

HIGHLIGHTS OF CABINET MEETING – FRIDAY 22 JULY 2022

1. Cabinet has agreed to the introduction of the Finance (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2022 into the National Assembly. The object of the Bill is to provide for the implementation of measures announced in Budget Speech 2022-2023.

2. Cabinet has agreed to the promulgation of the Information and Communication Technologies (Licensing and Fees) (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2022. The Information and Communication Technologies Authority would review the fees payable by International Long Distance licensees as from 01 July 2022 as follows -

- (a) the Initial Fee would be Rs100,000; and
- (b) the Annual Fee would be Rs100,000 or 0.8% of audited gross turnover, whichever is higher, but not exceeding Rs2M.

3. Cabinet has agreed to the State Trading Corporation (STC) commercialising its own branded one-litre edible oil, as announced in Budget 2022-2023. It would be sold at a subsidised price of Rs75 per one-litre.

4. Cabinet has agreed to amendments being made to the Consumer Protection (Control of Fairs) Regulations 2016 by reinstating Regulation 3(3), in order to allow the Ministry of Commerce and Consumer Protection to resume consideration and approve applications for the organisation of trade fairs on the same basis as it was prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Trade Fairs would be allowed subject to certain conditions.

5. Cabinet has agreed to the General Economic Cooperation Chapter and the Automatic Trigger Safeguard Mechanism under the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement (CECPA) between Mauritius and India. The modalities to incorporate these issues in the CECPA would be discussed at the first meeting of the High Powered Joint Trade Committee scheduled from 01 to 03 August 2022, in New Delhi.

The Chapter on Economic Cooperation covers some 25 sectors whereby both Parties have agreed to enhance their collaboration in sectors such as pharmaceuticals, agro-industry, SMEs, manufacturing, ocean economy, ICT and financial services. The Economic Cooperation Chapter also has a regional dimension as it provides a framework for Indian investors to use Mauritius as a gateway for production and subsequent export to the SADC and COMESA markets to which Mauritius is a party.

6. Cabinet has agreed to the Information and Communication Technologies Authority (ICTA) signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the *Agence de Régulation des Postes et des Communications Electroniques* (ARPCE) of the Republic of Congo with a view to strengthening cooperation between the two regulatory bodies.

The objectives of the Memorandum of Understanding are mainly to promote collaboration between the two regulatory bodies, more specifically activities relating to electronic transactions, the fight against fraud and cybercrime, development of universal services, determination of tariffs, quality of services provided by operators and monitoring of the spectrum, among others. Collaboration between the ICTA and the ARPCE would be primarily through the organisation of seminars and capacity building for the personnel as well as sharing of information and expertise in specific sectors mutually beneficial to both agencies.

7. Cabinet has taken note of the status regarding the implementation of the project for the construction of 12,000 residential units by the New Social Living Development Ltd particularly, land issues, geotechnical investigations of the sites and launching of tenders for contracts for works.

8. Cabinet has taken note that a Regional Workshop would be held by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in collaboration with the Regional Bureau of the International Criminal Police Organisation (INTERPOL), from 01 to 05 August 2022 in Mauritius. The objective of the workshop is to assess the implementation of the SADC Protocol on Combating Illicit Drug Trafficking in the SADC Region. The workshop would also consist of a course on forensic drug analysis which would be dispensed by experts from the Drugs Unit of the Forensic Science Laboratory.

9. Cabinet has agreed to Mauritius hosting the African Economic Conference 2022, which is being jointly organised by the African Development Bank, the Economic Commission for Africa and the United Nations Development Programme from 09 to 11 December 2022.

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. The theme for the 2022 Conference is "*Supporting Climate-Smart Development in Africa*" to lay focus on Africa as being the most exposed region to climate risks. Around 300 participants are expected at this event which would be conducted in a hybrid format.

10. Cabinet has agreed to the Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage signing an Executive Programme under the Cultural Agreement between the Republic of Mauritius and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan for the period 2022-2025. A Cultural Agreement between Mauritius and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan was signed on 13 May 1975 to develop relations between the two States and exchanges in educational, cultural and scientific fields.

11. Cabinet has taken note that the Kite Foil African and Middle East Championships would be held in Mauritius at Mahebourg, from 26 to 31 August 2022. Some 70 elite surfers from 32 countries would compete in the different events of the Championships.

12. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the resumed session of the 59th meeting of the Standing Committee of Contracting Parties (COP) on the Convention of Wetlands held recently in Switzerland. The Mauritian delegation stressed on the fact that -

- (a) Chagos Archipelago is and has always been part of the Territory of Mauritius, as authoritatively determined by the International Court of Justice and confirmed by United Nations General Assembly Resolution 73/295 and the Judgement of the Special Chamber of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS); and
- (b) Mauritius is the only State lawfully entitled to exercise sovereignty and sovereign rights over the Chagos Archipelago and its maritime zones.

