

HIGHLIGHTS OF CABINET MEETING – THURSDAY 30 DECEMBER 2021

1. Cabinet has agreed to appropriate Regulations being made to provide for the following –

- (a) the amount to be paid to workers as additional remuneration for year 2022;
- (b) the financing of the additional remuneration for year 2022 for employees of the tourism sector, earning up to Rs50,000 a month;
- (c) the financing of the payment of Rs140 as additional remuneration for year 2022 to each Mauritian worker employed in an Export Oriented Enterprise (EOE), earning up to Rs50,000 a month, from the special allowance granted under the Workers' Rights (Payment of Special Allowance) Regulations;
- (d) the maintenance of the payment of the special allowance which was introduced in 2018 to top up the national minimum wage and for the financing of the additional remuneration for year 2022 for workers in the Tourism sector; and
- (e) the adjustment of the national minimum wage by the amount of additional remuneration payable for the year 2022.

2. Cabinet has agreed to the Consumer Protection (Control of Imports) Regulations 2017 being amended to classify COVID-19 Rapid Antibody Test, as a prohibited good, in order to ban its importation into the country.

3. Cabinet has agreed to the promulgation of the Freeport (Amendment) Regulations 2021. Necessary amendments were brought to the Freeport Act through the COVID-19 (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2020, to authorise Private Freeport Developers to provide warehousing facilities for the storage of goods, in a Freeport zone to any person, during the COVID-19 period and such further period as may be prescribed. In view of the current situation of the COVID-19 pandemic, the prescribed period has been extended up to 31 December 2022.

4. Cabinet has agreed to Mauritius joining the Colombo Security Conclave as Functional Member. The Colombo Security Conclave is a trilateral initiative comprising India, Sri Lanka and Maldives for cooperation in the field of maritime security. The focus of the Colombo Security Conclave encompasses cooperation in combatting human trafficking, counter terrorism as well as the protection of critical infrastructure, cyber security, oil pollution response plan and COVID-19 concerns. The ultimate aim of the Colombo Security Conclave is to secure the region by working together on a common platform.

5. Cabinet has taken note that following the heavy rainfall on 26 and 27 December 2021, the Land Drainage Authority (LDA) carried out an investigation into the causes of the water accumulation near the market of Rose Hill and had a working session with representatives of various organisations concerned including Metro Express Ltd, the Municipal Council of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill, the National Development Unit, the Road Development Authority, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Centre, the Central Water Authority and Larsen and Toubro. Following an assessment of the situation, several immediate and short term measures have been proposed by the LDA to address the problem.

6. Cabinet has taken note of the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic prevailing across the world. Some 283.6 million cases have been reported globally, of which 252.1 million persons have been successfully treated.

With regard to Mauritius, as at 29 December 2021, there were 477 active cases of COVID-19, out of which 14 were admitted at the New ENT Hospital. Over the period 16 December to 28 December 2021, 52 deaths were attributed to COVID-19.

Cabinet has also taken note of progress in the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme, including the administration of the booster dose in the Republic of Mauritius. As at 29 December 2021, 949,894 persons had received a first dose of vaccine (representing 75 percent of the population). 910,890 persons were fully vaccinated (representing 72 percent of the population). 186,042 persons had received a booster dose (representing 14.7 percent of the population).

Cabinet has further taken note that two repatriation flights have been effected to Rodrigues on 24 December 2021.

7. Cabinet has agreed to the submission of the first Biennial Update Report and the National Greenhouse Gas Inventory Report for the Republic of Mauritius to the Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). In line with the requirements of the UNFCCC, the Republic of Mauritius had submitted its First, Second and Third National Communications in 1999, 2010 and 2017 respectively. A National Communication is a periodical report which each Party to the Convention prepares to include vulnerability and adaptation assessments, greenhouse gas inventory preparation, mitigation analysis and awareness raising activities which can be used for designing mitigation and adaptation policies and actions to increase its resilience to the impacts of climate change as well as promote a low emission economy.

8. Cabinet has taken note that due to the prevailing sanitary conditions, the *Festival Kiltir Ek Langaz Kreol Morisien 2021* could not be held. In an endeavour to provide some relief and to financially support the artists, the Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage are proposing that artists who have participated in the last two editions of the Festival, be allowed to record their performances and thereafter, broadcast same on social media and the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation. The Ministry of Tourism would contribute to the cachet of 35 artists for “*Poezi*” and 133 groups of artists for “*Sega Lontan*” and “*Konser*”. The Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage would meet the cachet for 35 groups of artists for “*Sega Tipik*” and four groups for “*Teat*”, as well as logistics for recording.

9. Cabinet has taken note that in the context of the celebration of the 75 years of Independence of the Republic of India, a youth delegation comprising 10 young Mauritians, to be accompanied by two officers of the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation, would participate in the Republic Day Camp 2022 scheduled from 15 January to 03 February 2022 in India, under a Youth Exchange Programme.

10. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent participation of the Minister of Land Transport and Light Rail, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, as a panellist, in the Global presentation of UNCTAD Review of Maritime Transport 2021 on 15 December 2021.

The Review of Maritime Transport is an UNCTAD flagship report published annually since 1968. It provides an analysis of structural and cyclical changes affecting seaborne trade, ports and shipping, as well as an extensive collection of statistics from maritime trade and development. This year’s edition focused on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the industry and includes a special chapter on the challenges seafarers face as a result of the crewing crisis.

In his statement, the Minister highlighted that Mauritius, as a SIDS, was heavily dependent on maritime transport for international trade as it plays a crucial role in the economic and regional development of the country. The surge in container freight rates would have devastating consequences on SIDS economies, which, according to UNCTAD’s prediction, would be hit the hardest, in view of their remoteness and the fact that they depend primarily on maritime transport. He informed the panel that the Mauritian Government was fully supportive of the efforts being undertaken by international institutions such as the International Maritime Organization, World Trade Organization and UNCTAD, which are at the forefront of Ship Safety and Security.
