

HIGHLIGHTS OF CABINET MEETING – FRIDAY 27 MAY 2022

1. Cabinet has agreed to the introduction of the Food Bill into the National Assembly. The object of the Bill is to repeal the Food Act 1998 and replace it by a new Food Act to provide for, inter alia, the modernisation and consolidation of the laws relating to the safety and nutritional quality of food, and for matters related thereto.

2. Cabinet has taken note that in its 2018 Report, the Commission of Inquiry on Drug Trafficking has underlined that drug traffickers are resorting to satellite phones and has recommended for its proper monitoring and supervision by the relevant authorities. In this respect, Cabinet has agreed to the promulgation of the –

- (a) Information and Communication Technologies (Licensing and Fees) (Amendment) Regulations 2022 which would make it mandatory for any individual or entity wishing to make use of a satellite phone to apply and obtain a licence from the ICTA prior to making use of the devices; and
- (b) Information and Communication Technologies (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2022. The Schedule to the principal Regulations which describes each type of licence issued by the ICTA would also be amended to provide for a new RA16A licence for the use of satellite phones with limited scope. New initial and annual licence fees for the RA16A licence of Rs10,000 respectively instead of the current fees of Rs50,000 respectively would be introduced in the Schedule.

3. Cabinet has agreed to the promulgation of the Road Traffic (Public Service Vehicle, Road Service and Carrier's Licence) (Amendment) Regulations 2022, whereby a "B" Carrier's Licence holder should submit simplified quarterly financial returns to the National Land Transport Authority .

4. Cabinet has taken note that the National Archives (Access to Public and Destruction of Public Records) (Amendment) Regulations 2022 would be promulgated. Currently, a Mauritian citizen and a non-Mauritian citizen can only have physical access to documents of the National Archives Department against payment of fees. With a view to preserving and managing its archival records, the National Archives Department has developed a Document Management System with functionalities and features including, inter alia, an e-Archives vault for storing scanned images and an e-Payment gateway to enable users to pay for online services.

The Regulations would provide for subscriptions fees to access the online database for periods ranging from three to 12 months, as well as printing fees of digital images.

5. Cabinet has taken note that the Sugar Insurance Fund (Reduced General Insurance Premium) Regulations 2022 would be promulgated with a view to exempting sugarcane planters and métayers producing up to 60 tons of sugar from the general insurance premium payable to the Sugar Insurance Fund Board for crop 2021 as announced in Budget Speech 2021-2022.

6. Cabinet has taken note that the following Regulations would be made under the Seed Act –

- (a) Seeds (Sampling and Testing) Regulations 2022;
- (b) Seeds (Seed Production and Certification) Regulations 2022;
- (c) Seeds (Registration of Variety) Regulations 2022;
- (d) Seeds (Import and Export) Regulations 2022;
- (e) Seeds (Registration of Seed Dealer and Seed Producer) Regulations 2022;
- (f) Seeds (Marketing) Regulations 2022; and
- (g) Seeds (Appeal Board) Regulations 2022.

The above set of Regulations would allow the seed sector to be properly regulated by providing relevant stakeholders information on the quality, germination percentage as well as yield capacity of seeds which are being imported. The Regulations would also ensure preservation of local seed varieties which have adapted to the climate.

7. Cabinet has agreed to the National Audit Office of Mauritius signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India. The Memorandum of Understanding provides for cooperation in the following areas –

- (a) training in Mauritius or in India on a need basis;
- (b) capacity building in terms of participation in selected conferences, seminars, internships and other training activities of international character;
- (c) exchange of visits or programmes for strengthening institutional relationship; and
- (d) sharing of experiences and best practices in the field of public auditing.

8. Cabinet has taken note of the implementation of zero-interest loan scheme for patients undergoing treatment in private clinics as well as implementation of policy of referral of certain patients to private clinics by the Ministry of Health and Wellness. To that end, the Ministry of Health and Wellness would be signing Memoranda of Understanding with the Association of Private Clinics and two banks.

9. Cabinet has agreed to the launching of the Request for Proposals for the ‘Development and Operation of a Modern Urban Terminal at Quatre Bornes’. The advent of the Metro Express Project at Quatre Bornes has given rise to opportunities for the redevelopment of a strategic area in the town centre into a modern urban terminal.

