

HIGHLIGHTS OF CABINET MEETING – FRIDAY 08 JULY 2022

1. Cabinet has agreed to the introduction of the Immigration Bill into the National Assembly. The main object of the Bill is to consolidate and strengthen the law with regard to the admission, and stay, of non-citizens in Mauritius. The Bill makes new provisions to prevent situations where a non-citizen marries a citizen for the sole purpose of obtaining a residence permit in Mauritius. Accordingly, consequential amendments would be brought to the Mauritius Citizenship Act to, inter alia, empower the Immigration Department to investigate into whether the marriage between a non-citizen and a citizen is a marriage of convenience and also, to provide for the documents to be submitted by a non-citizen at the time of making an application for the publication of a marriage.

2. Cabinet has agreed to the introduction of the Mauritius Food Standards Agency Bill into the National Assembly. The object of the Bill is to provide for the establishment of the Mauritius Food Standards Agency for the purpose of, inter alia, -

- (a) ensuring a high degree of consumer confidence in the safety and nutritional quality of food produced, processed, imported, sold in, or exported from Mauritius;
- (b) ensuring an effective, transparent and accountable regulatory framework within which the food industry can work efficiently; and
- (c) providing appropriate information relating to food to enable the consumer to make informed choices regarding food safety and nutritional quality.

3. Cabinet has agreed to the SME Mauritius Ltd signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the Mauritius Institute of Training and Development for the benefit of small and medium enterprises. The Memorandum of Understanding would pave the way in establishing a coherent and comprehensive approach in the development of the SME sector. In addition to being equipped with the technical know-how to operate in their respective field of activity, SMEs would be simultaneously empowered in the setting up of their own businesses, which would help in the enhancement of the entrepreneurial culture. The objectives of this joint collaboration are, inter alia, -

- (a) the promotion of an entrepreneurship culture by enhancing entrepreneurial skills;
- (b) the promotion of learner ability in identifying market needs and prospective solutions through an entrepreneurial perspective;

- (c) the provision of short courses in relevant trades to help and support SMEs in their quests for development and growth; and
- (d) the provision of technical assistance as well as the organisation of workshops and seminars on entrepreneurship.

4. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the scoping mission conducted by consultants of the Climate Resilient Infrastructure Development Facility (CRDIF) from 28 to 31 March 2022 in Mauritius, following a request for assistance in the water services sector and has agreed, in principle, to the implementation of the recommendations contained in their report, in a phased manner and on a priority basis.

The CRDIF is an official Southern African Development Community (SADC) programme funded by the United Kingdom's Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office, and it works to deliver sustainable demand-driven small-scale infrastructure across SADC countries in the water sector. Some of the major solutions recommended by the consultants to address existing challenges in the water services sector are -

- (a) the conduct of water resources/non-revenue water assessments;
- (b) the development and operationalisation of a Water Supply and Distribution Improvement Programme; and
- (c) the provision of support to institutional reforms/capacity development.

5. Cabinet has agreed to the refund of any balance of Recycling Fee to a worker who is no longer in employment at the age of 60 and to amend the National Savings Fund Act accordingly. This measure would be effective as from July 2022.

6. Cabinet has taken note of the actions being taken by the Ministry of Financial Services and Good Governance to reinforce the visibility and attractiveness of the Mauritius International Financial Centre. The initiatives include –

- (a) the recent organisation of a webinar as well as a career and job fair in collaboration with Mauritius Finance for the benefit of job seekers in the financial sector;
- (b) the proposed hosting of the Single Window initiative to improve regulatory framework for financial services products;
- (c) the review of the attractiveness of financial products developed by the Financial Services Commission; and
- (d) the promotion of the financial services sector in collaboration with the Economic Development Board.

7. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the participation of Mauritius in the 2022 United Nations Ocean Conference which was co-hosted by the Governments of Portugal and Kenya from 27 June to 01 July 2022 in Lisbon, Portugal. The theme of the Conference was “Scaling up ocean action based on science and innovation for the implementation of Goal 14: stocktaking, partnerships and solutions”. Mauritius organised two side events in the margins of the Conference, in order to showcase the Marine Protected Area which it intends to create around the Chagos Archipelago. The Prime Minister also made pre-recorded statements during both side events.

8. Cabinet has taken note of the deliberations and the outcomes of the recent Pre-Summit Meeting held at the UNESCO Headquarters in which the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology participated virtually and which was organised as a precursor to the United Nations Transforming Education Summit scheduled for September 2022. This Summit aims at mobilising greater political ambition, commitment, and action to accelerate progress on education in order to meet the 2030 Education SDG 4 deadline despite the slide caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Pre-Summit, inter alia, provided an inclusive and open forum for countries to present preliminary outcomes of their national consultations and engage in discussions of key recommendations.

9. Cabinet has taken note that a Workshop on Artificial Intelligence and an Award Ceremony by the Intelligent Minds Trust of India would be organised in October 2022 in Mauritius, with the aim to reward delegates from India who have dedicated their lives to academia.

10. Cabinet has taken note of the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic prevailing across the world. Some 557.7 million cases have been reported globally, of which 531.6 million persons have been successfully treated. With regard to Mauritius, as at 6 July 2022 there were 309 active cases of COVID-19, out of which 40 were admitted at the New ENT Hospital. Over the period 30 June to 6 July 2022, four deaths were attributed to COVID-19.

11. Cabinet has taken note that the Central Health Laboratory of the Ministry of Health and Wellness has received reagents to carry out PCR tests for Monkeypox.

12. Cabinet has taken note of the activities that the Ministry of Health and Wellness would organise to mark World Population Day 2022, celebrated on 11 July. The theme for this year is “*A world of 8 billion: Towards a resilient future for all - Harnessing opportunities and ensuring rights and choices for all*”.

The following activities would be organised –

- (a) a training session to be held on 11 July 2022 on ‘Monitoring in labour’ to further help improving maternal health and reduction in infant deaths so as to ultimately curtail the impact of declining population trend;
- (b) a workshop on Minimal Initial Service Package for Sexual and Reproductive Health in crisis situations to be held on 18 July 2022; and
- (c) radio and TV programmes to sensitise the community on maternal and child health services and preconception care, including vaccination.
