

HIGHLIGHTS OF CABINET MEETING – FRIDAY 17 JUNE 2022

1. Cabinet has taken note that the Securities (Collective Investment Schemes and Closed-end Funds) (Amendment) Regulations 2022 would be promulgated. The Securities Act was amended in 2021, inter alia, with respect to Investment Funds.

Amendments are being made to the Regulations to align the existing Regulations with the Securities (Amendment) Act 2021 and to cater for an appropriate regulatory framework to allow other securities exchanges as well as clearing and settlement facilities to operate in Mauritius.

2. Cabinet has taken note that the Board of the Independent Broadcasting Authority has approved an upward revision of the annual licence fee of holders of Subscription Television Broadcasting Licence from Rs2M to 0.25 percent of their Gross Annual turnover figures or Rs2M, whichever is the higher.

The Independent Broadcasting Authority (Licence Fees) Regulations 2002 would be amended to reflect the above revised fees. The Regulations shall be deemed to have come into operation on 01 June 2022. The new rates would be applicable as from 01 July 2022.

3. Cabinet has agreed to the Consumer Protection (Control of Imports) Regulations 2017 being amended in order to allow companies holding a Premium Investor Certificate issued by the Economic Development Board to import second-hand motor vehicles for the purpose of exhibition and display only, without the requirement of an import permit.

4. Cabinet has taken note of the commencement of greening and embellishment works from Gros Bois to Nouvelle France along the Motorway M2 in line with recommendations made under the consultancy services for the preparation of a Masterplan for greening and embellishment of Motorways M1 and M2 from the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport to Grand Baie roundabout, commissioned by the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change in year 2021.

The objectives of this project are, inter alia, to implement a sustainable state-of-the-art landscaping project along the Motorways, which would enhance the driving experience of road users while contributing to the greenhouse gas sink capacity of Mauritius.

5. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation would launch a new programme to be called the 'Youth Ambassador Programme'. The objectives of the Youth Ambassador Programme would be –

- (a) to provide a platform for the youth to be represented thereby promoting youth empowerment; and
- (b) to help in the dissemination of information related to government policies, programmes, events, activities, legislation especially to other youngsters.

A group of 10 young people aged between 17 to 25 years old coming from different parts of the country and representative of the Mauritian population has been designated as 'Youth Ambassadors'. In their capacity as Ambassadors, and on a voluntary basis, these youngsters would, inter alia -

- (i) collect information pertaining to policies, programmes, events, activities, and legislation, amongst others, from Ministries and Departments;
- (ii) be active on social media platform (such as Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram) and the media by posting and sharing information relevant to the youth;
- (iii) communicate with other youngsters through social media platforms and collect feedbacks on ideas; and
- (iv) attend national youth events throughout the year.

The Youth Ambassadors would be expected to hold an annual conference on 12 August each year to mark the International Youth Day.

6. Cabinet has agreed to the setting up of a Permit and Licences Fast Track and Facilitation Committee for Renewable Energy projects at the level of the Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities with a view to ensuring the timely implementation of such projects in order to meet the renewable energy targets set by Government by year 2030. The Terms of Reference of the Permit and Licences Fast Track and Facilitation Committee are, inter alia, to -

- (a) identify the bottlenecks hindering the issuing of licences and permits for Renewable Energy project and facilitate the processing of application expeditiously;

- (b) take up the matter with the relevant stakeholders for EIA licence, Land Conversation Permit, Planning Clearance, Way Leave and Building and Land Use Permit;
- (c) develop guidelines and timelines to facilitate the application for Permits and Licences;
- (d) hold bilateral meetings with the promoters; and
- (e) refer major bottlenecks in project implementation to the Fast Track Committee with proposals to address same.

7. Cabinet has agreed to Mauritius approaching the United States, through its Inland Revenue Service (IRS), to become an approved jurisdiction for the purpose of the IRS Qualified Intermediary programme. Under the US tax law (Foreign Accounts Tax Compliance Act - FATCA), a person who makes a payment of certain US-sourced income such as interest, dividends and royalties to a foreign person is required to deduct 30 percent, or such other lower amount as applicable, as withholding tax from the payment, and remit same to the IRS together with relevant supporting documentation.

In 2001, the IRS established the Qualified Intermediary programme. The objective of the programme is to streamline and simplify the withholding tax payments and tax information reporting process in respect of US-sourced income made to a foreign person. In order for an entity based in Mauritius to be entitled to submit an application under the Qualified Intermediary programme, there is a need for Mauritius to be first designated as an Approved Jurisdiction for the programme by the IRS.

8. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology and the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) on the organisation of the ADEA 2022 Triennale.

The purpose of the Memorandum of Understanding is to provide a legal framework and define the responsibilities of the Parties to prepare and organise the ADEA 2022 Triennale in Mauritius from 19 to 21 October 2022. The main objective of the ADEA 2022 Triennale is to foster continental, regional and cross-country interactions in support of peer learning and knowledge exchange around Africa's key educational priorities in its quest to build back better resilient education systems for the Continent.

9. Cabinet has agreed to Government making a symbolic donation of USD25,000, as a gesture of solidarity, to Malawi which was badly affected by tropical storm Ana.

