

## **HIGHLIGHTS OF CABINET MEETING – FRIDAY 18 MARCH 2022**

1. Cabinet has agreed to the promulgation of the Declaration of Assets (Mauritius Prisons Service) Regulations 2022, to extend the application of the Declaration of Assets Act to every officer of the Departmental grade in the Mauritius Prisons Service. The Commission of Inquiry on Drug Trafficking has recommended, among others, that any successful candidate must before taking office and subsequently on a periodic interval, make a declaration of his or her assets as well as those of his or her family and close relatives. The Declaration of Assets (Mauritius Prisons Service) Regulations 2022 provide for -

- (a) every officer of the Mauritius Prisons Service in office, at the commencement of these Regulations, to make a declaration of his assets and liabilities with ICAC, including the assets and liabilities of his spouse, his minor children and his children of age and grandchildren, not later than 90 days after the commencement of these Regulations; and
- (b) where before the commencement of these Regulations, a senior officer of the Mauritius Prisons Service has, pursuant to the Act, already made a declaration of his assets and liabilities with ICAC, that senior officer of the Mauritius Prisons Service shall not be required to make a new declaration of his assets and liabilities under these Regulations.

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2. Cabinet has taken note that the Dangerous Drugs (Prescribed Forms) (Amendment) Regulations 2022 would be promulgated. The Commission of Inquiry on Drug Trafficking has, in its Report released in 2018, recommended, amongst others, that in order to facilitate the work of pharmacists, the Pharmacy Board, in collaboration with the Medical Council, must prepare a uniform prescription form with the specific information fields.

The Regulations have been drafted to provide for the prescription of Triplicate Prescription Forms for Dangerous Drugs listed under Schedules II and III of the Dangerous Drugs Act in order to ensure an effective control of dangerous drugs both in the private and the public sectors. The Triplicate Prescription Form would facilitate the work of pharmacists and it would also help protect the public from the potential harms of these substances. The rationale behind the introduction of Triplicate Prescription Form for prescribing dangerous drugs is to provide for better control measures relating to possession, supply, manufacture, import/export of such drugs with associated criminal sanctions.

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3. Cabinet has agreed to the promulgation of the Information and Communication Technologies (Registration of SIM) (Amendment) Regulations 2022 which provide for the postponement of the coming into operation of the Regulations from April 2022 to 16 January 2023. Thereafter, existing holders of SIM cards would be given up to 31 July 2023 to register their SIM cards with respective operators.

The following are being included in the Regulations -

- (a) “image check” and “liveness detection” in the interpretation section;
- (b) in order to register a SIM card in the name of the minor child, the birth certificate would be used for a citizen while for a non-citizen, the SIM card would be registered in the name of the parent/guardian; and
- (c) contrary to the provision to have a SIM card deactivated immediately upon the death of a subscriber, it was now proposed that a delay of 15 days be provided in the Regulation so as to give the operators sufficient time to send an SMS to the mobile phone of the deceased. In the eventuality the mobile phone was being used by another person, the latter would be invited to transfer of the SIM card in his name.

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4. Cabinet has agreed to the construction of a common building to house the Mauritius Meteorological Services and the National Coast Guard Post on Raphaël Island, St Brandon.

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5. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a Memorandum of Agreement between the Higher Education Commission (HEC) and the Commonwealth of Learning, for the elaboration of a Technology Enabled Learning (TEL) Strategy in higher education. The development of a TEL strategy in Mauritius would serve the following purposes –

- (a) enable an increased use of TEL both by learners and academic staff, while also opening a pathway for non-traditional learners who would benefit from TEL-induced flexibility and accessibility;
- (b) promote further the dissemination and sharing of teaching and learning materials;
- (c) increase the number of international students in the public Higher Education Institutions with facilities of blended mode of learning; and
- (d) build capacity and professional development of staff in the use of TEL.

