

HIGHLIGHTS OF CABINET MEETING – FRIDAY 30 SEPTEMBER 2022

1. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the participation of the Prime Minister -
 - (a) at the State Funeral of Queen Elizabeth II who passed away on 08 September 2022 and the ceremonies associated thereto in the UK; and
 - (b) as Head of the Mauritius delegation, in the 77th Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) from 20 to 23 September 2022, in New York.

The State Funeral of Her Majesty the Queen took place at Westminster Abbey on Monday 19 September at 11 00 hours and was attended by some 2,000 guests including Heads of State and Government. The Prime Minister attended the offer of respects at the Lying-in-State at Westminster House and made a special tribute in honour of the Late Queen at the Lancaster House. He also attended a reception hosted by the new King, Charles III, at Buckingham Palace in the evening of 18 September 2022 and conveyed the condolences of the Government and people of Mauritius.

In New York, the Prime Minister attended the 77th Session of the UNGA and other side events. In the margins of the UNGA, the Prime Minister participated and made a national statement of commitment virtually on 19 September 2022 at the 'Transforming Education Summit' convened by the UN Secretary General. He also addressed the African Union High Level side event "Global Summit on Transforming Education" virtually.

The Prime Minister participated in the First Gathering of the Global Group of Heads of State and Government for the Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) which was co-hosted by the President of the Republic of Ghana, the Prime Minister of Norway, the Director General of WHO and the WHO Global Ambassador for NCDs and Injuries. He also attended the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) Leaders Breakfast Meeting. During his mission to New York, further discussions were held with the UK authorities on the signature of a parameter agreement to implement the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice, the UNGA Resolution 73/295 and the Judgment of the Special Chamber of the International Tribunal on the Law of the Sea on the Maritime Delimitation between Mauritius and Maldives in the Chagos Archipelago Region. During his address at the UNGA, he called, inter alia, for the vicious cycles of violence, divides and distrust to end and spoke on the issue of climate change, UN Reform, cybercrime, misuse and abuse of ICT and the need for a Multidimensional Vulnerability Index.

The Prime Minister had bilateral meetings with the President of Latvia, Slovenia and Comoros, respectively as well as with the President of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission.

2. Cabinet has agreed to drafting instructions being conveyed to the Attorney General's Office in respect of a new Water Resources Bill. The main object of the proposed Water Resources Bill would be to provide a legal framework for the sustainable management, protection, development and efficient use and conservation of water resources in Mauritius, the establishment of a National Directorate of Water Resources and to make provision for the regulation and licensing of water services.

The new Water Resources Bill would, among others, address the following aspects –

- (a) management of surface and underground water resources and management of dams;
- (b) governance of water resources;
- (c) protection of water resources;
- (d) conservation of water resources; and
- (e) licensing of water services and tariffs.

3. Cabinet has agreed to the Skills Development Authority Act 2019 being proclaimed and for its coming into operation as from 01 November 2022. The objects of the Skill Development Authority would be to –

- (a) regulate the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sector;
- (b) ensure quality assurance in TVET sector;
- (c) confer awarding powers to training institutions;
- (d) develop a skills framework; and
- (e) maintain the Skills Development Fund.

4. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Mauritius Institute of Training and Development and the Institute of Vocational Training and Labour Studies Alberto Cassimo of the Republic of Mozambique. The main objective of the Memorandum of Understanding is to promote cooperation between both countries in the following areas –

- (a) training of trainers and managers to promote the development of technical competencies, psycho-pedagogical and management capacities for trainers and managers of vocational training centres;
- (b) exchange of experiences through, among others, exchange of trainers and trainees, study visits, and seminars;

- (c) curriculum based on standards of competences aiming at promoting exchanges in the development of curricula of training based on standards of professional skills; and
- (d) internship and recruitment of students and trainees.

5. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a new Protocol in respect of the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the Republic of Mauritius and the European Union for the period 2022–2026 based on a new fee structure.

6. Cabinet has agreed to the hosting of 9th Political Dialogue between the Government of Mauritius and the European Union (EU) on 14 November 2022. The Mauritius-EU Political Dialogue, which has been held since 2011, is in accordance with Article 8 of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement, and the discussions are non-binding in nature.

The aim of the Dialogue is to exchange information, foster mutual understanding and facilitate establishment of agreed priorities and shared agendas between Mauritius and the EU. It also facilitates consultations and strengthens cooperation on a number of issues of mutual interest to both parties.

7. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of the Project Agreement and Letter of Commitment by the Government of Mauritius with regard to the Hydromet Project. The Indian Ocean Commission is the Executing Entity for the “Building Regional Resilience through strengthened Meteorological, Hydrological and Climate Services in the Indian Ocean Commission Member Countries (Hydromet) Project”.