10. Cabinet has agreed to the “Master Plan for the Environment in the Republic of Mauritius (2020–2030)”. The Action Plan contained in the document comprises policy recommendations relating to thematic areas, namely *la culture environnementale; urbanisme et politique environnementale; le changement climatique; zone côtières et environnement marin; biodiversité et ressources naturelles; lutte contre la pollution; la gestion des déchets; et contrôle des déchets plastiques*. The Master Plan also proposes a set of overarching and cross-cutting policy recommendations geared towards addressing systemic issues.

11. Cabinet has agreed to the introduction of a new Planters’ Protection Scheme in replacement of the Agricultural Calamities Solidarity Scheme and the Crop Loss Compensation Scheme that are implemented by the Small Farmers Welfare Fund (SFWF). The new Scheme would be mandatory for planters (vegetables, fruits, flowers, tea in open culture and sheltered-farming) registered with the SFWF to benefit from a compensation.

12. Cabinet has taken note of the introduction of a Healthy Living and Wellness Programme in the school curriculum to further consolidate the holistic education of learners. The Healthy Living and Wellness Programme would be so calibrated as to consist of a number of components comprising, inter alia, breathing techniques, age appropriate yoga postures, healthy eating habits and stress management.

The Programme would thus promote physical fitness along with healthy lifestyle. In the long term, this initiative would foster healthier future generations and help reduce risk factors, including the prevalence of non-communicable diseases. Holistic Educators would be trained and tasked with the delivery of the Programme.

13. Cabinet has taken note of the signing, on behalf of Government of Mauritius, of an amended project document, in respect of the Strategic Action Programme, Policy Harmonisation and Institutional Reforms (SAPPHIRE) project, reflecting a change in portfolio for the management thereof from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Seychelles Office to the Headquarters of the UNDP.

The SAPPHIRE project, which is expected to be completed by 2023, aims at combatting ocean degradation and strengthening of ocean governance in the Western Indian Ocean region.

14. Cabinet has taken note of the activities that the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change would organise, in collaboration with various stakeholders, to mark World Environment Day 2022, celebrated on 05 June. The theme for this year is “*Stockholm+50: a healthy planet for the prosperity of all – our responsibility, our opportunity*”. The official launching of World Environment Day 2022 would be held on 05 June 2022 at Phoenix Mall and the following activities would be organised to mark the event –

- (a) cleaning up of lagoons at Mont Choisy, Flic en Flac, Blue Bay and Belle Mare; and
- (b) enhanced enforcement operations on Plastic Regulations and vehicular smoke emission around the island.

15. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the national consultations undertaken in the context of the forthcoming international environmental meeting “*Stockholm+50: a healthy planet for the prosperity of all – our responsibility, our opportunity*” scheduled on 02 and 03 June 2022 in Stockholm, Sweden.

The Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change, in collaboration with UNDP Country Office, organised national consultations, through various meetings, survey questionnaires and online discussions, on the Stockholm+50 three leadership dialogues which are –

- (a) reflecting on the urgent need for actions to achieve a healthy planet and prosperity of all;
- (b) achieving a sustainable and inclusive recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic; and
- (c) accelerating the implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development in the context of the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development.

The Report highlights the themes discussed, the challenges and opportunities identified along with proposed recommendations.

16. Cabinet has taken note of the activities being organised by the Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage to pay tribute to late Sir Anerood Jugnauth to commemorate his first death anniversary, namely –

- (a) inauguration of the Samadhi and Memorial Monument at the SSR Botanic Garden, Pamplemousses, followed by the unveiling of the bronze portrait of late Sir Anerood Jugnauth; and
- (b) opening of a temporary exhibition on late Sir Anerood Jugnauth which would be held at Chateau de Mon Plaisir. The exhibition would, inter alia, comprise exhibition panels, video footage and exhibits depicting his life from his childhood to that of a Statesman. The exhibition which would be launched on 06 June 2022 would thereafter be opened to the public from 07 June to 26 June 2022 at Chateau de Mon Plaisir.

17. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation would organise the fifth edition of the activity “*Pédaler en Sécurité*” on Sunday 05 June 2022 from 0900 hours to 1100 hours. The main objective of the activity is to encourage the population at large to practise cycling as a physical activity while observing safety measures. The theme for this year is “Cycle for Nature” as it coincides with World Environment Day.

The activity would be held in all the 20 constituencies of the island with some 20 groups of participants. Each group would depart at a designated site in each of the 20 constituencies. The itinerary in each constituency has been identified and the track to be covered in each constituency would be around 10 kms.

