

HIGHLIGHTS OF CABINET MEETING – FRIDAY 01 JULY 2022

1. Cabinet has agreed to the introduction of the Academy of Design and Innovation Bill into the National Assembly. The object of the Bill is to provide for the establishment of the Academy of Design and Innovation, which would take over the functions and powers of the Fashion and Design Institute. Accordingly, the Fashion and Design Institute Act would be repealed and replaced by this new piece of legislation.

The establishment of the Academy of Design and Innovation has been rendered necessary in view of the fast-growing technology in the design field. The Academy of Design and Innovation would not only promote excellence in the field of fashion and design technology, but would, in addition, promote excellence for the creative industry in other fields such as graphic and multimedia, built-in and architecture, jewellery and arts and crafts.

2. Cabinet has agreed to the Workers' Rights (Prescribed Period) Regulations 2021 being amended so as to extend to 31 December 2022, the prescribed period during which an employer shall not reduce the number of his workers either temporarily or permanently or terminate the employment of any of his workers.

3. Cabinet has taken note that the Gambling Regulatory Authority Appeal Committee Regulations 2022 would be promulgated. The Regulations make provision, among others, for –

- (a) hearing of appeals against decisions of a stipendiary steward appointed by the Horse Racing Committee and the decision of an administrator of a horse racing organiser;
- (b) the composition of the Appeal Committee and the rules governing the operation of the Appeal Committee;
- (c) the procedure for making appeals and the process for dealing with them; and
- (d) the different offences covered by the Regulations and the applicable sanctions.

4. Cabinet has taken note that the Food (Amendment) Regulations 2022 would be made to provide, inter alia, for the definitions of “best-before date” and “use-by date” as follows –

- (a) **“Best-before date”**, for a food for sale, means the date up to which the food for sale will remain fully marketable and will retain any specific qualities for which express or implied claims have been made, provided the food for sale remains in an intact package during its storage; and is stored in accordance with any storage conditions specified by the manufacturer; and
- (b) **“Use-by date”**, for a food for sale, means the date after which it is estimated that the food for sale should not be consumed because of health or safety reasons, provided the food for sale remains in an intact package during its storage; and is stored in accordance with any storage conditions specified by the manufacturer; and has same meaning as expiry date.

These Regulations shall come into operation on 01 July 2022

5. Cabinet has taken note that the Road Traffic (COVID-19 Sanitary Measures) (Amendment) Regulations 2022 and the Light Rail (COVID-19 Sanitary Measures) (Amendment) Regulations 2022 would be promulgated.

The Road Traffic (COVID-19 Sanitary Measures) (Amendment) Regulations 2022 would revoke provisions relating to travel restrictions in public transport and standing accommodation in buses. The Light Rail (COVID-19 Sanitary Measures) (Amendment) Regulations 2022 intend to delete provisions relating to physical distancing requirements as these are no more applicable inside the light rail vehicles. Furthermore, the wearing of face masks at bus stops, bus shelters, bus stations, taxi stands and light rail stations would no longer be mandatory. However, passengers would still be required to wear their face masks inside the public transport vehicles, including the light rail.

6. Cabinet has taken note of the revocation of the Consolidated COVID-19 Regulations 2021 and the promulgation of the Quarantine (COVID-19 Restrictions) Regulations 2022, effective as from 01 July 2022, to provide for the easing of sanitary restrictions in Mauritius, including the following –

- (i) public or private gathering without limitation of number of attendees;
- (ii) masks would no longer be a legal requirement in public areas except for specified places;
- (iii) period of self-confinement of at least seven days for a COVID-19 positive person, but the person may resume his normal activities, should he present a negative PCR or Rapid Antigen Test prior to seven days;
- (iv) presentation of the vaccination pass at specified workplaces for employees only; and

- (v) COVID-19 vaccination will no longer be a pre-requisite before travelling abroad and testing upon arrival at the airport will be discontinued.

Cabinet has also taken note that the quarantine period has been extended until 30 September 2022.

7. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Prime Minister to Kigali, Rwanda, where he participated in the 26th Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM 2022) and other side meetings in connection thereto.