The Hydromet Project aims at strengthening the resilience and adaptive capacity of regional and national communities to the impacts of climate change in the island states of the South West Indian Ocean. The main benefits of the project are improved hydro-meteorological equipment, knowledge and decision-making and better adaptation planning infrastructure. The project would be implemented over a period of five years until 2027.

8. Cabinet has agreed to the Ministry of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping authorising the importation of 400 tonnes of “*Capitaine*” fish during the end-of-year festive season 2022. With a view to avoiding any shortage of fish on the local market, registered importers of fish and fish products would be allowed to import some 400 tonnes of “*Capitaine*” fish from 01 to 20 December 2022.

9. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Health and Wellness would conduct the 6th Non-Communicable Diseases (NCD) Survey in Rodrigues in October/November 2022. The overall goal of the Rodrigues NCD Survey 2022 is to determine the prevalence of NCDs and to study the trends in hypertension, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, obesity and their associated risk factors in the Rodriguan population. The specific objectives of the survey are to, inter alia, –

- (a) measure the prevalence of diabetes mellitus and pre-diabetes;
- (b) examine complications of diabetes, including retinopathy and nephropathy;
- (c) measure the prevalence of cardiovascular risk factors;
- (d) assess public awareness of diabetes mellitus and the importance of its metabolic control; and
- (e) evaluate public awareness of hypertension and its control.

The NCD Survey 2022 would target Rodriguan adults aged 20 to 74 years.

10. Cabinet has taken note that Mauritius has been ranked 45th globally in the Global Innovation Index (GII) Report for year 2022. It is ranked 1st in the Sub-Saharan Region, 1st among the African countries and 6th among the 36 upper middle-income countries. Mauritius was ranked 82nd in 2019, 52nd in both 2020 and 2021.

The GI Report is co-published annually by Cornell University of New York, INSEAD (*Institut Européen d'Administration des Affaires*) and the World Intellectual Property Organization, a specialised agency of the United Nations and provides detailed metrics about the innovation performance of 132 countries and economies around the world, including Mauritius.

11. Cabinet has taken note that the Fraser Institute has, in its Economic Freedom of the World 2022 Annual Report released on 08 September 2022, ranked Mauritius at the 9th position out of 165 countries for the year 2020. This places Mauritius among the top 10 countries whose policies and institutions are most favourable to economic freedom. Mauritius was ranked 11th in 2019.

The Fraser Institute is an independent, non-partisan research and educational organisation based in Canada. It provides an in-depth analysis of each country's degree of economic freedom across five key areas, namely Size of Government, Legal System and Property Rights, Sound Money, Freedom to Trade Internationally and Regulation of Credit, Labour and Business.

12. Cabinet has agreed to Mauritius submitting its candidature to host the 66th meeting of the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) Commission for Africa during the course of the second semester of 2023. Mauritius is currently the second Vice-Chair of the UNWTO Executive Council.

13. Cabinet has agreed to the Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development signing an Agreement with the Standard Chartered Bank (incorporated in England) to, inter alia, develop an Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Framework for Mauritius. The development of an ESG Framework would ease the process for Government to raise financing on the international market as a large and growing proportion of global investors are using ESG factors to direct their investments.

14. Cabinet has taken note that Mauritius would host two events, organised in collaboration with the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), namely a three-day Seminar on the Chemical Weapons Convention and Chemical Safety and Security Management for Member States of the OPCW in the Africa Region, and a four-day Executive Programme on Integrated Chemicals Management, from 11 to 14 October 2022.

The aim of the Seminar is to provide a platform for the exchange of experiences on national framework for chemical safety and security management. The Executive Programme would cover a variety of topics relevant to those leading the implementation of integrated chemicals management from both policy and industrial perspectives.

15. Cabinet has taken note that Mauritius would host the 2nd Mauritius Maritime Week, Conference and Exhibition from 13 to 15 December 2022. The objective of holding this event in Mauritius is to continue the promotion of trade and economic development throughout the Indian Ocean through transportation and logistics as well as promoting foreign direct investment and international business tourism in the Republic of Mauritius.

The event would provide an opportunity to showcase Port Louis Harbour as an important maritime logistics and transport hub in this region of the world. World-class international business leaders would analyse latest global transportation and logistics issues and the event would be attended by leading shipping lines, shippers, railways, cargo owners, freight forwarders, logistics companies, road transport companies, investors, economists, consultants, ports, port equipment and IT services suppliers.

16. Cabinet has taken note that the University of Mauritius would organise the 3rd International Conference of NextComp 2020 from 06 to 08 October 2022. The theme of the Conference is “Next Generation Computing Applications”.