The project, which would be implemented in the four public universities, would span over a period of 6 months, commencing on 4 April 2022 and would be in force up to 30 September 2022.

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6. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a Financing Agreement between the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change and the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für*

*Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)*, in relation to the capacity building of key stakeholders for the effective implementation of activities under the Hydrochlorofluorocarbons Phase-Out Management Plan (HPMP). The Montreal Protocol on Substances that deplete the Ozone Layer was introduced in 1987 to regulate the production and consumption of Ozone Depleting Substances towards the safeguard of the Ozone Layer. Mauritius became Party to the Protocol in 1992.

GIZ has been designated by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development of Germany to assist sub-Saharan African countries in implementing provisions of the Montreal Protocol as part of its contribution to the Multilateral Fund, as a developed country. The Agreement would cater for the following activities –

- (a) training of technicians working in the refrigeration and air conditioning sectors on natural refrigerants and the safe handling of hydrocarbons, by the Mauritius Institute of Training and Development;
- (b) in-house training of Customs Officers by the Mauritius Revenue Authority on tracking the illegal importation of banned refrigerants and equipment containing prohibited refrigerants; and
- (c) organisation of workshops by the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change with stakeholders of the refrigeration and air conditioning sectors to maintain dialogue and consultation on specific activities and the implementation of the HPMP, to identify problems and challenges and to come up with collective solutions on green technology alternatives to be adopted in Mauritius.

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7. Cabinet has taken note of the Technical Assistance provided by the United Kingdom (UK) Authorities to support Mauritius in its reforms to further strengthen and sustain its Anti-Money Laundering and Combatting the Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT) and Proliferation Financing framework. Following discussion between the Prime Minister and the UK Secretary of State of Foreign Affairs and Commonwealth Affairs at the COP 26 Summit in Glasgow, the UK expressed its wish to offer more support to Mauritius to further strengthen its AML/CFT and Proliferation Financing regime following its successful delisting from the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) list of “Jurisdiction Under Increased Monitoring” in October 2021 and the UK list of “High Risk Third Countries” in November 2021.

The objectives of the Technical Assistance are, inter alia, to –

- (a) provide focused assistance to ensure that Targeted Financial Sanctions are properly understood, implemented and enforced in Mauritius;
- (b) help ensure Mauritius’s enhanced readiness to demonstrate to the Eastern and Southern Africa Anti-Money Laundering Group that recommended actions related

to Immediate Outcome 3 (Financial Institutions and Designated Non-Financial Business and Professions) have been addressed;

- (c) support in establishing a continuing programme of regular outreach to Immediate Outcome 3 (Financial Institutions and Designated Non-Financial Business and Professions); and
- (d) address recommended actions and provide an independent and critical review of the effectiveness of Immediate Outcome 9 (Terrorism Financing Investigation and Prosecution) with a view to improving current ratings.

The first training programme on Terrorism Financing Offences was held from 14 to 17 March 2022.

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8. Cabinet has taken note of the measures taken by the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security to implement the recommendations made in the Office of Public Sector Governance (OPSG) Report on grant administration for schemes under the Livestock Production and Development Programme.

The Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security would prepare an Action Plan, with a time frame, to implement the recommendations proposed in the Report.

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9. Cabinet has taken note that the first Indian Ocean Muaythai Open Championships and the Mauritius Super 4 World Games Qualifiers would be held at the Côte d'Or National Sports Complex on 19 and 20 March 2022, in accordance with the sanitary protocols recommended by the Ministry of Health and Wellness. Around 125 boxers and officials from Reunion, Madagascar and Mauritius are expected to participate.

For the Indian Ocean Muaythai Open Championships, Mauritius would be represented in 12 Male and four Female categories, while four boxers would represent Mauritius for the Super 4 World Games Qualifiers. The competitions would be held behind closed doors.

