

HIGHLIGHTS OF CABINET MEETING – FRIDAY 16 SEPTEMBER 2022

1. Cabinet has taken note of the conclusions and recommendations contained in the Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Dr (Mrs) B.A.F. Gurib-Fakim, GCSK, former President of the Republic, and has agreed, inter alia, to the Report being made public. A copy of the Report is available on the website of the Prime Minister's Office (<https://pmo.govmu.org>).

2. Cabinet has agreed to drafting instructions being conveyed to the Attorney General's Office for amendments to be brought to the Occupational Safety and Health Act with a view to further improving occupational safety and health standards at the workplace.

3. Cabinet has taken note that the Prime Minister would lead a delegation to New York to participate in the 77th Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) which will be held from 20 to 26 September 2022.

Prior to the UNGA Session, the Prime Minister would attend the State Funeral Service of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in London on Monday 19 September 2022.

During his absence, the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management would act as Prime Minister until the return of the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education and Science and Technology and the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Land Use Planning, Minister of Tourism.

4. Cabinet has taken note that on Monday 19 September 2022, the day of the funeral of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, a national mourning would be observed from sunrise to sunset. The Mauritian flag would be flown at half-mast on all public buildings on that day and an appeal has been made to the private sector to follow suit.

5. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Mauritius Institute of Biotechnology Ltd and the Department for International Trade of the United Kingdom on cooperation in the fields of pharmaceuticals and biotechnology. The Memorandum of Understanding would, inter alia, cover the following areas of cooperation -

- (a) promotion, development and acceleration of manufacturing of pharmaceutical products, including vaccines and other drugs;
- (b) facilitation of business opportunities for bilateral investment including joint commercial ventures and partnerships;

- (c) negotiations for securing licensing agreements with pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies; and
- (d) training and human resource development, as well as technology transfer and innovative practices.

6. Cabinet has agreed to the Ministry of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation signing a Memorandum of Cooperation in the field of Information and Communication Technology with the National Informatics Centre and National Informatics Centre Services Incorporated of India, both operating under the aegis of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology of the Republic of India. The Memorandum of Cooperation would aim at fostering collaboration in, inter alia, the following potential areas –

- (a) setting up of communication channels for exchange of information;
- (b) collaborating on best practices in the use of IT in Government;
- (c) identifying applications to lead the e-Government agenda in both countries; and
- (d) accelerating exchange in the area of e-Governance applications.

7. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a General Framework Agreement between the Republic of Mauritius and the Republic of Rwanda. Its main objective would be to promote cooperation in political, economic, social, cultural, security and technical fields as well as encourage the exchange of information, knowledge and experience in areas of common interest. The Agreement would also provide for the establishment of a Mauritius-Rwanda Joint Commission at Ministerial level whose purpose would be to monitor the implementation of the Agreement and identify further areas of cooperation.

8. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a Memorandum of Agreement establishing a framework of cooperation for the implementation of activities under the “*Observatoire de Recherche en Environnement*” (ORE), between the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change and the University of Mauritius. The ORE would be responsible for the following, amongst others –

- (i) conducting research that would address data gaps and improve data collection of the different environmental media;
- (ii) developing effective and appropriate responses towards improving the country’s performance in respect of its international rankings such as Environment Performance Index, Earth Overshoot Day, International Union for Conservation of Nature, Sustainable Development Goals Index, World Risk Index and Ecological Footprint; and

- (iii) supporting research towards a systematic and long term observation, monitoring and reporting on environmental ecosystems in Mauritius.

9. Cabinet has agreed to the implementation of drain projects under the National Flood Management Programme on a fast track basis. The Fast Track Committee, chaired by the Minister of National Infrastructure and Community Development, has considered the challenges in the implementation of drain projects in high risk flood prone areas for 53 projects in priority with land acquisition issues.

The Committee took note that one of the major bottlenecks faced by the National Development Unit as well as other stakeholders involved in the implementation of drain projects related to acquisition of private land and obtaining wayleaves from private land owners.

10. Cabinet has taken note of the launching of the 15th edition of the Public Service Excellence Award for year 2022. The theme chosen for the 2022 edition is “A citizen-centric Public Service to accelerate socio-economic development”. The theme purports to promote a public service that responds promptly to citizens’ needs and problems.

Public Organisations would be grouped under three categories, namely Ministries/Departments (other than Disciplined Forces), Disciplined Forces and Local Authorities. In each category, there would be a Gold, Silver and Bronze winner. There would also be Special Awards for the introduction of good practices in the areas of Human Resource, and Occupational Safety and Health. Participating organisations would be assessed on the basis of leadership and team spirit, problem solving strategies and enhancement of safety at workplaces, responsiveness to citizens’ needs and application of innovative technologies in delivery of public services, and optimal use of public resources.

11. Cabinet has taken note that to mark World Clean-Up Day 2022 on Saturday 17 September 2022, the National Environment Cleaning Authority would organise in collaboration with other stakeholders, anti-littering eco-trek events in five different regions of Mauritius from 1000 hours to 1200 hours to sensitise the population on the issue of littering. The five sites concerned are Petrin (two sites), Mon Desert Mon Trésor, Le Morne and Flacq.

12. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation would organise walking activities to mark World Walking Day on 02 October 2022, in collaboration with the Mauritius Sports Council, the National Youth Council, and the Mauritius Recreation Council. The population in general will be invited to take part therein in all 20 constituencies of Mauritius, as well as in Rodrigues.