18. Cabinet has taken note of the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic prevailing across the world. Some 529.8 million cases have been reported globally, of which 500.3 million persons have been successfully treated.

With regard to Mauritius, as at 25 May 2022, there were 178 active cases of COVID-19, out of which 15 were admitted at the New ENT Hospital. Over the period 19 to 25 May 2022, no death was attributed to COVID-19.

Cabinet has also taken note of progress in the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme, including the administration of the booster dose in the Republic of Mauritius.

19. Cabinet has taken note of cases of Monkeypox that have been reported in 20 countries across the world. Sanitary authorities at ports of entry in Mauritius were closely monitoring the situation. Arrangements are being made by the Ministry of Health and Wellness for the procurement of tests and vaccines against Monkeypox.

20. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, along with the COMESA Secretariat, would organise a national consultative workshop on the COMESA Conflict Early Warning System (COMWARN) from 06 to 08 July 2022. COMWARN aims at developing the Structural Vulnerability Assessment (SVA) for the COMESA region. It provides a basis for policy options that are tailor-made to assist its Member States to address structural conditions for conflict prevention as well as peace and prosperity in the region.

The main objective of the workshop is to come up with a national SVA response strategy for Mauritius. Participants would be sensitised on the COMESA and the African Union SVA methodologies. The Secretariat would present and discuss Mauritius’ SVA and identify the necessary response strategies

21. Cabinet has taken note that seven athletes are participating in the African Judo Championships being held from 26 to 29 May 2022, in Algeria. Mauritius won one gold medal and one silver medal as follows –

- (i) Ms Priscilla Morand – gold medal; and
- (ii) Ms Christianne Legentil – silver medal.

22. Cabinet has taken note that Club M has been qualified to play six matches in the preliminaries of African Cup of Nations 2023 group stage.

23. Cabinet has taken note that the Opening Ceremony for the 22nd African Senior Athletics Championships would be held on Wednesday 08 June 2022 at the Côte D'Or National Sports Complex. Some 837 participants from 44 African countries, including 622 athletes, have already confirmed their participation to these Championships.

24. Cabinet has taken note of the holding of the Public Service Excellence Award (PSEA) ceremony on Friday 27 May 2022 to reward the winners of the PSEA 2021 edition. The theme chosen was “Promoting an agile and responsive Public Service”, which purports to prompt public organisations to adopt innovative practices and technologies to enhance public service delivery. 50 entries were received in the Main Award Category and nine entries in the Special Award Category from Small Sections/Divisions/Public Organisations. The Panel shortlisted 13 projects which have introduced innovative practices, processes and procedures in organisations to improve service delivery and carried out a final assessment to determine the winners.

25. Cabinet has taken note of the activities being organised by the Ministry of Health and Wellness in the context of World No Tobacco Day 2022, observed on 31 May, namely –

- (a) an official ceremony for the launching of activities on 31 May 2022 at the University of Mauritius which would include exhibition, counselling, sensitisation sessions, talks on the ill effects of smoking in the community and the launching of videos;
- (b) radio talks and TV programmes on MBC on the dangers that tobacco use pose to public health and on the services provided by the Tobacco Cessation Clinics;
- (c) intensive crackdown operations by Public Health and Food Safety Inspectors, in collaboration with the Police to discourage people from smoking in public places; and
- (d) collection of cigarette butts by officers of the Ministry of Health and Wellness and students of the University of Mauritius, the Open University of Mauritius and the Mauritius Institute of Education, to sensitise the public in general on the serious threat that cigarette waste has on the environment.

The theme chosen for this year is “Tobacco: Threat to our environment”.

26. Cabinet has taken note that election for the position of Executive Directors on the Board of Governors of the African Development Bank Group was held on 26 May 2022. Mr Gerard Pascal Bussier, Deputy Financial Secretary at the Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development, the nominated Mauritian candidate for the post, has been elected as one of the Executive Directors. He would hold the post for the next three years, starting as from 01 August 2022.

27. Cabinet has taken note of the constitution of the Independent Broadcasting Review Panel with Me Jean Gaël Basset as Chairperson.

28. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Executive Council of the Urdu Speaking Union with Mr Anwar Dustmohamed as part-time President.

29. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Executive Council of the Bhojpuri Speaking Union with Dr (Mrs) Sarita Boodhoo as part-time President.