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10. Cabinet has agreed to Mauritius hosting the meeting of the fourth session of the Technical Committee of the African Union's Early Childhood Education and Development (ECED) Cluster on 28 and 29 April 2022. The objectives of the Technical Committee Meeting are to -

- (a) take stock of the progress and key achievements of the Working Groups of the ECED Cluster;
- (b) review and adopt the 2022/2023 Annual Cluster Work plan; and
- (c) provide a strategic guidance for the preparation and submission of AU Early Childhood Education Framework and Regional Early Childhood Education

Research Strategy to the Specialised Technical Committee on Education, Science, Technology and Innovation of the African Union Commission.

The expected outcomes of the meeting are the submission of -

- (i) a report on the activities and achievements of the Working Groups along with their respective Work Plans for 2022;
- (ii) Guidelines for the preparation of a draft AU Early Childhood Education Framework and Regional Early Childhood Development Research Strategy; and
- (iii) an Approved Work Plan for the ECED Cluster for the Year 2022/2023.

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11. Cabinet has taken note of the heavy rainfall which occurred on Sunday 13 March 2022 in Mauritius and the emergency response measures taken by various institutions including the Police, the Special Mobile Force, the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service and the National Coast Guard. The heavy rainfall led to flooding and water accumulation in various regions. The Land Drainage Authority carried out a survey in the affected regions and has proposed additional remedial measures.

Cabinet has also taken note of the occurrence of heavy rainfall from Tuesday 15 to Thursday 17 March 2022.

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12. Cabinet has taken note of the holding of a National Policy Dialogue on Green Economy under the SWITCH Africa Green project on 31 March and 01 April 2022. The SWITCH Africa Green project is an initiative designed and funded by the European Union to facilitate the transition of African countries to sustainable development. The Country Implementation Plan was adopted by Government in October 2016. In line with requirements of the SWITCH Africa Green project, a dialogue has to take place with stakeholders of the three key sectors, namely agriculture, manufacturing and tourism, along with other cross-cutting sectors, including, energy efficiency, water efficiency, standards and labelling, integrated waste management and eco-innovations.

The objective of the National Policy Dialogue is to improve understanding of green economy, enhance policy coordination on greening the three key sectors and increase awareness on sustainable consumption and production.

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13. Cabinet has taken note of the activities being organised by the Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities in the context of the World Water Day 2022, celebrated on 22 March. The theme for World Water Day 2022 is "Groundwater: Making the Invisible Visible". The Ministry of

Energy and Public Utilities, in collaboration with the Central Water Authority and the Water Resources Unit, would organise the following activities –

- (a) an Open Day would be held on 22 March 2022 at Hollyrood Well Field together with an exhibition on the theme “Groundwater: Making the Invisible Visible”;
- (b) a video clip would be produced on the theme of the World Water Day and would be broadcast on the MBC Channels and social media on 22 March 2022;
- (c) a Fresco Competition by the youth would take place on 23 March 2022 at St Aubin Water Station; and
- (d) planting of around 100 trees at Bagatelle Dam on 28 March 2022 by young volunteers from the Mauritius Scout Association and Mauritius Wildlife Foundation, amongst others.

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14. Cabinet has taken note of the activities being organised by the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security to mark the International Day of Forests 2022, celebrated on 21 March. The theme chosen by the United Nations for this year is “Forests and Sustainable Production and Consumption”. The Ministry would proceed with the launching of a forest trail and plantation of some fruit trees at Belle Vue Forest also known as Daruty Forest situated at Petit Raffray. The Belle Vue Forest Trail is expected to bring societal, environmental and economic benefits for the local inhabitants and the country at large.

The following activities would also be organised –

- (a) sale of plants at half price on 21 March 2022 in all forest nurseries managed by the Forestry Service; and
- (b) launching of pamphlets to raise awareness on the importance of forests and inviting the public to learn to love forests.

