

## **HIGHLIGHTS OF CABINET MEETING – 10 DECEMBER 2021**

1. Cabinet has agreed to the promulgation of the Information and Communication Technologies (Registration of SIM) Regulations 2021 so as to control the sale and use of the Subscriber Identity Module cards (SIM cards), issued by telephony service providers.

In the Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Drug Trafficking published in July 2018, it has been stated that there were several issues relating to the use of SIM cards such as the purchase of SIM cards through impersonation, usage of these cards to carry illegal activities such as criminal intimidation, extortion, unsolicited calls, and drug trafficking.

Mobile operators would be given a period of three months from the date of coming into operation of the Regulations to set up the required infrastructure and database for the implementation of the Regulations. The Regulations would be effective as from 01 January 2022.

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2. Cabinet has agreed to extend the moratorium for the banning of the following non-biodegradable single use plastic products up to 14 January 2023 -

- (a) plastic bowls and cups used solely for the packaging of food products such as dairy products; and
- (b) plastic trays for the Modified Atmosphere Packaging (MAP) of food such as fresh meat and pre-cooked/cooked food products for the purpose of extended shelf life.

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3. Cabinet has taken note that of the promulgation of the Gambling Regulatory Authority Appeal Committee (Decisions of Administrators and Racing Stewards) (Amendment) Regulations 2021.

The amendment to the Regulations would allow the Gambling Regulatory Authority to –

- (a) obtain documents such as transcripts, audio and video recordings of any race meetings subject to enquiry and appeal before the Appeal Committee without any fees being paid to the MTC Sports and Leisure Ltd (MTCSL);
- (b) set deadlines for submitting relevant documents pertaining to an appeal;
- (c) appoint dedicated officer(s) of the Gambling Regulatory Authority to conduct administrative tasks and give technical support to the Appeal Committee;
- (d) facilitate submission of relevant information by an appellant through the introduction of a standardised form; and

- (e) allow the extension of time of the Appeal Committee hearing without the need to obtain the consent of the MTCSL.

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4. Cabinet has taken note of the promulgation of the *Institutions Agréées* (Amendment) Regulations 2021 to designate the Industrial Finance Corporation of Mauritius (IFCM) Ltd (formerly the Investment Support Programme (ISP) Ltd) as an “*Institution Agréée*”. An institution should apply to the Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development to be designated as an “*Institution Agréée*”, for it to be able to inscribe fixed and floating charges when making advances of money to their clients.

The IFCM Ltd has been granted both a Leasing Licence and a Factoring Licence by the Financial Services Commission in October 2021. Its other financial products would include subscribing to debentures and equity participation. It would have to register instruments creating fixed or floating charges in accordance with the *Code Civil Mauricien* for its leasing and lending activities.

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5. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security would give a one-off grant of Rs10,000 per arpent to small registered planters who have undertaken onion cultivation in 2021, following the unprecedented price increase of fertilizers and other chemical inputs and adverse climatic conditions. The payment would be effected by the Agricultural Marketing Board based on the list submitted by the Food and Agricultural Research and Extension Institute.

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6. Cabinet has taken note that following the Tripartite Committee Meeting on salary compensation for the year 2022, a monthly salary compensation of Rs500 would be paid to those earning up to Rs13,000 monthly and Rs400 to those earning above Rs13,000, effective as from 01 January 2022. Some 423,200 employees (104,500 in the public sector and 318,700 in the private sector) would be concerned.

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7. Cabinet has taken note that the additional subsidy of Rs62.00 per pack of 25 kg of flour exceptionally granted in February 2021 to bakeries purchasing flour directly from the State Trading Corporation has been extended up to 30 June 2022.

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8. Cabinet has agreed to the Mauritius Oceanography Institute (MOI) signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) on cooperation in the field of oceanography. The objectives of the Memorandum of Understanding are to –

- (a) foster and promote research and development in such spheres of oceanography of mutual interest to both Parties and within the broad context of sustainable development; and
- (b) cooperate on matters concerning the Blue Economy.

