

HIGHLIGHTS OF CABINET MEETING – FRIDAY 21 JANUARY 2022

1. Cabinet has agreed to the promulgation of the Road Traffic (Control of Vehicle Emissions) (Amendment) Regulations 2022. With a view to curtailing black smoke emissions and at the same time improving air quality for road users, the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change has acquired portable smoke meters to measure the level of opacity of smoke emitted by motor vehicles. These smoke meters would be allocated to the enforcement agencies, namely the Police, the *Police de L'Environnement* of Rodrigues, and the National Land Transport Authority.

2. Cabinet has taken note that the Minister of Financial Services and Good Governance would promulgate the Stock Exchange (Brokerage) (Amendment) Regulations 2022, under the Securities (Amendment) Act 2021. The objective of the proposed amendments to the existing Stock Exchange (Brokerage) Regulations is to provide for an appropriate Regulatory framework for all licensed Securities Exchanges and Clearing and Settlement Facilities to be able to apportion the brokerage fees for securities transactions notably for equity.

In view of the fact that currently there is more than one Securities Exchange and each one has its own licensed Clearing and Settlement Facility to clear and settle transactions, the Financial Service Commission (FSC) has proposed some amendments to the Stock Exchange (Brokerage) Regulations which would allow the apportionment of the brokerage fees so that the appropriate fees are paid to the relevant Clearing and Settlement Facility. The new Regulations provide for each investment dealer to determine its own brokerage fee. The FSC would also amend its Rules which relate to Brokerage Fees to, inter alia, give effect to the proposal of allowing intermediaries to set their own fees.

3. Cabinet has agreed to allow persons who deponed before the Truth and Justice Commission and whose cases shall be lodged in court, as determined by the Land Research and Monitoring Unit, to benefit from financial assistance up to a predetermined amount from the Ministry of Housing and Land Use Planning to cover litigation costs. Assistance would be extended in respect of a first batch of 20 cases which have already been recommended by the Land Research and Monitoring Unit.

The Ministry of Housing and Land Use Planning would shortly launch an Expression of Interest to enlist the services of a Genealogist for an initial period of six months.

4. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of three Memoranda of Understanding between the Economic Development Board (EDB) and –

- (a) the Dubai Chamber of Commerce and Industry;
- (b) the Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce and Industry; and
- (c) the Abu Dhabi Fund for Development.

The main objectives of the two Memoranda of Understanding with the Chambers of Commerce are to –

- (i) establish a framework for developing stronger business relations between the EDB and the United Arab Emirates Chambers of Commerce and Industry;
- (ii) strengthen trade ties between the two countries and create new channels of business exchanges; and
- (iii) strengthen institutional relations and capacity building through mutual cooperation.

The main objective of the Memorandum of Understanding with the Abu Dhabi Fund for Development is to establish a framework for EDB to facilitate the Abu Dhabi Fund for Development to invest in companies in the Republic of Mauritius either through full ownership or equity sharing in partnership with public or private Mauritian companies to accelerate economic development and create job opportunities across various sectors.

5. Cabinet has taken note that the Children’s Act 2020, the Child Sex Offender Register Act 2020 and the Children’s Court Act 2020 would come into operation on Monday 24 January 2022.

6. Cabinet has taken note of the activities being organised by the Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage in collaboration with Le Morne Heritage Trust Fund to commemorate the 187th Anniversary of the Abolition of Slavery in Mauritius on 01 February 2022. A wreath laying ceremony would be held at the “Monument aux Esclaves”, Pointe Canon, Mahebourg on Monday 31 January 2022 at 17 00 hours. On 01 February 2022, the day of the commemoration, a wreath laying ceremony would also be held at the International Slave Route Monument at 10 00 hours. The wreath laying ceremonies would be held in accordance with sanitary protocols.

The following activities would also be organised –

- (a) an exhibition on the theme - “Our History, Our Heritage” by the Nelson Mandela Centre for African Culture in collaboration with the National Art Gallery from 28 January to 28 February 2022 at “Lespas Lar” at La Tour Koenig; and
- (b) workshops by Le Morne Heritage Trust Fund to sensitise the inhabitants of the village on the different facilities being offered to fishers by Government. Similar workshops would be held to promote economic empowerment in the agriculture and SME sectors.