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15. Cabinet has taken note that in view of the implementation of the Metro Phase 3 project, works would have to be undertaken at Rose Hill Roundabout and a traffic diversion would be implemented for a period of nine months, with effect from 22 March 2022 as follows –

- (a) part of the Rose Hill Roundabout (near Manjoo) would be closed temporarily;
- (b) the junction of Vandermeersch Street/Port Louis – Saint Jean Road would be converted into a staggered cross junction inclusive of a right turning lane towards the Place Margeot Bus Terminal;
- (c) traffic along A1 Road would be required to proceed straight in the direction of Port Louis or Belle Rose; and

- (d) traffic along Vandermeersch Street would be slightly deviated at the staggered cross junction.

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16. Cabinet has taken note of the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic prevailing across the world. Some 464.6 million cases have been reported globally, of which 396.9 million persons have been successfully treated.

With regard to Mauritius, as at 16 March 2022, there were 2,004 active cases of COVID-19, out of which 11 were admitted at the New ENT Hospital. Over the period 10 March to 16 March 2022, 18 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 17 March 2022, 1,002,694 persons had received a first dose of vaccine (representing 79.2 percent of the population). 967,015 persons were fully vaccinated (representing 76.4 percent of the population). 564,226 persons had received a booster dose (representing 44.6 percent of the population). 75.9 percent of adolescents aged 12 to 17 years had received a first dose of vaccine and 68.2 percent had received a second dose.

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17. Cabinet has taken note of the COVID-19 situation prevailing in Rodrigues. As at 16 March 2022, there were 244 active cases. Four persons were admitted at Mont Lubin Treatment Centre.

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18. Cabinet has taken note that on 16 March 2022, the Ministry of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping was notified of the breakdown of the main engine of Motor Vessel (MV) Ore Shandong, a cargo ship under the flag of Hong Kong, near Coco Island, St. Brandon. On the same day, the Marine Rescue Coordination Centre of the National Coast Guard contacted the Master of the Vessel who informed that several attempts to repair defects on the engine were unsuccessful. MV Ore Shandong was drifting in a North-North West direction towards Coco Island at a speed of 01 Knot.

All authorities involved in the National Oil Spill Contingency Plan (NOSCP) were requested to be on alert in case of an eventual oil spill in the Exclusive Economic Zone of Mauritius and to be prepared for the activation of the NOSCP in line with provisions laid down in the Environment Protection Act. The Regional Coordination Operations Centre, based in Seychelles, was notified of the incident and was requested to remain on alert in case any assistance was required. The Office of the Regional Council of Reunion Island, based in Mauritius, was also notified. On 17 March 2022, Alp Keeper, the tug appointed by the owner, had left the port of Cape Town for the towing of MV Ore Shandong. MV Ore Tianjin which is also sailing in the region would be called upon to act in case MV Ore Shandong continues to drift towards Coco Island. Actions were underway for the repair of the main engine.

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19. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the participation of the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology in the High Level Ministerial Webinar which was organised recently by the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) on the status of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)

Education in Africa recently. The webinar comprised the presentation and findings of the study entitled “*A Situational Analysis on the Status of STEM Education in Secondary School Level in Africa*”. The participants were mainly Ministries of Education in Africa, Inter-Country Quality Nodes coordinators and key stakeholders in STEM Education.

The objectives of the Webinar were also to –

- (a) promote the establishment or review of STEM education policy in African countries;
- (b) encourage the implementation of the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework and adaptation of country-based indicators for STEM education; and
- (c) promote cross-country peer learning, knowledge exchange, and sharing of good practices among education actors.

The study underscored critical areas in Africa that require STEM-based interventions as well as the inability of the workforce to fill STEM-related jobs. Inadequate resources and facilities stood out as a major challenge among the factors that contributed to the low uptake of STEM education in Africa.

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20. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Central Procurement Board with Mr Raj Hemansing Prayag, GOSK, as Chairperson, for a period of three years.

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21. Cabinet has taken note of the constitution of the Veterinary Council for the period 2022-2024.

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