The objectives of the Conference are to address new developments, both in theory and in practice, mainly in the areas of Artificial Intelligence, Communication and Computer Networks, Security and Forensics and Data Analytics. The event would also include an industry session covering innovative technologies implementation. Some 75 researchers from various countries would participate to the event.

17. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Health and Wellness, in collaboration with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), would hold a "Regional Project Mid-Term Coordination Meeting" from 14 to 18 November 2022 in Mauritius under the African Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training related to Nuclear Science and Technology (AFRA).

The meeting would be held within the framework of the IAEA Technical Cooperation Project RAF 6055 "*Improving the Quality of Radiotherapy in the treatment of Frequently Occurring Cancers*". The objective of the event is to enhance the quality of the delivery of radiotherapy services in AFRA Member States through harmonised clinical training schemes and sensitisation of policy makers. It is expected that some 56 participants from 29 IAEA Member States, among others, would attend the meeting

18. Cabinet has taken note of the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic prevailing in Mauritius. As at 28 September 2022, there were 14 active cases of COVID-19, out of which 10 were admitted at the New ENT Hospital.

Cabinet has also taken note that the quarantine period in Mauritius would be extended up to 30 November 2022. The existing sanitary measures applicable in Mauritius and Rodrigues are also being extended up to 30 November 2022. Henceforth, there would be no mandatory in-centre quarantine prior to travel to St Brandon.

Cabinet has further taken note that the British High Commission in Mauritius has made a donation of Personal Protective Equipment, masks, gowns and medical equipment to the Ministry of Health and Wellness.

19. Cabinet has taken note that the NOTAMs which lay down conditions for passengers and crew members travelling to Mauritius and Rodrigues respectively would be extended up to 30 November 2022.

20. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Land Use Planning, Minister of Tourism to France in the context of the International French Travel Market Top Resa, which is a leading annual event for the international travel and tourism industry to discuss tourism and travel-related topics, analyse trends, accelerate business networking and formulate strategies for the next season. The Mauritian Pavilion accommodated all the local tourism stakeholders. During and in the margins of the Top Resa event, various meetings were held with key stakeholders to obtain direct feedback from the travel trade and to explore strategies for sustainable tourism growth in the post-pandemic context.

The Deputy Prime Minister participated in a working session of the Vanilla Islands Organisation and discussions centered on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the tourism sector. He also participated in a networking event organised by the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority which was attended by major French tour operators and travel agents as well as local tourism stakeholders.

21. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent official visit of the Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity to Rodrigues in the context of the International Day for Older Persons and the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, which would be held on 01 and 17 October 2022, respectively. The activities organised included, among others, –

- (a) handing over of certificates to unemployed beneficiaries of the National Empowerment Foundation (NEF) as well as staff of the NEF and the Commission for Social Security, Health and Others;
- (b) launching of training courses in Masonry and Ladies Wear to be dispensed by the MITD to 27 unemployed beneficiaries of the NEF; and
- (c) a visit to the Respite Care Centre at Piton where senior citizens can stay for a maximum period of two months per year.

The Minister also had a working session with the Chief Commissioner of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly to discuss issues pertaining to poverty alleviation, capacity building of staff, Medical Boards and domiciliary visits for elderly persons and persons with disabilities.

22. Cabinet has taken note of the activities being organised by the Ministry of Health and Wellness in the context of World Heart Day 2022. The theme chosen for this year is “Use Heart for Every Heart”. The Ministry of Health and Wellness, in collaboration with various organisations and stakeholders, would organise some 12 sessions of health promotion campaigns at strategic localities throughout the island on Saturdays, every fortnight.

The Ministry would commemorate World Heart Day during the official launching of the Health Promotion Campaign at Phoenix Mall on 01 October 2022. The health promotion campaigns would include, among others –

- (a) NCD and HIV Screening Programme and display on healthy food models; and
- (b) talks on NCDs including cardiovascular diseases, cancer and their risk factors and the importance of adopting a healthy lifestyle.

23. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of –

- (a) the Parole Board with Mrs Nudhar Bundhoo as part-time Chairperson;
- (b) the Correctional Youth Centre Board of Visitors with Mr Vijay Ramanjooloo as part-time Chairperson;
- (c) the Rehabilitation Youth Centre Board of Visitors with Mrs Leelawtee Ramsaha as part-time Chairperson; and
- (d) the Discharged Persons' Aid Committee with Dr Michael Pompeia as part-time Chairperson.

24. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Professional Quantity Surveyors' Council for the period 2022 - 2024.

25. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Executive Council of the Sanskrit Speaking Union with Mr Kessen Budhoo as part-time Chairperson.