The Memorandum of Understanding would promote cooperation on activities relating to coastal fish resources, marine ecosystems, the impacts of climate change such as ocean warming, sea level rise, ocean acidification, as well as the measurement of oceanic primary production. One of the first areas of cooperation under the Memorandum of Understanding would be the collaboration of the MOI with the IOC on the ongoing regional ECOFISH programme. The overall objective of the ECOFISH programme is to enhance equitable economic growth by promoting sustainable fisheries in the East Africa-South Africa-Indian Ocean region.

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9. Cabinet has agreed to the appointment, in accordance with Article 23 of the 1899 Hague Convention, of the following persons as members of the Permanent Court of Arbitration, to represent the Judiciary of Mauritius, for a period of six years as from the date of their appointment –

- (i) Honourable Dheerajlall Baramlall Seetulsingh, Chairperson of the National Human Rights Commission;
- (ii) Mr Dheerendra Kumar Dabee, S.C., G.O.S.K., former Solicitor-General;
- (iii) Honourable Gerard Angoh, former Puisne Judge; and
- (iv) Mr Ravindra Chetty, Senior Counsel.

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10. Cabinet has agreed to the Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage designating six sites of cultural significance as National Heritage, namely –

- (i) First flag hoisting site for the Independence of Mauritius in 1968 at Champ de Mars, Port Louis;
- (ii) Chateau Benares, Benares;
- (iii) Le Batelage, Bel Ombre;
- (iv) Lavoir, Mahebourg;
- (v) Abreuvoir, Mahebourg; and
- (vi) Old stone building at Krishnanand Seva Ashram, Calebasses.

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11. Cabinet has taken note of developments regarding the African Horse Sickness (AHS) and the import of horses from South Africa. After a comprehensive risk analysis, the Livestock and Veterinary Division of the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security has proposed that the

import of horses to Mauritius might be resumed subject to conditions being strictly complied with regard to –

- (a) the movement of horses from infected zones to the Controlled AHS Zone (Surveillance and Protection Zone); and
- (b) the movement of horses within the Controlled AHS Zone (from the Surveillance/Protection Zone to the Free Zone).

Upon arrival in Mauritius, existing protocols of the Livestock and Veterinary Division would apply.

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12. Cabinet has taken note of the status of the newly constructed Interchange at Hillcrest across Motorway M1 with traffic lights at the junction of Hillcrest Avenue and Tulipes Avenue. The monitoring exercises have revealed the following -

- (a) major improvements have been observed at St Jean Interchange and La Louise, whereby queuing during peak hours along Motorway M1 has decreased;
- (b) the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit has tabled traffic counts at Hillcrest/Avenue des Tulipes Junction and the new Trianon Roundabout and has confirmed that the level of service of the road is satisfactory;
- (c) to date, the Traffic Branch has not reported any accident at the signalised junction; and
- (d) all stakeholders have confirmed that the traffic signal at the junction Hillcrest Avenue and Tulipes Avenue is controlling the traffic in an orderly and safe manner.

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13. Cabinet has taken note that following the recommendations of the Pay Research Bureau Report 2021, the witnesses' attendance allowances have been revised. Necessary amendments have been made to the First Schedule to the Witnesses' Attendance Allowances Act. The Witnesses' Attendance (Amendment of Schedule) (No. 2) Regulations 2021 have been published in the Gazette on 07 December 2021.

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14. Cabinet has taken note that the official launching of the Taxi Operators Welfare Fund would be held on 10 December 2021 by the Minister of Land Transport and Light Rail, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade. The official logo of the Fund would also be unveiled.

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15. Cabinet has taken note of the holding of the Mega Blood Donation 2021 by the Ministry of Health and Wellness, in collaboration with the Blood Donors Association from Monday 20 December to Thursday 23 December 2021 at the City Council of Port Louis. The Mega Blood Donation would be held in strict compliance with sanitary measures.

