

HIGHLIGHTS OF CABINET MEETING – FRIDAY 02 DECEMBER 2022

1. Cabinet has taken note that the Freeport (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2022 would be promulgated. The Regulations provide for an extension of the time limit from 31 December 2022 to 31 December 2023 of the authorisation granted by the Economic Development Board to a Private Freeport Developer to provide warehousing facilities for the storage of goods in a Freeport zone to any person.

2. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the State Trading Corporation (STC) and the Union of Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture (UCCIA) of the Union of the Comoros. The Memorandum of Understanding would, inter alia, serve –

- (a) for the promotion of trade cooperation between the STC and UCCIA through exchange of information on commodity trading, including risk management in the event of *force majeure*;
- (b) as a basis for joint endeavours by the STC and the UCCIA which may lead to contractual agreements;
- (c) to promote trade in commodities by allowing third country and third-party transactions wherever such opportunities arise for the mutual benefit of both parties; and
- (d) to share know-how in human resource development, procurement, inventory management, supply and distribution of basic necessities and other strategic goods.

3. Cabinet has taken note that the Prime Minister would lead a delegation to Washington DC, USA to participate, inter alia, in the US-Africa Leaders' Summit which would be held from 13 to 15 December 2022. In the margins of the Summit, bilateral meetings would be held with several Heads of State/Government as well as other dignitaries.

The Prime Minister would also participate in a side event organised by the Corporate Council on Africa on the theme "Leveraging the Private Sector to reach Health Security Goals in Africa".

4. Cabinet has taken note that following the Tripartite Committee Meeting on salary compensation for the year 2023, a monthly salary compensation of Rs1,000 across the board would be paid as from January 2023. Some 106,000 employees in the public sector and 327,000 employees in the private sector would benefit from the salary compensation. In order to support enterprises to maintain the productive capacity –

- (a) Government, through the Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA), would provide financial support to an SME or an Export Oriented Enterprise having difficulties to pay the salary compensation 2023. This would be determined by the MRA on a case to case basis; and
- (b) enterprises having obtained loan from the DBM for the payments of wages and end-of-year bonus during the COVID-19 period and experiencing difficulties for repayment would be given a moratorium on a case to case basis.

Government would continue to pay the special allowances to National Minimum Wage earners so that they have a guaranteed income of Rs13,075 per month as from January 2023, inclusive of the CSG Income Allowance.

5. Cabinet has taken note that the International Organization for Migration would conduct a consultancy assignment on the development of a Mass Evacuation in Natural Disaster (MEND) Contingency Plan for Mauritius. The development of the Contingency Plan stems from the 2020 Report on the Capacity for Disaster Reduction Initiative as one of the recommendations therein, targeting local population as well as foreign nationals (migrants and tourists) using the base MEND guide. The purpose of the consultancy assignment would be to –

- (a) equip the Government of Mauritius with a MEND Contingency Plan to strengthen its capacity to respond to crises in times of natural disasters, more specifically during floods, tsunamis, storms and tidal surges, and landslides; and
- (b) better respond to crises through safe mass evacuation of people, including non-citizens, from exposed areas.

6. Cabinet has taken note of the findings and recommendations of the Fact-Finding Committee set up by the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family Welfare, following the admission of one Baby S in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit of the SSRN Hospital.

The Ministry has already initiated actions with regard to the recommendations that can immediately be implemented. There are a number of recommendations that would require further consultations with key stakeholders as they involve policy decision, amendments to the existing legal framework and additional resources.

7. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent meeting of the High-Level Committee on the Elimination of Gender-Based Violence under the chair of the Prime Minister. The Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare presented the second status report on the implementation of the recommendations of the National Strategy and Action Plan of the High-Level Committee on Elimination of Gender-Based Violence. Members of the High-Level Committee submitted their views and comments which have been incorporated in the final status report. The Minister of Public Service, Administrative and Institutional Reforms reported on the status regarding the audit and review exercise for key institutions.

The High-Level Committee has also agreed to the international consultant, who had drafted the National Strategy and Action Plan, conducting a mid-term review to assess whether the implementation of the Strategy and Action Plan is on the right track or whether there is a need to re-strategise.

8. Cabinet has taken note of the status regarding the formulation of Business Continuity Plans at the level of Ministries and Departments for eventual activation in times of crisis. The project was wholly financed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), while the Civil Service College Mauritius provided technical assistance for the design of the plans and the training of officers.

As at date, 13 Ministries have already developed their Business Continuity Plans and presented same at a workshop held recently in the presence of UNDP representatives. During the current Financial Year, six additional Ministries/Departments would craft their Business Continuity Plan.

9. Cabinet has taken note of the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic prevailing in Mauritius. As at 30 November 2022, there were 126 active cases of COVID-19, out of which 44 were admitted at the New ENT Hospital. Over the period 24 to 30 November 2022, three deaths were attributed to COVID-19.