Mauritius requested that –

- (a) the Contracting Parties should formally acknowledge that for the purpose of the Ramsar Convention, the Chagos Archipelago forms an integral part of the territory of the Republic of Mauritius and that the purported extension by the United Kingdom of the Ramsar Convention to the so-called “British Indian Ocean Territory” is invalid; and
- (b) the Secretariat should ensure that no reference is made to the so-called “British Indian Ocean Territory” in any documentation relating to the Convention.

13. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Health and Wellness has elaborated a National Action Plan on Breastfeeding 2022-2027, to improve the current breastfeeding rate and enhance health outcomes for both mothers and children in Mauritius and Rodrigues. The main strategies of the Action Plan have been formulated, based on the six major action areas advocated by the WHO, as follows -

- (a) building healthy public policies to enhance breastfeeding supportive environments;
- (b) developing policies to regulate the marketing of breastmilk substitutes;
- (c) reviewing breastfeeding legislation;
- (d) mobilising community action and participation in breastfeeding initiatives through the development of strategies for the promotion and support of breastfeeding at community level;
- (e) building capacity through training of all health professionals in breastfeeding; and
- (f) monitoring and education of the policies.

The Action Plan would be officially launched on 01 August 2022 in the context of the World Breastfeeding Week 2022. The theme for this year is “*Step up for Breastfeeding: Educate and Support*”. A workshop on Breastfeeding would be organised as well as a sensitisation campaign on the benefits of breastfeeding.

14. Cabinet has taken note of the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic prevailing across the world. Some 571.8 million cases have been reported globally, of which 541.9 million persons have been successfully treated. With regard to Mauritius, as at 21 July 2022, there were 400 active cases of COVID-19, out of which 39 were admitted at the New ENT Hospital. Over the period 14 to 20 July 2022, one death was attributed to COVID-19.

15. Cabinet has taken note that the official unveiling of the Mascot and the launching of a new hymn for *the Commisison de la Jeunesse et des Sports de l'Océan Indien* (CJSOI) Games was held on 20 July 2022 at the Côte d'Or National Sports Complex. The Mascot known as Joy, which represents an interactive cat was created by Ms Sarah Theveneau. The *chanson des Jeux* entitled 'C'est la fête' produced by Mr Gerard Louis and performed by the *Teen é Dièse* group was made public.

16. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Health and Wellness would commemorate World Hepatitis Day 2022 on 28 July 2022 at Dr A. G. Jeetoo Hospital. On this occasion, a few patients who have successfully completed treatment for Hepatitis C would be invited to share their experience.

17. Cabinet has taken note the outcome of the recent visit of the Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation to Estonia and Greece which was organised by the Northern Ireland Cooperation Overseas, Belfast, under its European Union funded project, namely Cyber Resilience for Development (Cyber4Dev). The aim of the visit was to get acquainted to a detailed state-of-play on cybersecurity in the EU by having an in-depth study on cybersecurity in a digitally advanced country such as Estonia, which could greatly help Mauritius strengthen its position to become a Cyber4Dev hub in the African region.

During his visit, the Minister had a meeting with the Minister of Entrepreneurship and Information Technology and acting Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Estonia and discussions mainly centered around potential collaboration in the field of digital services and cybersecurity. He also had meetings with representatives of several major Estonian companies in the ICT sector and the e-Governance Academy of Estonia.

In Athens, he visited the European Union Agency for Cybersecurity (ENISA) and had a meeting with the Executive Director. ENISA is the EU agency dedicated to achieving a high level of cybersecurity across Europe. ENISA could assist CERT-MU in the conceptualisation of future cyber drill scenarios.

18. Cabinet has taken note that five Directors nominated by Government on the Board of Mauritius Telecom have tendered their resignation and they have consequently been replaced by the following five new Members with effect from 21 July 2022 –

- (a) Mr Philippe Epaminondas Gaston Maxime Sauzier;
- (b) Mr Anandsing Acharuz;
- (c) Mr Kritananda Naghee Reddy;
- (d) Mr Mario Alain Chung Chin Ah-Sue; and
- (e) Mr Neermul Saddul.

19. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the following Board and Committees under the Mental Health Care Act –

- (a) the Mental Health Board with Dr Paramasiven Motay as Chairperson;
- (b) the Mental Health Commission with Ms Diya Beesoondoyal as Chairperson;
- (c) the Mental Health Care Accounts Committee with Mr Latanraj Ghoorah as Chairperson; and
- (d) the Managerial Committee with Dr Rishi Bundhun as Chairperson.