This high-level event was preceded, inter alia, by the Commonwealth Foreign Affairs Ministers' Meeting, held on 23 June 2022, which also saw the participation of the Minister of Land Transport and Light Rail, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade.

During CHOGM 2022, the Heads of Government took note, amongst others, of Reports from the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Commonwealth Foundation and the Commonwealth of Learning. Reports on the outcomes of pre-CHOGM fora, namely the Commonwealth Business Forum, the Commonwealth People's Forum, the Commonwealth Women's Forum and the Commonwealth Youth Forum were also considered. Following discussions, CHOGM 2022 adopted a Communiqué on the theme of the Meeting: '*Delivering a Common Future: Connecting, Innovating, Transforming*'.

The Prime Minister also attended –

- (a) the Commonwealth Heads of Government Retreat. The agenda included shared priorities and global challenges relating to insecurities in food, energy and climate as well as sustainable development and COVID-19 response/post-recovery; and
- (b) Executive Sessions, alongside other Heads of State and Government.

In the margins of the CHOGM 2022, the Prime Minister had meetings with –

- (a) His Excellency Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda and new Chair-in-Office of the CHOGM. Bilateral issues of common interests were discussed, inter alia, the signature of a General Framework Agreement, the importation of key food/agricultural products from Rwanda, investment incentives as well as the establishment of working relations between the Economic Development Board and the Rwandan Development Board;
- (b) the Rt Hon Boris Johnson, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, with whom discussions centred around the Chagos issue; and

- (c) His Royal Highness Prince Charles, the Rt Hon Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada, His Excellency Uhuru Kenyatta, President of Kenya, His Excellency Ibrahim Mohamed Solih, President of Maldives, His Excellency Dr. S. Jaishankar, Minister of External Affairs of India and the Hon Richard Marles, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Defence of Australia, amongst others.

On 26 June 2022, the Prime Minister and Dr Edouard Ngirente, Prime Minister of Rwanda, jointly inaugurated the Mushishito-Rukarara 5MW Hydropower Plant in the Nyamagabe District of Rwanda. The Omnihydro plant is mostly owned by Omnicane and was built by its subsidiary. This hydropower plant is a clean and renewable bio-energy production, estimated to reduce carbon emissions by about 14,500 metric tons yearly.

8. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of the Ministerial Resolution, entitled 'Ushering in a decade of delivery for sustainable inland transport and sustainable development', of the Inland Transport Committee (ITC), of the United Nations. The Ministerial Resolution expresses the commitment of Member States to build on the progress made by the ITC over the past seven and a half decades in creating safer, more accessible, and sustainable inland transport, while also embracing new changing technology and the needs to address challenges such as climate change and disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

9. Cabinet has agreed to 12 essential commodities being placed under the maximum mark-up regime, as from 01 July 2022, namely Canned Fish (Pilchards, Mackerel and Sardines), Canned Tomatoes, Processed Cheese, Edible Oil, Margarine, Milk Powder, Pulses (black lentils, red lentils, broad beans, chickpea dal and split peas), Baby Diapers, Adult Diapers, Infant Food/Preparation, Wheat Cereals (Breakfast Cereals) and Pasta.

10. Cabinet has taken note of the proposed course of action regarding the implementation of the budgetary measure for the abolishment of Municipal Tax on the family home which is expected to become effective as from 01 July 2022, as announced in the Budget Speech 2022/23. The abolition of Municipal Tax would be applied as follows -

Category	Payment of Municipal Tax
Households owning a single house	Exempted
Households owning more than one house in any Municipal Area	Exempted only for the house which is the main residence of the owner
Mixed-Use buildings	Exempted only for the residential part thereof if same represents the main residence of the household.

Necessary amendments would be made to the Regulations under the Local Government Act.

11. Cabinet has agreed to the renewal of the Executive Programme between the Government of the People's Republic of China and the Government of the Republic of Mauritius for period 2022-2025. The first Cultural Agreement was signed between the two countries in 1980 to encourage exchanges in the fields of arts and culture.

The proposed Executive Programme 2022-2025 provides for cultural cooperation in the following fields –

- (a) exchange of performing arts troupes;
- (b) exchange of professionals in the field of visual arts, archives, museums, heritage and cinema; and
- (c) holding of arts and crafts exhibition.

