

HIGHLIGHTS OF CABINET MEETING – 14 JANUARY 2022

1. Cabinet has taken note that the date of the coming into operation of the Consolidated COVID-19 (Amendment No. 5) Regulations regarding the definition of “fully vaccinated” and “booster dose” has been exceptionally extended from 15 January 2022 to 19 February 2022.

2. Cabinet has taken note that sanitary restrictions which were applicable up to 15 January 2022 would be extended up to 31 March 2022.

3. Cabinet has taken note of the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic prevailing across the world. Some 320.8 million cases have been reported globally, of which 264 million persons have been successfully treated.

With regard to Mauritius, as at 12 January 2022, there were 745 active cases of COVID-19, out of which 13 were admitted at the New ENT Hospital. Over the period 07 January 2022 to 12 January 2022, 12 deaths were 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. As at 13 January 2022, 957,029 persons had received a first dose of vaccine (representing 75.6 percent of the population). 920,741 persons were fully vaccinated (representing 72.7 percent of the population). 252,990 persons had received a booster dose (representing 20 percent of the population).

Cabinet has further taken note that some private clinics would also be authorised to carry out vaccination of persons aged 40 years and above (first, second and booster doses) and those aged 12 to 17 (first and second doses) with the Pfizer vaccine.

Healthcare frontliners and high risk individuals would also be given Pfizer vaccine as a booster dose.

4. Cabinet has taken note that in connection with the fight against COVID-19 pandemic, a donation of medical equipment has been received from the Government of Israel.

5. Cabinet has taken note that the virtual inauguration of the Social Housing Units at Dagotièrre and Mare Tabac and the Ground Breaking Ceremony of the Civil Service College as well as the 8 MW Solar PV Farm projects would be performed by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius and the Prime Minister of the Republic of India on 20 January 2022 at Dagotièrre.

6. Cabinet has agreed to the naming of one of the Metro stations along the Rose Hill to Réduit alignment after an Indian personality, namely Mahatma Gandhi. The “Réduit” Station would be named as Mahatma Gandhi Station.

7. Cabinet has taken note that a Line of Credit Agreement of USD190M has been signed between SBM (Mauritius) Infrastructure Development Company Ltd and the Exim Bank of India, to finance the implementation of the ongoing Metro Express Project and other infrastructure projects.

8. Cabinet has agreed to the formal establishment of diplomatic relations between Mauritius and Suriname. Mauritius and Suriname share several historical and cultural commonalities, given their common heritage and affinities. The establishment of official diplomatic relations would pave the way to enhanced interaction between the two countries in the international fora and initiate cooperation bilaterally in fields of common and mutual interest.

9. Cabinet has agreed to amendments being made to the Road Traffic (Speed) Regulations 2011 to set the maximum speed limits at 30 km per hour along streets and 40 km per hour along ‘collector/distributor’ roads (C roads), as advised by the United Nations and World Health Organization. The classification of ‘Urban’ and ‘Rural’ roads would have to be subdivided into two categories to establish a hierarchy of roads in accordance with their primary functions.

10. Cabinet has agreed to -

- (a) the proclamation and entry into force of the Industrial Property Act 2019 by end of January 2022; and
- (b) the implementation of Regulations in respect of the Industrial Property Act 2019.

The Regulations cover, amongst others, the following –

- (i) procedures for the filing of applications in respect of the various industrial property rights;
- (ii) all the requirements relevant to applications under each right;
- (iii) list of documents to be submitted along with the application;
- (iv) relevant forms to be filled in for the application, renewal and change in ownership under each right;
- (v) procedures for the filing of oppositions;

- (vi) provisions for the filing of international applications under the Patent Cooperation Treaty, the Hague Agreement and the Madrid Protocol; and
- (vii) the relevant fees applicable for protection of each Industrial Property Rights.

11. Cabinet has taken note of the promulgation of the Customs Tariff (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2022. The Regulations provide for a reduction in the safeguard customs duty on imports of margarine and spread from SADC member countries from 13 percent to 11 percent. The Regulations would come into operation on 29 January 2022.