10. Cabinet has taken note that the NOTAM for passengers and crew members travelling to Mauritius and Rodrigues has been extended up to 28 February 2023.

11. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the Meeting of Commonwealth Law Ministers and Senior Officials held recently in Mauritius. The Meeting was attended by Commonwealth Law Ministers, Attorneys General and Senior Officials from 31 jurisdictions with a view to discussing legal issues of interest to Commonwealth Member countries and was chaired by the Attorney General, Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security. The theme of the Meeting was “Strengthening international cooperation through the rule of law and the protection of human rights”. Various topics were discussed during the meeting, including –

- (a) access to justice and, in particular, the Plan of Action on Equal Access to Justice endorsed by the Commonwealth Heads of Government in Kigali in June 2022;
- (b) courts of the future and digitisation;
- (c) mutual legal assistance schemes ;
- (d) regulation of digital assets in the Commonwealth ;
- (e) the draft Commonwealth Principles on Freedom of Expression and the Role of the Media in Good Governance, and
- (f) establishment of a Law Ministers Action Group ;

Bilateral meetings were held by the Mauritius delegation with those from the United Kingdom, Singapore, Rwanda and Canada

12. Cabinet has taken note that major road works would be carried out along the Motorway M1 and the Rose Hill-Trianon Road, A14, in the region of Ebène, near the Ebène-Trianon bridge. The slip lane from Ebène-Trianon bridge leading to Motorway (Southbound) would be closed for a duration of three months, with effect from 08 December 2022. The traffic motoring from Ebène and proceeding towards Port Louis would thus be diverted onto the Trianon Roundabout to eventually join Motorway M1. The necessary traffic signs would be put up to inform and guide road users.

13. Cabinet has taken note that restoration and repairs of the stone wall at the Inner Courtyard of the Renganaden Seeneevassen Building, along Georges Guibert Street, Port Louis, would be carried out from 07 to 30 December 2022. Subsequently, the Georges Guibert Street from its junction with Pope Hennessy Street (as from KFC) to its junction with La Poudrière Street, Port Louis, would be temporarily closed to traffic and pedestrians during the execution of the works.

14. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Land Use Planning, Minister of Tourism to London, United Kingdom, in the context of the 43rd edition of the World Travel Market (WTM). He participated in a panel at the Ministers' Summit focusing on "Rethinking Tourism – what should the tourism sector of tomorrow look like and how do we get there?". During his intervention, he pointed out, among others, that as a Small Island Developing State, Mauritius is exposed to the impact of climate change. Working towards a sustainable tourism industry is high on the Government agenda with the objective of broadening the tourism product portfolio to include eco-tourism.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Land Use Planning, Minister of Tourism also had the opportunity during the WTM event to meet some major UK-based Travel and Tour Operators which market the Mauritian destination to obtain their feedback on the UK market, listen to their concerns and brainstorm on how to collaboratively boost the market. He had meetings, among others, with the CEO of British Airways, the Minister of Tourism of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Minister of State (Minister of Development) of the UK. He also gave a live interview on the BBC.

15. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the participation of the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Land Use Planning, Minister of Tourism in the 18th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the '*Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie*' (OIF). The Summit was preceded by the 43rd Session of the Ministerial Conference of La Francophonie. The central theme of the Summit was '*La Connectivité dans la diversité - le numérique vecteur de développement et de solidarité dans l'espace francophone*'. The OIF Secretary-General presented a comprehensive report on actions carried out during her tenure. The Summit also addressed the role of women and young people as agents of peace and actors of development. The Summit welcomed the adoption of the '*Francophonie: la stratégie numérique 2022-2026*' document.

In the margins of the Summit, the Deputy Prime Minister met a number of dignitaries, including the Presidents of Burundi, Cote d'Ivoire, France, Mauritania, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal and Tunisia, as well as the Prime Ministers of Canada, Madagascar and Tunisia. He also had in-depth discussions with the Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs of France and Secretary-General of OIF. He had a working session with the President of Seychelles.

16. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the mission of the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Land Use Planning, Minister of Tourism where he attended the 117th session of the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) Executive Council. Mauritius has been re-elected as Vice-Chair of the Executive Council of the Organisation for the period 2022-2023.

In the margins of the event, the Deputy Prime Minister paid a courtesy call on the Minister of Tourism, Handicrafts and Social and Solidarity Economy of the Kingdom of Morocco and also had a meeting with the Secretary-General of UNWTO. He also had a bilateral meeting with the Minister of Tourism of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

17. Cabinet has taken note that Mr Dheerujall Baramlall Seetulsingh, S.C. has been re-appointed as Chairperson of the National Human Rights Commission and Mr Michel Vieillesse as Member of the National Preventive Mechanism Division for a further period of four years. Mrs Marie Lindona Charlotte Laureen Manguillier and Mr Chuveeraj Kunal Naik have been appointed as Members of the Human Rights Division for a period of four years.

18. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the National Children's Council Board, with Mr Jayprakashsing Rutnah as part-time Chairperson.