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16. Cabinet has taken note of the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic prevailing across the world. Some 268.2 million cases have been reported globally, of which 241.4 million persons have been successfully treated.

With regard to Mauritius, as at 09 December 2021, there were 713 active cases of COVID-19, out of which 22 were admitted at the New ENT Hospital. Over the period 02 December to 08 December 2021, 95 deaths were attributed to COVID-19.

Cabinet has further taken note of progress in the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme, including the administration of the booster dose in the Republic of Mauritius. As at 09 December 2021, 932,857 persons had received a first dose of vaccine (representing 73.7 percent of the population). 901,187 persons were fully vaccinated (representing 71.2 percent of the population). 138,038 persons had received a booster dose (representing 10.9 percent of the population).

Cabinet has also taken note that one million doses of Molnupiravir have been received by the Ministry of Health and Wellness and distributed to the public health institutions for treatment of eligible COVID-19 patients.

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17. Cabinet has taken note of the new arrangements being put in place for incineration and burial of persons deceased with COVID-19. The hours of operation of incinerators and cemeteries would be revised as follows -

- (a) incinerator facilities would be operational from 0800 hours instead of 09 00 hours so as to cater for a maximum of four incinerations per day up to midnight; and
- (b) late night burial would be allowed up to midnight instead of 22 00 hours.

Officers of the Civil Status Office and Health Offices would be on call as from 06 00 hours in the morning for issue of relevant permits for incineration and beyond 22 00 hours for issue of permits for late night burial up to midnight.

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18. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Land Use Planning, Minister of Tourism in the 24th session of the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) General Assembly, which was held in Madrid, Spain. The 24th session of the General Assembly focused on the importance of innovation, education and rural development in rebuilding and transforming the tourism sector, and provided a platform for discussions on major issues that have a direct bearing on tourism policy at the highest national and international levels.

Mauritius has been elected as Vice-Chair of the Executive Council of the Organization for the period 2021-2022. Old Grand Port and Le Morne Villages have been recognised as Best Tourism Villages 2021.

In the margins of the General Assembly, the Deputy Prime Minister had the opportunity to meet and discuss with a number of his counterparts from different countries, including France, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, the Republic of South Africa, Cape Verde, Seychelles, Iran, Tunisia, Morocco, Tanzania, Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, Mozambique, Niger, Algeria, Zambia and Jordan and they discussed on possible areas of collaboration and especially how they could collaborate at the level of the UNWTO for the rebound of the travel and tourism sector in the context of the new normal.

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19. Cabinet has taken note of the major outcome of the 8th Ministerial Conference of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) which was recently held in Dakar. The President of the People's Republic of China has stated that during the next three years, China would work closely with African countries to implement various programmes including –

- (a) the medical and health programme: Delivery of one billion doses of COVID-19 vaccine;
- (b) the poverty reduction and agricultural development programme;
- (c) the trade promotion programme; and
- (d) the investment promotion programme – allocation of Special Drawings Rights (SDRs).

The Conference adopted the following four outcome documents –

- (i) The Dakar Declaration of the 8<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference of the FOCAC, which enumerates the principles of the Partnership as well as the general scope of the cooperation.
- (ii) FOCAC Dakar Action Plan 2022-2024, which details the specific areas of cooperation and provide a general overview on how they shall be implemented.
- (iii) Declaration on China-Africa Cooperation on Combating Climate Change, which is a framework of strategic cooperation to jointly tackle the challenges posed by climate change.
- (iv) China-Africa Cooperation Vision 2035, which is a framework document that determine the directions and objectives where the two sides would wish the partnership to evolve.

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20. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Board of the Statutory Bodies Family Protection Fund with Mrs C.R. Seewooruthun, Senior Chief Executive, Ministry of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management as Chairperson.

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21. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Board of Trustees of “*La Clinique Mauricienne*” for the year 2022.

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22. Cabinet has taken note of the appointment of Mr Oliver Michael Thomas as member and Chairperson of the Board of the Nelson Mandela Centre for African Culture Trust Fund as from December 2021.

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