12. Cabinet has taken note that restrictions were imposed on the movement of livestock from Rodrigues to Mauritius since the outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease in the island on 11 March 2021. A protocol, outlining a series of animal health and traceability conditions that have to be complied with, has been worked out in order to ease the movement of animals from Rodrigues. In the first instance, only the Mauritius Meat Authority would move livestock from Rodrigues to Mauritius. Consideration would be given to registered butchers holding a National Agricultural Products Regulatory Office Licence at a later stage. The first consignment of livestock was expected to leave Rodrigues on 18 January 2022.

13. Cabinet has taken note that there has been a significant increase in the Gross Official International Reserves of the country from USD7.3 billion as at end-December 2020 to USD8.6 billion as at end-December 2021, representing an increase of USD1.3 billion.

14. Cabinet has taken note of the status of the relocation of vulnerable families in the region of Chitrakoot, Vallée Pitot, Le Batelage, Rivière des Anguilles, Rivière des Créoles and Plaine Magnien due to the risk of landslide.

15. Cabinet has agreed to the extension of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Regional Programme for Eastern Africa 2016-2021, by one more year until 31 December 2022. The request for the extension of the Regional Programme emanates from the UNODC which felt that, in view of the current national priorities in combating COVID-19, it would be appropriate to allow Member States to focus on recovery from the pandemic, which would in turn provide them and the UNODC reasonable time to elaborate the next Regional Programme. The overarching theme of the Regional Programme 2016-2021 is the promotion of rule of law and human security in Eastern Africa, while its objective is to support the efforts of these countries to respond to evolving human security threats.

16. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the virtual participation of the Minister of Land Transport and Light Rail, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade in the recent meeting of the *Comité de suivi* of the Interreg Indian Ocean overseas cooperation programme. The Interreg Indian Ocean overseas cooperation programme aims to strengthen the regional integration of Réunion Island and Mayotte in the Indian Ocean by meeting the joint development challenges of countries in the area (Australia, Comoros, India, Kenya, Madagascar, Maldives, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles and Tanzania). The *Comité de suivi* is the governance structure of the programme and meets annually to review the implementation of the projects/activities. The meeting took cognizance of the activities implemented under the Interreg V (2014-2020) and discussed the planning of the next phase of the programme Interreg VI (2021-2027). An envelope of around €62M was being earmarked for the Interreg VI, for which the following four priorities have been identified –

- (a) strengthen collaborative research and economic cooperation to foster common solutions and regional value creation;
- (b) enhance territorial resilience and sustainable development;
- (c) strengthen skills, culture and tourism for economic and social development; and
- (d) strengthen governance for cooperation in the Indian Ocean.

17. Cabinet has taken note of progress achieved so far by the Ministries/Departments in the implementation of the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) introduced in August 2021 to support the Public Sector Business Transformation Strategy. The five KPIs at the level of Ministries, Departments, Local Authorities and State-Owned Enterprises relate to training, implementation of the eHR project, good governance, prescription of Scheme of Service and compliance of Government offices with fire safety requirements.

18. Cabinet has taken note of the proposed visit of Mr Hamad Kalkaba Malboum, President of the African Athletics Confederation and his delegation to Mauritius from 16 to 19 January 2022. The President of the African Athletics Confederation intends to effect a visit to Mauritius to, amongst others, take cognizance of the status of the on-going preparations in view of the 22nd African Senior Athletics Championships to be held at the Côte d'Or National Sports Complex from 08 to 12 June 2022.

19. Cabinet has taken note that the Republic Day Camp 2022 organised under the Youth Exchange Programme in the context of the celebration of the 75 years of independence of the Republic of India, scheduled from 15 January to 03 February 2022 in India, has been cancelled due to a surge in cases of COVID-19 in India and all over the world.

20. Cabinet has taken note that the appointment of Mr Ashit Kumar Gungah as Executive Director of the National Productivity and Competitiveness Council would be renewed for a period of two years.

21. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Board of Trustees of the St. Antoine Planters Cooperative Trust with Mr Chabeelall Dabydoyal as Chairperson.
