

HIGHLIGHTS OF CABINET MEETING – FRIDAY 02 SEPTEMBER 2022

1. Cabinet has agreed to the promulgation of the Civil Aviation (Passenger Service Charge) (Amendment) Regulations 2022. The new Regulations provide for application of a penalty of five percent and interest at the rate of one percent per month or part thereof, in respect of late payment by airlines of passenger service charge to the airport operator concerned. The remittance period would be not later than 30 days after the end of every month for the payment of the Passenger Service Charge. The Regulations would come into operation on 01 November 2022.

2. Cabinet has agreed to the removal of Butterfish from the list of “Controlled Fish Species”. Butterfish is transhipped through the Mauritian port, but being included in the list of “Controlled Fish Species”, it is not authorised for import for sale on the local market unless there is a shortage of frozen fish. As the fish is transhipped in Mauritius, some operators have expressed their interest to import same and make it readily available for the local market.

3. Cabinet has agreed to designate the Samadhis and Memorial Monuments of Late Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam and Late Sir Anerood Jugnauth, respectively erected at SSR Botanic Garden, as National Heritage under the National Heritage Fund Act, as recommended by the National Heritage Fund Board. Both are landmark personalities in the history of Mauritius and have contributed enormously in the development of the country since Independence.

4. Cabinet has agreed to the organisation of a wreath laying ceremony by the Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage in collaboration with the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund at Antoinette Phooliyar, Barlow, on 01 November 2022 to commemorate the 188th Anniversary of the Arrival of Indentured Labourers in Mauritius. The official ceremony for the Commemoration of the 188th Anniversary of the Arrival of Indentured Labourers would be held at the Trou Fanfaron Wharf next to the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site on 02 November 2022.

The ceremony at Antoinette Phooliyar would be in memory of the first indentured labourers who came to Mauritius in the 1830s and were employed by the Ex-Antoinette Sugar Estate.

5. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the official visit of the Prime Minister to Rodrigues from 28 to 30 August 2022. During his visit, the Prime Minister inaugurated the new Departure Lounge and the Duty Free Shop at Plaine Corail Airport and laid the foundation stone of the new duty free warehouse and office complex in the secured zone of the Airport of Rodrigues. The Prime Minister had a working session with the Executive Council of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly. During the meeting, discussions centered around the chronic and permanent water deficit affecting the island and actions envisaged. Other issues raised included –

- (a) port development and maritime services;
- (b) the impact of climate change, particularly severe beach erosion and sedimentation of the lagoon; and
- (c) the construction of the New Runway at Plaine Corail Airport.

The Prime Minister laid the foundation stone of the new Bank of Mauritius building to be known as Rodrigues House and effected the official launching of 12 MBC TV channels and four radio channels in Rodrigues. During his address to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, the Prime Minister highlighted the various projects that Government had been implementing in Rodrigues. The Prime Minister also inaugurated the newly constructed Fire Station at Mon Plaisir.

6. Cabinet has taken note that the National Certificate of Education (NCE) Assessment 2021-2022 would be held on Thursday 06 October, Friday 07 October, Thursday 13 October, Friday 14 October, Tuesday 18 October and Wednesday 19 October 2022.

The best candidates at the NCE assessment would be admitted to the 12 Academies. Some 17,559 students (boys and girls in Mauritius, Rodrigues and Agalega) would take part in the NCE Assessment 2021-2022.

7. Cabinet has taken note that the Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan would hold a Pakistan Week in celebration of its 75th anniversary of Independence and the commemoration of the 55th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Mauritius and Pakistan. The programme of events from 02 to 08 September 2022 would comprise the following–

- (a) a Pakistan Film Festival organised by the Mauritius Film Development Corporation and the High Commission of Pakistan from 02 to 04 September 2022 at MCine Trianon;

- (b) a cricket match on 03 September 2022 organised by the Pakistan High Commission and the Mauritius Cricket Federation at SSR Cricket Ground, Mapou;
- (c) a Qawali/Sufi night on 05 September 2022 at Serge Constantin Hall, Vacoas and on 07 September 2022 at the Farmer's Service Centre, Goodlands;
- (d) a Painting and Photographic exhibition, a Handicrafts exhibition and a Pakistan food festival from 06 to 07 September 2022 at the Islamic Cultural Centre, Port-Louis; and
- (e) an official reception for the Independence Day of Pakistan at J&J lawns, Phoenix, to be followed by a musical concert on 08 September 2022 at J&J Auditorium, Phoenix.

8. Cabinet has taken note of the amount collected as distiller-bottler contribution and which has been paid to sugar cane planters from years 2011 to 2021. The contribution/Litre was increased from Rs20 to Rs40 as from 2016, following the recommendations of the Landell Mill Report.

9. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation would launch a new programme called '*Jeunes Sapeurs Pompiers*' under the 'Youth Volunteer Mauritius'. The objective of the '*Jeunes Sapeurs Pompiers*' programme is to create a pool of young volunteers equipped with the necessary skills to assist in dealing with life threatening situations such as flash floods, fires and other natural disasters.

Under the '*Jeunes Sapeurs Pompiers*' programme, young volunteers would be enrolled in a 10-day training where they would be trained in 'prompt rescue', handling firefighting equipment and acquiring life saving techniques. The participants would be required to undergo a fitness test to ascertain that they are medically fit to undertake the training.

10. Cabinet has taken note that the International Trade Centre (ITC), in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade and the Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) would launch the new Trade Obstacles Alert Mechanism (TOAM) and the complementary mobile application on 29 September 2022.

