

HIGHLIGHTS OF CABINET MEETING – FRIDAY 05 AUGUST 2022

1. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a Memorandum of Agreement between the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change and the Road Development Authority on greening and embellishment works along Motorways M1 and M2 from Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport to Grand Baie. The services and participation of Authorities and Sponsors would also be enlisted for the greening and embellishment works.

2. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Mauritius Research and Innovation Council and the Mohammed Bin Rashid Space Centre of the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The Memorandum of Understanding aims at establishing a framework for the cooperation in the field of peaceful use of outer space which would be beneficial to both parties and would include, inter alia, -

- (a) expert advice for the development of Space Roadmap/Space Strategy and Space Policy;
- (b) technical guidance to develop satellite structure, sub-systems and payload which would be useful for both parties; and
- (c) facilitation of establishment of new start-ups in the field of Satellite/Space Technology which would be beneficial to both parties.

3. Cabinet has taken note that as from 05 August 2022, the State Trading Corporation would commercialise 1,100,000 litres of Refined Soyabean Oil under its brand name “Smatch” over a period of three months. The product would be available at different points of sale in Mauritius and Rodrigues at the maximum subsidised retail price of Rs75 per litre.

A limitation on the sale of Refined Soyabean Oil “Smatch” to a maximum of two litres per person would be imposed in all retail outlets with effect from 05 August 2022, in view of the limited available quantity of the product and to prevent any potential risk of stockpiling and hoarding.

4. Cabinet has taken note that Mauritius has won four medals so far in the Birmingham Commonwealth Games as follows -

- (a) Silver medal -
 - Miss Roilya Ranaivosoa – Weightlifting (49kg)
 - Mr Remi Feuillet – Judo (-90kg)
- (b) Bronze medal –

- Miss Christianne Legentil – Judo (-57 kg)
- Mr Sebastien Perrine – Judo (+100kg)

Mr Richarno Colin has qualified for the semi-final in the Light Welterweight boxing category to be held on Saturday 06 August 2022.

5. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a Project Document and Memoranda of Understanding in the context of the “Indian Ocean Regional Project – Mauritius – Implementing Sustainable Low and Non-Chemical Development in SIDS (ISLANDS)” under grant funding from the Global Environment Facility. The specific objectives of the project are to prevent the future build-up of materials and chemicals entering SIDS that contain Persistent Organic Pollutants, mercury and other harmful chemicals; safely manage and dispose of existing harmful chemicals, products and materials currently present in those SIDS; and ensure the safe management of products continuing to enter SIDS by closing materials and product loops.

The ISLANDS project would address the recommendations in the Initial Assessment Report prepared by the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change such that Mauritius meets its obligations under the Minamata Convention.

6. Cabinet has taken note that the Independent Broadcasting Authority (Administrative Penalties) Regulations 2022 would be promulgated. The objective of the Regulations is to provide for a framework for the determination of the quantum of the administrative penalty which the Independent Broadcasting Authority may impose on a licensee for a breach of the main Act, regulations, codes or conditions of licence.

Any licensee who feels aggrieved by the decision of the Authority to impose an Administrative Penalty may appeal against the decision to the Independent Broadcasting Review Panel. The Regulations would come into operation on 08 August 2022.

7. Cabinet has taken note that the Excise (Amendment of Schedule) (No. 3) Regulations 2022 and the Customs Tariff (Amendment of Schedule) (No. 4) Regulations 2022 would be promulgated to provide for a revision in the minimum threshold of energy efficiency index for refrigerators and dishwashers above which the existing 25% levy on energy inefficient appliances would apply. The Excise (Amendment of Schedule) (No. 3) Regulations 2022 provide for -

- (a) the levy to be applicable based on the new threshold Energy Efficiency Index for refrigerators and dishwashers imported as from 01 September 2022. However, to allow a smooth implementation, those refrigerators and dishwashers in bonded warehouse on or before 31 August 2022 would be allowed to be cleared based on either the new or the previously applicable threshold Energy Efficiency Index depending on their MS certification; and
- (b) the removal of washing machines from the scope of the levy.

The Customs Tariff (Amendment of Schedule) (No. 4) Regulations 2022 provide for consequential changes in HS Codes.

Both Regulations would come into operation on 01 September 2022.

8. Cabinet has taken note of the measures being taken by the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family Welfare for the effective implementation of the recommendations of the National Gender Policy (2022 – 2030) which was launched on 08 March 2022. The implementation of strategies and actions enunciated in the National Gender Policy rests on the following -

- (a) strengthening of the National Steering Committee on Gender Mainstreaming and the Gender Cells at the level of all Ministries/Departments;
- (b) establishment of the Inter-Ministerial Gender Technical Working Committee; and
- (c) setting up of four Gender Technical Working Groups on Gender Mainstreaming relating to the private sector, academia, media and civil society organisations.

9. Cabinet has taken note of the activities being organised by the Civil Status Division to mark the Africa Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Day, observed on 10 August and the Identity Day, observed on 16 September. The Africa Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Day, and the Identity Day celebrate the recognition of the legal identity of all persons from birth to death, and the affirmation of key human and civil rights, including the right to recognition under the law, the right to participate in society and the economy, and the right to access social services.

The Civil Status Division would organise sensitisation campaigns on MBC TV and radio, and private radio channels on the themes to be decided by ID4Africa and on other current issues such as the online issue of Birth and Marriage certificates.

