

HIGHLIGHTS OF CABINET MEETING – FRIDAY 18 NOVEMBER 2022

1. Cabinet has agreed to the introduction of the Trade (Anti-dumping, Countervailing and Safeguard Measures) Bill into the National Assembly. The new Bill would replace the Trade (Anti-dumping and Countervailing Measures) Act 2020.

The object of the Bill is to provide for the protection of the domestic industry against the negative effects of dumped, subsidised and increased imports, and for related matters.

2. Cabinet has agreed to the promulgation of the Education (Amendment No. 3) Regulations 2022. Necessary amendments are being brought to the Education Regulations 1957 as follows –

(A) Regulation 3 of the Education Regulations 1957 is being amended to cater for the required qualifications in the sector, that is, the applicants should be holders of the appropriate ‘O’ and ‘A’ level qualifications as well as the following –

- (a) (i) a degree or joint degree in the subject to be taught, or an equivalent qualification; and
- (ii) a Post Graduate Certificate in Education from a recognised institution, or an alternative qualification in Education from a recognised institution; or
- (b) a B.Ed from the Mauritius Institute of Education in the subject to be taught.

The subjects have been set out in the Third Schedule to the Regulations.

(B) in cases where universities do not offer a degree in the subject being taught at school or the appellation of a degree differs from that of the subjects being taught, the list of acceptable qualifications has been listed out in the Fourth Schedule to the Regulations.

The amendments are in line with the recommendation of the “Declaration on Transforming Education in Africa” made in September 2022 in the margins of the 77th UN General Assembly, where countries have been invited to take the commitment to reform the teaching profession with a focus on quality teacher training and teachers’ recruitment and management policies that improve learner outcomes and help to improve teacher retention and fulfilment.

3. Cabinet has agreed to the payment of a cash grant in lieu of provision of school materials in-kind to children of eligible households under the Social Register of Mauritius for the following items –

- (a) school bags and shoes for Mauritius and Rodrigues; and
- (b) complete sets of uniforms for Rodrigues.

4. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a contract between the Mauritius Research and Innovation Council (MRIC), and the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) and ISRO Telemetry, Tracking and Command Network (ISTRAC) relating to the utilisation of the Ground Station of MRIC by ISRO for tracking a satellite which the latter would launch on 26 November 2022.

The main responsibilities of MRIC would be to –

- (a) receive telemetry data from the satellite and communicate same to a space centre in Bangalore, India;
- (b) receive tele-command from Bangalore and to relay to the satellite;
- (c) provide telemetry and tracking support; and
- (d) obtain the necessary Frequency Licence from the Information and Communication Technologies Authority.

5. Cabinet has taken note that Statistics Mauritius would conduct a Household Budget Survey during the period January to December 2023 in the islands of Mauritius and Rodrigues. The Household Budget Survey is normally carried out every five years. The primary objective of the Household Budget Survey is to collect information on the consumption pattern of the population with a view to updating the basket of goods and services, and providing a system of weights for the computation of the monthly Consumer Price Index and the related inflation rate.

The Household Budget Survey would also collect information on the income of members of the household, the demographic characteristics as well as the housing and living conditions of the population of Mauritius and Rodrigues.

6. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Blue Economy, Marine Resources and Fisheries and Shipping would launch an Expression of Interest for local and international companies to invest in demersal fishing and processing facilities. The objectives of the project are to –

- (a) sustainably exploit the shallow water demersal resources of the fishing banks (Nazareth, Albatross, Saya de Malha, St Brandon excluding inshore waters, Soudan and Hawkins), using handlines;
- (b) maximise exploitation on the fishing banks through an ecological approach to fisheries while ensuring that we stay within the limits of Maximum Sustainable Yields;
- (c) increase fish production to meet the local demand and reduce imports; and
- (d) collect all fisheries related data to support studies regarding stock assessment and the management of the stocks.

All selected applicants would have as strict obligation to comply with Mauritian laws and unload all their catch at the Trou Fanfaron Fishing Port in Mauritius and have processing activities in Mauritius, if required.

7. Cabinet has taken note that a Cane Replantation Revolving Fund would be introduced by the Development Bank of Mauritius (DBM) to provide loans to sugar cane planters at an annual preferential rate of 2.5 percent with a view to encouraging them to renew their crops. Planters wishing to bring back their abandoned land to cultivation would also benefit from that loan facility.

The DBM would provide Rs200M every year under this Scheme over a period of three years starting as from Crop Year 2023. The maximum loan amount would be Rs60,000/Arpent, representing 90 percent of the cost of replantation or rehabilitation of one Arpent of land. Repayment would be made annually over a period of four years, including a one year moratorium. As security, a pledge would be inscribed on the planters' sugar crop proceeds so as to ensure that repayment to the DBM is made.

Both small and large planters including those who wish to replant their abandoned land might benefit from that loan. Disbursement would be upon recommendation of the Mauritius Cane Industry Authority.

8. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of Phase 1 of the "Regulatory Review" exercise in Mauritius. The project which is funded by the European Union involves two phases, namely –

- (a) Phase 1 - Assessment of the existing legal and regulatory framework as well as the institutional arrangement and the formulation of recommendations to address weaknesses observed; and
- (b) Phase 2 - Support for implementation, change management and capacity building.

