Mauritius All-In-One Travel Form is available online to facilitate the current travel formalities for incoming passengers to Mauritius. The passengers would be able to fill in the Form prior to departure and would receive an email with a document comprising the Disembarkation Card, the Health Declaration Forms and the Health COVID-19 Laboratory Request Form. The Form is currently available on the website of the MTPA, Air Mauritius and ATOL and would be available on other websites including airlines.

9. Cabinet has agreed to the Office of Public Sector Governance (OPSG) conducting 14 reviews in Ministries and Government Departments for the period October 2021 to June 2022 on the basis of the findings and shortcomings noted in the Report of the Director of Audit on the Accounts of Government for the Financial Year 2019/2020. The OPSG would ensure that its recommendations are included in the Action Plans of the Audit Committees established in Ministries/Departments.

10. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the Fourth Meeting of the High Level Drugs and HIV Council chaired by the Prime Minister which was held on 23 September 2021. The following main issues were discussed at the meeting –

- (a) the implementation of the recommendations made by the Commission of Inquiry on Drug Trafficking;
- (b) the Drug situation in Mauritius;
- (c) the National Survey among People Who Use Drugs;
- (d) the Drug Offenders Administrative Panel;
- (e) the provision of Paraphernalia in the Needle Exchange Programme;
- (f) the HIV/AIDS situation in Mauritius; and
- (g) the Action Plan on Drug Prevention Programmes for Young People.

11. Cabinet has taken note of the actions initiated and reported upon by the different Ministries under the 10 strategic pillars of the National Road Safety Strategy 2016-2025 at the Fifth Meeting of the National Road Safety Commission which was chaired by the Prime Minister on 20 September 2021. The Prime Minister, inter alia, commended the efforts made by various Ministries towards the execution of the National Road Safety Strategy 2016-2025 and advocated that a mid-term review could be envisaged. He emphasised on the importance of involving the younger generation in matters of road safety strategies. He further elaborated on the different actions taken by Government, especially as regard enhancement and enforcement of the existing laws and regulations to improve road safety. As at date, 85 percent of the actions and projects in the National Road Safety Strategy have been completed but continued actions are required by relevant Ministries/Departments and stakeholders in order to achieve the results set in reducing the number of road fatalities.

12. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Youth Employment, Sports and Recreation would organise the Fourth Edition of the activity '*Pédaler en Sécurité*', on Saturday 09 October 2021 from 08 30 hours to noon. The aim of the event is to promote cycling as a physical activity to keep fit and also to raise awareness on the precautions that should be taken while being engaged in bicycle riding. '*Pédaler en Sécurité*' would be held in collaboration with the Mauritius Sports Council, the National Youth Council and the High Commission of India. The departure of the peloton would be in front of Octave Wiehé Auditorium, Réduit. The cyclists would proceed to the village of St. Pierre, with the arrival scheduled in the yard of the Mahatma Gandhi Institute in Moka. The event would culminate in a wreath-laying ceremony at the bust of Mahatma Gandhi.

13. Cabinet has taken note of the recent participation of the Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare in the Girmitya Conference 2021 organised by the India Foundation which was held virtually with the support of the Overseas Indian Affairs Division of the Ministry of External Affairs of the Republic of India. The Minister was officially invited to participate as Chief Guest by the India Foundation, which is a New Delhi based think-tank. The main focus of Conference was on the “Girmityas”, that is, India’s indentured labourers and their descendants and how the diasporas had endured tremendous hardships and sufferings and yet emerged as a significant force in their respective countries. The theme for this year was ‘*Changing identities, shifting trends, and roles*’.

During her intervention, the Minister gave a brief history of indentured labourers who came to Mauritius and the role that Indians had played in shaping the socio-economic landscape of the country.

14. Cabinet has taken note that the Board of Directors of Air Mauritius Limited had, on 07 October 2021, elected Mr Marday Venketasamy, GOSK, as Chairperson of the Board.

15. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Outer Islands Development Board with Mr Vidianan Bhantoo as Chairperson.