12. Cabinet has taken note that the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Land Use Planning, Minister of Tourism would issue the Planning Policy Guidance 10 for Residences of Diplomatic Missions under section 13 of the Planning and Development Act. A Planning Policy Guidance establishes a set of performance criteria and design guidance on any aspect of land use planning and development, including their relationship to and impact on economic and social development and covering the form, scale, intensity, built form, location and general criteria for different classes of development.

The Planning Policy Guidance 10 would assist local authorities in determining applications for the issue of Building and Land Use Permit in respect of development works to be carried out within a designated buffer in the vicinity of residences of High Commissioners and Ambassadors.

13. Cabinet has taken note of the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic prevailing across the world. Some 551.9 million cases have been reported globally, of which 527.4 million persons have been successfully treated. With regard to Mauritius, as at 29 June 2022, there were 439 active cases of COVID-19, out of which 28 were admitted at the New ENT Hospital. Over the period 23 to 29 June 2022, two deaths were attributed to COVID-19.

14. Cabinet has taken note that tests carried out on the two suspected cases of Monkeypox had yielded negative results.

15. Cabinet has taken note that 16 players aged between 17 to 18 years, of the Liverpool Football Club International Academy (LFCIA) (Mauritius) would effect a tour in the UK from 21 to 31 July 2022, which would include showcase matches against other academies in front of a professional audience.

16. Cabinet has taken note of the organisation by the Mauritius Football Association of friendly triangular matches, which will be held on 05, 07 and 09 July 2022, among senior women football teams of Mauritius, Rodrigues and Seychelles at the Côte d'Or National Sports Complex. The Mauritius U20 Girls Team will also play a training match with each of the three teams.

17. Cabinet has taken note of the status of projects that were being undertaken by the National Housing Development Company (NHDC) Ltd. In addition to 2,188 housing units built and/or delivered since November 2019, the NHDC Ltd has embarked on construction projects in respect of some additional 758 housing units.

From December 2019 to-date, the NHDC Ltd has disbursed an amount of Rs118M for the rehabilitation of the existing wastewater network on five sites, namely Highlands, Bambous, St Pierre, Rose Belle and Vieux Grand Port. Rehabilitation of existing wastewater network and ancillary works, to the tune of Rs168M, is ongoing at Nouvelle France, Tyack, Riambel, Dagotière and Notre Dame.

18. Cabinet has taken note of a situational analysis of the tourism sector since the full reopening of borders on 01 October 2021 up to 31 May 2022. Mauritius welcomed 482,371 tourists for the period 01 October 2021 up to 31 May 2022. The Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority would monitor the situation in the coming months and adapt its marketing strategies in order to attain the set objective of one million tourists, in line with the short-term tourism strategy for the year 2022.

19. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the participation of the Minister of Land Transport and Light Rail, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade in the 12th WTO Ministerial Conference (MC12) held recently in Geneva. In his pre-recorded address to the plenary, the Minister emphasised the impact of the challenges facing the world economy, particularly on Net Food Importing Developing Countries such as Mauritius and the need for the MC12 to frame responses to address them. He also proposed that a special desk be set up at the WTO to examine issues confronting the Small Island Developing States and to propose solutions as appropriate.

20. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent virtual participation of the Minister of Labour, Human Resource Development and Training, Minister of Commerce and Consumer Protection in the 110th Session of the International Labour Conference held in Geneva.

The key resolutions adopted by the Conference were, inter alia, –

- (a) resolution on the inclusion of a safe and healthy working environment in the ILO's framework of fundamental principles and rights at work;
- (b) resolution concerning Decent Work and the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) which highlights, among others, the role, importance, relevance and the contribution of SSE; and
- (c) resolution to place on the agenda of the next ordinary session of the Conference an item entitled "Apprenticeships".

21. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the National Productivity and Competitiveness Council, with Mr Sujoy Busgeeth as part-time Chairperson.

22. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Mauritius Accreditation Service (MAURITAS) Advisory Council, with Dr Abdel Anwar Hossen Khoodaruth, as part-time Chairperson.

23. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Board of the Civil Service College, Mauritius, with Professor Dhanjay Jhurry, GOSK, as part-time Chairperson.