The TOAM which was launched in Mauritius in 2015 was an extension of an ITC project on Non-Tariff Barriers. The TOAM is jointly managed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade and the MCCI. It provides a web-based platform on which business operators report trade obstacles such as non-tariff barriers and other constraints which they might face in the course of exports and imports. These obstacles are channeled to Ministries/Agencies concerned for remedial actions.

So far, some 30 trade obstacles have been successfully resolved. The mobile application would make the TOAM more visible to operators and enable them to report trade obstacles directly and seamlessly from their mobile devices.

11. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the second meeting of the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Monitoring and Implementation of Free Trade Agreements held recently. The Committee took note that –

- (a) exports to China increased by 148 percent in 2021, with an export value of Rs1.4 billion. Exports to India also increased by 60 percent during that period; and
- (b) Mauritius had been selected as one of the countries for the African Continental Free Trade (AfCFTA) Guided Trade Initiative.

The measures and actions taken by the different Ministries/Institutions concerned to maximise on the opportunities arising under the various trade agreements signed by Mauritius were also discussed. The measures identified relate broadly to the following –

- (a) Labour Issues;
- (b) Information and Sensitisation;
- (c) Trade and Investment Promotion;
- (d) Sanitary and Phyto-Sanitary and Technical Barriers to Trade issues; and
- (e) Industrial Strategy.

12. Cabinet has taken note of the measures taken by the Mauritius Society for Animal Welfare (MSAW) and the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security to implement the recommendations made in the Office of Public Sector Governance Report on Financial Reporting and Governance Practices at MSAW.

13. Cabinet has taken note of the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic prevailing across the world. Some 608.3 million cases have been reported globally, of which 584.6 million persons have been successfully treated. With regard to Mauritius, as at 31 August 2022, there were 99 active cases of COVID-19, out of which 18 were admitted at the New ENT Hospital.

Cabinet has also taken note that the US Food and Drug Administration has, on 31 August 2022, approved two freshly revised and updated COVID-19 boosters, one created by Moderna and one made by Pfizer and German biotechnology company BioNTech, targeting the original SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus variant as well as two Omicron subvariants known as BA.4 and BA.5.

14. Cabinet has taken note that the first case of Monkeypox in the Indian Ocean has been detected in Mayotte. The first case of Monkeypox was confirmed by the Regional Health Agency of Mayotte on 27 August 2022.

15. Cabinet has taken note that the World Teacher's Day would be celebrated on Wednesday 05 October 2022 and would be decreed a school holiday for students attending pre-primary, primary and secondary schools and MITD Training Centres as well as for teaching and non-teaching staff of these institutions.

The World Teacher's Day has been celebrated internationally since 1994 upon an initiative of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and for the first time in Mauritius as from 05 October 1996.

16. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the participation of the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management in the Second Edition of the Kigali Global Dialogue 2022 held in Rwanda. The Dialogue 2022 was organised by the Observer Research Foundation (ORF) and ORF America in Partnership with the Rwanda Convention Bureau.

The objective of the conference was to bring together policymakers, academics, the civil society and the private sector from around the world to deliberate and devise solutions to critical sustainable development challenges facing the global community today. Discussions were centered around the following thematic pillars -

- (a) Building Resilient Societies;
- (b) The Lost Six Million: Lessons from the Pandemic;
- (c) Commerce, Creativity and Chrome;

- (d) Climate Corollaries; and
- (e) A Multipolar World: The Geopolitics of Development.

17. 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 Eighth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD 8) Summit held recently in Tunisia. Discussions revolved around three main themes, namely –

- a) Economy - Realising Africa as a vigorously growing region while taking advantage of resolving social issues as opportunities for development;
- b) Society- Realising a resilient and sustainable society; and
- c) Peace and Security – Realising a sustainable Peace and Stability.

Japan announced the launch of a new Bilateral Business Improvement Committee between Mauritius and Japan as one of the measures for Japan's contribution as well as with Morocco, Rwanda, and Tunisia. The aim of the Committee is to promote trade and investment between Japan and Africa and support Japanese companies expanding into Africa

In the margins of the Summit, the Minister had bilateral meetings with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Japan and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Tunisia.

18. Cabinet has taken note of the virtual participation of the Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation as Keynote Speaker at the Opening Ceremony of the Inaugural Small Islands Developing States Internet Governance Forum (IGF) organised by the Caribbean Telecommunications Union in partnership with the 18th Caribbean Internet Governance Forum and the 1st Caribbean Youth Internet Governance Forum.

The main aim behind the organisation of this event was to formulate internet governance policies and initiatives for priority attention to facilitate ICT-driven social and economic development amongst SIDS. The theme for the event was "Internet Governance Priorities for ICT-Driven Development.". The IGF provided a platform to various stakeholders to engage in high level panel discussions on topics such as Cybersecurity, Cybercrime, Data Protection, Digital Justice, Digital Strategies and the Digital Economy and the future of the internet.

19. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent official visit of the Minister of Health and Wellness to Rodrigues. During his visit, the Minister launched a Workshop on Hepatitis C at the Baladirou Training and Residential Centre and inaugurated the Mont Lubin Flu Clinic and the new Cascade Jean-Louis Community Health Centre. A donation of Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP) machines was made to the Commission of Rodrigues for Health.

The Minister also effected a site visit at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital where actions were being taken for the setting up of a Cardiac Unit and an Intensive Care Unit. Moreover, he visited the Pointe La Gueule Prison where necessary logistics for the testing of HIV and other Sexually Transmitted Diseases for inmates were being put in place. He also launched the Workshop of the Youth Empowerment Programme Against Drugs.

With a view to promoting oral health and enhancing dental services at Rodrigues, the Ministry of Health and Wellness had also arranged for the conveyance of a Mobile Dental Caravan, fully equipped for dental consultation.