10. Cabinet has agreed to the review of the age limit for entry in the Public Service for Medical Specialists and other professionals in strategic positions from 40 to 50 years. The age limit for entry in the Public Service would be reviewed for all grades except for Workman's Group, from 40 to 45 years. For grades requiring a postgraduate degree together with years of post-qualification experience as core qualification, the age limit would be increased from 40 to 50 years.

11. Cabinet has taken note of the activities being organised by the Ministry of Health and Wellness in the context of the commemoration of the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, observed on 26 June. The theme for this year is "Addressing drug challenges in health and humanitarian crises".

The Ministry of Health and Wellness would, inter alia, -

- (a) launch a Methadone Day Care/Residential Rehabilitation Centre for Women Who Use Drugs at Brown Sequad Mental Health Care Centre on 02 July 2022;
- (b) launch the National Electronic Register of patients of the Methadone Day Care Centres at the Mahebourg Methadone Day Care Centre;
- (c) launch a Capacity Building Programme for Prison Officers; and
- (d) hand over videos used in the context of Mass Media/Social Media Campaign against synthetic and other drugs to the Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology, to be used in educational institutions for sensitisation and awareness of in-school youth regarding substance abuse.

12. Cabinet has taken note of the activities being organised by the Ministry of Public Service, Administrative and Institutional Reforms to mark the UN Public Service Day, observed on 23 June 2022. The theme for this year is "Building Back Better from COVID-19 Enhancing Innovative Partnerships to Meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)". The Ministry would organise the following activities -

- (a) a workshop on 23 June 2022 which would focus on the evolution of the Public Service since Independence, the future of Public Service in the post COVID-19 era and the role and contribution of public institutions and public servants in building back better from the COVID-19 pandemic; and
- (b) welfare activities, namely domino and scrabble tournaments and quiz and essay competitions by the Public Officers' Welfare Council.

13. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage would participate in the celebration of the 8th International Day of Yoga on 21 June 2022 from 0830 hours to 0930 hours being organised by the High Commission of India in Mauritius on the wharf near the Apravasi Ghat World Heritage Site at Trou Fanfaron, Port-Louis, together with the Apravasi Ghat Trust Fund.

The programme would be livestreamed around the world and would further the promotion of Mauritius as a cultural destination.

14. Cabinet has taken note of the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic prevailing across the world. Some 542.5 million cases have been reported globally, of which 517.9 million persons have been successfully treated.

With regard to Mauritius, as at 15 June 2022, there were 169 active cases of COVID-19, out of which 14 were admitted at the New ENT Hospital. Over the period 9 to 15 June 2022, one death was attributed to COVID-19.

15. Cabinet has agreed to the African Regional Labour Administration Centre (ARLAC) holding its 18th Meeting of the Committee of Senior Officials in Mauritius from 11 to 13 October 2022. ARLAC is an international organisation which was set up jointly by the International Labour Organization and the United Nations Development Programme in 1974 for the development of labour administration in Africa. The mandate of ARLAC is to strengthen labour administration systems in Member countries. Around 60 delegates from 19 countries, including Mauritius, are expected to participate in the meeting.

16. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the participation of the Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development at the OECD Ministerial Council Meeting and the International Economic Forum on Africa held recently. The Secretary General of the OECD highlighted that, despite all difficulties arising from

the pandemic and the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, countries should remain focused on structural reforms such as securing the green transition to reach net zero emissions, optimising the digital transformation, responding to the challenges posed by population ageing and rebuilding fiscal buffers and resilience. He emphasised that these reforms can be achieved through effective global cooperation.

The Minister attended the session chaired by the Minister of Economy and Finance of Italy on international tax challenges arising from an increasingly digitalised and globalised world economy. He also attended events held in the margins of the Ministerial meeting where discussions were held around the topics of “Building resilient value chains for Africa” and “OECD and Africa: A future together”. The Minister was also invited to intervene as a speaker on a panel “How can Africa become the next investment frontier?” as part of the 21st International Economic Forum on Africa. During his intervention, he elaborated on the difficulties Mauritius encountered during the pandemic with regard to the closure of borders and on how Mauritius managed to get back on a recovery path.

17. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the online participation of the Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation, as Speaker in the World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC-21) in the “Partner2Connect Digital Development Roundtable” organised by International Telecommunication Union. The WTDC-21, which was held in Kigali, Rwanda, from 06 to 16 June 2022 provided Member States and other key stakeholders, a platform to engage in high-level discussions around the challenges and opportunities related to digital development, to make concrete pledges and forge new partnerships. The theme for this year WTDC-21 was “Connecting the unconnected to achieve sustainable development”.

The main areas of the intervention of the Minister in the Roundtable included, among others, the following –

- (a) elaborating on the position of Mauritius with regard to digital development in an inclusive manner;
- (b) digitalisation as the key to economic development and its importance in the delivery of services;
- (c) sharing data on internet coverage, broadband penetration percentage, mobile penetration and Fibre to the Home; and
- (d) launching of 5G technology in Mauritius.

18. Cabinet has taken note of the constitution of the National Environment Cleaning Board with Mr M.G. Bruno Lebreux as part-time Chairperson.