The Mauritius Sports Council would also organise the World Walking Week in all pre-primary, primary, secondary, private, and Special Education Needs schools, as well as in tertiary education institutions, during school hours within school compound.

13. Cabinet has taken note of the activities being organised by the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change in the context of the “*International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer*”, which is celebrated annually on 16 September, as follows -

- (a) a one-day Workshop for the youth, to be organised in collaboration with the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation, on Tuesday 20 September 2022. The objective of this Workshop would be to sensitise the younger generation on ozone layer depletion and to encourage their active participation towards its preservation and protection.

On the same occasion, the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change would hand over an environmentally friendly Air Conditioning Unit using natural refrigerant R290 to the Mauritius Institute of Training and Development (MITD). The said equipment has been acquired under grant funding from the Institutional Strengthening Fund of the Montreal Protocol for the purpose of dispensing training to technicians;

- (b) awareness raising on the depletion of the ozone layer and its preservation on radios as well as at Community Centres, Women Centres, and Social Welfare Centres to reach out to a maximum number of persons from various social groups and encourage collective action towards the protection of the ozone layer; and
- (c) a three-day training programme for Trainers of the MITD on domestic air conditioning systems which use environment-friendly refrigerants as well as on the safe handling of natural refrigerants.

14. Cabinet has taken note of the activities that would be organised by the Ministry of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity, in collaboration with the National Empowerment Foundation and the National Social Inclusion Foundation, to mark the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty 2022, commemorated every year on 17 October.

15. Cabinet has taken note that India, which will assume Presidency of the G20 for one year from 01 December 2022 to 30 November 2023, has announced that it will invite Mauritius as guest country for the G20 Summit during its presidency. Under India’s presidency, the G20 Leaders’ Summit at the level of Heads of State/Government is scheduled to be held on 09 and 10 September 2023 in New Delhi.

16. Cabinet has taken note of the elaboration of the National Sexual and Reproductive Health Policy 2022 and the National Sexual and Reproductive Health Implementation Plan 2022–2027 by the Ministry of Health and Wellness. The objectives of the National Sexual and Reproductive Health Policy are to, inter alia, empower people to make informed decisions about their sexual and reproductive health and ensure that their sexual and reproductive health rights are respected and protected as well as improve access to comprehensive and integrated sexual and reproductive healthcare and treatment services across all life stages.

The National Sexual and Reproductive Health Implementation Plan 2022–2027 has been formulated in order to ensure universal access to quality sexual and reproductive health, in line with the Health Sector Strategic Plan 2020-2024 as well as to contribute to achieving Sustainable Development Goal 3 on health, namely ensuring health and well-being for all, at every stage of life for the island of Mauritius.

17. Cabinet has taken note of the publication of the Annual Health Statistics Report for the year 2021 (HSR 2021) for the islands of Mauritius and Rodrigues by the Ministry of Health and Wellness. The HSR 2021, which is at its 47th edition, since 1975, provides evidence-based information and health indicators for the monitoring of the health of the population as well as for decision making, policy formulation, development of strategies and evaluation of health programmes.

In addition to information on population and vital statistics, health infrastructure, health personnel, maternal and child health, notifiable diseases, private health institutions, morbidity, infant and child mortality, mortality (all ages), and other services, the HSR 2021 also contains data on the COVID-19 national vaccination campaign which was launched in January 2021.

Cabinet also noted that the HSR 2021 would be made available on the website of the Ministry of Health and Wellness.

18. Cabinet has taken note of the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic prevailing across the world. Some 615.6 million cases have been reported globally, of which 594.8 million persons have been successfully treated. With regard to Mauritius, as at 14 September 2022, there were 58 active cases of COVID-19, out of which 15 were admitted at the New ENT Hospital.

19. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Industrial Development, SMEs and Cooperatives to India where he, inter alia, participated in the Third Meeting of the Joint Committee between India and Mauritius on Cooperation in the field of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprise sector. Three Memoranda of Understanding were also signed during the mission, as follows –

- (a) Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the National Cooperative College and VAMNICOM, to assist in drafting course content for award and non-award courses;
- (b) MoU between SME Mauritius Ltd and the Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India to develop the capacity of SME Mauritius Ltd and its personnel to provide quality in service delivery to SMEs as well as to facilitate exchange programmes of officials and resource persons between the two institutions; and
- (c) MoU between SME Mauritius Ltd and the National Institute for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises for cooperation in matters of policies, research and training for improving competitiveness of Indian and Mauritian micro, small and medium enterprises in the global markets.

20. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Council of the Mauritius Institute of Education, with Dr (Mrs) Jayantee Naugah as part-time Chairperson.

21. Cabinet has taken note that following the demise of Mr Vidianand Bhantoo, former Chairperson of the Outer Islands Development Corporation (OIDC), Mrs Asha Dabeesingh, Acting Permanent Secretary, Prime Minister's Office (Cabinet Office) has been appointed as part-time Chairperson of the Board of that organisation.

22. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Board of Trustees of the Rajiv Gandhi Science Centre Trust Fund, with Mrs Ellora Dhunnoo as part-time Chairperson.

23. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Board of the Mauritius Society of Authors, with Mr Gérard Daniel Louis as part-time Chairperson.