10. Cabinet has taken note that the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID) has, on 21 June 2022, concluded a cooperation agreement with the Mauritius International Arbitration Centre (MIAC).

The Agreement is based on Article 63 of the ICSID Convention and provides for the possibility of holding ICSID hearings at MIAC facilities, reinforcing ICSID's global presence and services. The Agreement also encourages knowledge sharing between ICSID and MIAC related to arbitration, conciliation, mediation, and other methods of dispute resolution.

11. Cabinet has taken note of the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic prevailing across the world. Some 585.6 million cases have been reported globally, of which 556.1 million persons have been successfully treated. With regard to Mauritius, as at 03 August 2022, there were 352 active cases of COVID-19, out of which 39 were admitted at the New ENT Hospital. Over the period 28 July to 03 August 2022, two deaths were attributed to COVID-19.

12. Cabinet has taken note that on 23 July 2022, the WHO has declared Monkeypox as a public health emergency of international concern. No case of Monkeypox has been detected in Mauritius. The situation is being monitored by the Ministry of Health and Wellness.

13. 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 24th Meeting of the Ministerial Committee of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation (MCO) held recently in South Africa. The following main issues were discussed -

- (a) Peace and Security;
- (b) Dialogue and Mediation in Conflict Resolution;
- (c) the SADC Mission in Mozambique;
- (d) Maritime Security; and
- (e) Signing of the SADC Protocol on the Interstate Transfer of Sentenced Offenders.

The Minister met the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation of South Africa and discussed, among others, the early conclusion of a Bilateral Visa Waiver Agreement between Mauritius and South Africa, the finalisation of the General Cooperation Agreement establishing a Joint Commission to enhance bilateral relations, the Memoranda of Understanding on Tourism, and on Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises.

14. 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 Ninth Meeting of the Council of Ministers of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) held recently in Ghana. A new Bureau was elected with the Minister of Trade and SMEs of Gabon, as the Chairperson of the AfCFTA Council of Ministers. The Council of Ministers further took note of the progress made on the negotiations for Phase I issues (Trade in Goods, Special Economic Zones and Trade in Services) and Phase II issues (Investment, Competition Policy and Intellectual Property Rights).

The Council of Ministers also took note of the projects realised by the Afrexim-Bank in the implementation of the AfCFTA Agreement. In the margins of the meeting, the Minister also had a meeting with the Minister of Trade and Industry of Ghana and discussed various areas of collaboration.

15. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development to UK and Morocco. In the UK, the Minister was invited by the African Leadership Organisation to participate in the 2022 African Business Leadership Awards ceremony as distinguished honouree and recipient of the 2022 African Finance Minister of the Year. He also participated in a special interview session for all honourees which was published in the ABLA Honourees' edition of the African Leadership Magazine. He seized the opportunity to meet representatives of Moody's Investors Service and Standard Chartered in the context of the Annual Credit Analysis Report of Moody's. He also met Mrs Catherine Bouvier of Standard Chartered, who confirmed that Standard Chartered would guide Mauritius through the development of an Environmental, Social and Governance Framework.

In Morocco, the Minister was invited to participate in the 2022 African Caucus Meeting in his capacity as Governor of the World Bank Group and the International Monetary Fund. The theme of the Caucus Meeting was "Towards a Resilient Africa".

16. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Attorney General, Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security to India. The Minister was invited as the Chief Guest to the International Conference on "Harnessing Indian Agriculture for Domestic and Global Prosperity", organised by the Bhartiya Agro Economic Research Centre and the Bhartiya Kisan Sangh in collaboration with the Indian Council of Agricultural Research, which was held in the context of the "Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav".

The Minister paid a courtesy call on the Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare of India, and discussed, among others, the signing of a General Framework Agreement between the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security and the Indian Council of Agricultural Research, capacity building, and the development of the fisheries sector. The Minister also had meetings with the representative of the Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative Limited and the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests of Chattisgarh State.

17. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the official visit of the Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation to Rodrigues in the context of *Les Assises de la Recherche et de L'Innovation* in Rodrigues organised by the Mauritius Research and Innovation Council (MRIC). *Les Assises de la Recherche et de L'Innovation*, named Rodlnov, was held with the support of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly. Prior to Rodlnov, a public sensitisation campaign on the importance of innovation was organised with the main aim to rekindle the innovation spirit amongst the Rodriguan population and to make the public aware of the opportunities made available by the MRIC and other partner organisations to facilitate their path on their innovation journey. Based on the specificities of Rodrigues Island, four thematic areas were discussed, namely Blue Innovation, Green Innovation, Social and Grassroots Innovation and Health, Wellness and Tourism Innovation.

18. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade would hold a national workshop in collaboration with the African Regional Intellectual Property Organization and the Intellectual Property Rights and Innovation in Africa project, on 30 and 31 August 2022 to promote the Banjul Protocol on Marks. The Banjul Protocol provides streamlined procedures regarding the protection of marks for those Member States which are a Party to the Protocol by a single filing. The workshop would provide an opportunity to sensitise stakeholders on the benefits of the Banjul Protocol and on the procedures to accede thereto.

19. Cabinet has taken note of the constitution of the National Cybersecurity Committee with Dr Viv Padayatchy as part-time Chairperson.

20. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Boiler and Machinery Inspectors Board with Mr Jean Pierre Claude Curtis Catacoopen as part-time Chairperson.