7. Cabinet has taken note that all schools would resume on an in-person learning and full-fledged basis as from 02 February 2022.

8. Cabinet has taken note that the Flexible Working Arrangement implemented in the Public Service due to the COVID-19 pandemic would be extended up to 31 March 2022.

9. Cabinet has agreed to the creation of a National Troupe. The National Troupe would form a unique platform to showcase the different cultures of Mauritius and its main purpose would be –

- (a) to preserve, promote and propagate the Mauritian history and culture; and
- (b) to promote a platform for local artists to showcase their talents.

The National Troupe would comprise singers, dancers, actors and other performing artists who would perform at different local venues and also participate in roadshows and cultural exchange programmes in foreign countries.

Cabinet has also agreed to the creation of a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV), to be registered as “National Troupe of Mauritius Ltd”, for managing and operating the National Troupe. The terms of reference of the SPV would be, inter-alia, to –

- (i) produce highly artistic shows reflecting the Mauritian contemporary culture and cultural heritage, specifically designed for national, regional and international audiences;

- (ii) devise and implement strategies to ensure that productions of the National Troupe are geared towards promoting cultural diversity and national unity;
- (iii) produce audience-oriented typical performances for specific events and festivals as may be required;
- (iv) promote the development of artistic talents including thorough training in the performing arts; and
- (v) recruit the appropriate human resources with specific expertise required to implement the objects of the SPV.

10. Cabinet has taken note of the status of the road capital projects implemented by the Road Development Authority (RDA), as at 31 December 2021. Various projects have been completed including –

- (a) the Jumbo/Pont Fer/Dowlut Flyovers;
- (b) the reconstruction of Royal Bridge at Quay D, Port Louis;
- (c) the rehabilitation of Saint Denis Bridge; and
- (d) the countermeasure works for slope failure at Souillac Bridge.

Twelve projects are ongoing and 13 others are at preliminary/procurement stage.

11. Cabinet had taken note of the terrorist attacks that had targeted civilian installations in Abu Dhabi, on Monday 17 January 2022 causing the death of three persons and injury to several others. Mauritius unequivocally condemns the terrorist attacks on civilians. Mauritius has expressed its solidarity with the brotherly people of the United Arab Emirates and presented its condolences on the loss of innocent lives.

12. Cabinet has taken note of the recent mission of the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Land Use Planning, Minister of Tourism to Dubai where he participated in the “Tourism and Property Week” held in the context of the Expo 2020 Dubai. During the visit, the Deputy Prime Minister had a meeting with Mr Hussain Sajwani, Founder and Chairman of the global property development company, DAMAC Properties Co. The company is interested to develop an upscale hotel project in Mauritius. The Deputy Prime Minister also met Mr Naaman Atallah, Chief Executive Officer of Nakheel Group, one of the pioneers in property development, whose innovative, landmark projects form an iconic portfolio of residential, retail, hospitality and leisure developments that are pivotal to realising Dubai’s vision as a world class destination for living, business and tourism.

The Deputy Prime Minister participated in a Business Forum organised by the Economic Development Board (EDB) with MJ Development, in collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce France-UAE. During his intervention at the Forum, he spoke on the evolution of the Mauritian Property and Real Estate market which started in the early 2000s. He also delivered a keynote address to launch the ICT Business Forum organised jointly by the Ministry of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation and the EDB.

In the margins of the Business Forum, the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation, had a meeting with HE Humaid Bin Salem, Secretary-General of the UAE Business Chambers, and it was agreed that a Memorandum of Understanding would be signed between the Economic Development Board and the Chambers. The Deputy Prime Minister also had a fruitful meeting with HE Dr Ahmad Bin Abdullah Humaid Belhoul Al Falasi, Minister of State for Entrepreneurship and SMEs of the UAE, who is also tasked with the development of a general national policy and strategy for the UAE’s tourism sector.

13. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent virtual meeting of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade had with HE Mr Nasser Bourita, Minister of Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation and Moroccan Expatriates of the Kingdom of Morocco. The main issues discussed during the meeting were -

- (a) the good bilateral relations which are based on common values such as respect for democracy, good governance and human rights;
- (b) sharing of information about the measures being taken in the respective countries to mitigate the adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on, inter alia, the economy;
- (c) the Convention for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with Respect to Taxes on Income; and
- (d) the need for a platform at the level of the African Union, for action-oriented results in, inter alia, economic integration, on the continental free trade agreement, climate change and the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

14. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation in Dubai, United Arab Emirates where his Ministry, in collaboration with the Economic Development Board, organised an ICT Business Forum during the Travel and Connectivity Week with a view to showcasing the technological development of Mauritius as the ICT hub *par excellence* of the region and promoting foreign investments in the ICT sector.

The objective of the ICT Business Forum was to showcase the attributes of Mauritius as a complementary jurisdiction towards finding collaborative and innovative solutions to support the African continent in its industrialization and digitalization process. The forum served as an excellent platform for both Mauritian companies and UAE-based companies to explore business opportunities and promote information exchange and business collaboration.

In the margins of the Forum, the Minister –

- (a) had a meeting with HE Hamad Al Mansoori, Director General of Digital Dubai Authority, Head of UAE Digital Government and also the Chairman of Mohammed Bin Rashid Space Centre;
- (b) paid a courtesy call on HE Omar Bin Sultan Al Olama, Minister of State for Artificial Intelligence, Digital Economy and Remote Work Applications of the UAE and HE Mrs Sarah Bint Yousif Al Amiri, Minister of State for Advanced Technology;
- (c) had meeting with HE Abdulla Mohammed Al Ashram, Group CEO of the Emirates Post Group;
- (d) visited the Mohammed Bin Rashid Space Centre in Dubai and met with the Director General, HE Yousuf Hamed Alshaibani; and
- (e) paid a courtesy call on Mr Ammar Al Malik, CEO of Dubai Internet City and on Ms Farah Tukan and Mr Justin Dowding of Tik Tok, the Director General for Government Relations and Public Policy and Director General of Legal for the region of Africa, Middle East, Turkey and Pakistan.

15. Cabinet has taken note of the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic prevailing across the world. Some 341.6 million cases have been reported globally, of which 274.2 million persons have been successfully treated.

With regard to Mauritius, as at 19 January 2022, there were 1,162 active cases of COVID-19, out of which 15 were admitted at the New ENT Hospital. Over the period 13 January 2022 to 19 January 2022, 14 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 20 January 2022, 964,309 persons had received a first dose of vaccine (representing 76.2 percent of the population). 927,168 persons were fully vaccinated (representing 73.2 percent of the population). 296,259 persons had received a booster dose (representing 23.4 percent of the population). 53.8% of adolescents aged 12 to 17 years had received a first dose of vaccine and 42.3% had received a second dose.

16. Cabinet has taken note that the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade participated in a Torch Lighting Ceremony, organised by the Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI), which marked the Africa Business Day on 20 January 2022. A Memorandum of Understanding between the MCCI and the Africa Business Council for the hosting of the latter's regional office for Southern Africa, at the MCCI was also signed during the function.

17. Cabinet has taken note that the first regional Steering Committee of the Port Security and Safety of Navigation Programme to Eastern Africa, Southern Africa and Indian Ocean was held in hybrid mode in Mauritius and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade was present at the opening ceremony. The programme is funded by the European Union to the tune of €28M. The beneficiary countries are Angola, Comoros, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles and Tanzania. South Africa and Djibouti are also involved in the discussions given the importance of their ports in the region.

The programme aims to enhance maritime security and safety in the region in line with the 2050 African Union Integrated Maritime Strategy. The main outcomes of the programme are –

- (a) strengthening of the capacities of authorities responsible for safety and navigation;
- (b) development of port security legislation and related compliance framework; and
- (c) development of a regional information sharing mechanism and data exchange system on cargo and passengers.

18. Cabinet has taken note of the constitution of the Managing Committee of the Probation Hostel for Boys and the Probation Home for Girls with Mrs Nudhar Bundhoo as Chairperson.