The main recommendations relate to the following components -

- (i) the improvement of the overall business climate;
- (ii) the Land Use and Construction Sector;
- (iii) the Trade and Logistics Sector;
- (iv) the Tourism Sector;
- (v) the Healthcare and Lifesciences Sector; and
- (vi) the setting up of a Single Licensing Agency.

9. Cabinet has taken note of the publication of a Protocol by the Mauritius Ports Authority on the entry and departure of vessels at the Port Louis Harbour. The Protocol, which is a compilation of cross sectoral clearances, is expected to facilitate and expedite maritime traffic and prevent unnecessary delays. It lays out all the relevant processes and requirements for vessels entering and departing from the Port waters. It also captures the processes relating to Pleasure craft proceeding to Rodrigues and other outer islands as well as the entry of foreign Pleasure craft and Cruise vessels. The Protocol would be uploaded on the website of the Mauritius Ports Authority.

10. Cabinet has taken note that the Association of Urban Authorities and the Association of District Councils would organise a series of sports and recreational activities under the name of "*Jeux Inter Villes et Villages*". Petangue, Indoors Games, Beach Volley and Football competitions would be organised.

A Family Fun Day would also be organised on 27 November 2022. The aim of the family day is to regroup participants in the *Jeux Inter Villes et Villages*, officers of the local authorities and their family members at the Côte d'Or National Sports Complex so as to foster greater unity among the population through the practice of games and sports.

11. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation would organise a ceremony for the inauguration of the Blue Bay Beach Arena on 23 November 2022. The Blue Bay Beach Arena has been built to host the beach handball competitions of the '*Commission de la Jeunesse et des Sports de l'Océan Indien*' (CJSOI) Games, to be held from 04 to 11 December 2022.

The Arena comprises a multipurpose beach playground, a jogging track, a stand with a seating capacity of 300 spectators, and an administrative block. The new infrastructure would have lighting facilities for training and jogging at night. After the 2022 CJSOI Games, the Arena would be opened to members of the public to enable them to practice beach sports and jogging.

12. Cabinet has taken note of the implementation of the yearly White Grub Protocol in the Republic of Mauritius and Reunion Island for period 01 November 2022 to 15 January 2023. The White Grub Protocol was signed between the French and Mauritian Authorities in 1990. During the implementation of this Protocol, control is exercised on all movement of planes and ship vessels between Mauritius and Reunion Island. The Protocol is time-bound, i.e. between 18 30 hours to 20 30 hours whereby flights are not allowed to land and ships are not allowed to berth due to the risk of adult insects being accidentally introduced in each territory.

13. Cabinet has taken note of the activities that the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family Welfare would organise in the context of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, which would be commemorated over a period of 16 days, from 25 November to 10 December 2022, namely -

- (a) a colloquium on Gender-Based Violence on 25, 28 and 29 November 2022 where the services of four experts from Belgium have been retained by the European Commission;
- (b) the launching of the Family Support Services on 26 November 2022 at the Abercrombie Police Station;
- (c) a Symposium on the link between religion and the Elimination of Gender-Based Violence on 05 December 2022; and
- (d) an awareness session on Gender-Based Cyber Violence on 10 December 2022.

14. Cabinet has taken note of the traffic schemes that would be implemented along A10 Road at Nouvelle France-Motorway M1 Crossing, in the context of the second phase of the drain construction works, namely –

- (a) the right-hand side lane of the Southbound Lane of Motorway M1 would be closed to traffic from 10 00 hours on 25 November 2022 to 04 00 hours on 28 November 2022; and
- (b) the width of both lanes towards the North would be reduced to 3.1 metres when approaching the works area and would return to normal beyond that point.

Traffic signs would be set up to inform and guide road users. Police assistance would also be provided.

15. Cabinet has taken note of the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic prevailing in Mauritius and a slight increase in the number of positive cases. As at 16 November 2022, there were 118 active cases of COVID-19, out of which 41 were admitted at the New ENT Hospital. Over the period 10 to 16 November 2022, one death was attributed to COVID-19.

Cabinet has also taken note that henceforth, COVID-19 tests at flu clinics would be only done after examination and on advice of the Medical Officer.

Cabinet has further taken note that the quarantine period would be extended from 30 November 2022 to 28 February 2023.

16. Cabinet has taken note that the African Economic Conference 2022, jointly organised by the African Development Bank, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and the United Nations Development Programme, would be held from 09 to 11 December 2022 in Mauritius.

The African Economic Conference is Africa's leading forum for discussions and knowledge exchange on a wide range of themes and emerging challenges confronted by countries in Africa. It is an annual event which is organised since 2006. Some 300 participants, comprising African Ministers, leading Economists, researchers, the private sector, international financial institutions are expected at this event.

17. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) National Awareness Workshop held in Mauritius recently. The objectives of the Workshop were to inform and sensitise representatives of both the private and public sectors of the opportunities and challenges available for trade under the AfCFTA. The Workshop focussed on market access for goods and services and aimed at sensitising the private sector of opportunities and challenges under the AfCFTA in terms of exports, cross-border investment, potential of integrating into Regional Value Chains, sourcing of raw materials in Africa, trading in Special Economic Zones and challenges associated with logistics and connectivity.

18. Cabinet has taken note of the constitution of the Board of the Academy of Design and Innovation with Mr Sunael Singh Purgus as part-time Chairperson.
