

HIGHLIGHTS OF CABINET MEETING – FRIDAY 15 SEPTEMBER 2023

1. Cabinet has taken note of the recent participation of the Prime Minister in the 18th G20 Leaders' Summit in New Delhi. India assumed the Presidency of the G20 for one year in December 2022 under the theme of "*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*" or "One Earth, One Family, One Future". Mauritius was invited to participate as a Guest Country in all the G20 meetings scheduled from December 2022 to November 2023.

During the Opening Ceremony of the G20 Leaders' Summit, the Indian Prime Minister announced the adherence of the African Union as a permanent member of G20. At the first session of the Summit on the theme 'One Earth', an appeal was made for collective efforts to work together to address the challenges posed by climate change, and on the need to embrace natural farming, protecting human health as well as the health of the soil and the Earth. The adoption of a consensus on the G20 Leaders Declaration was announced during the second session of the Summit which focused on the principle of 'One Family' and the Declaration containing 112 outcomes was released. The second day of the Summit focused on the principle of 'One Future', where the new path of human centric union instead of GDP Centric Approach was advocated by Prime Minister Modi.

The Prime Minister of Mauritius intervened during the Summit and, inter alia, underlined the vulnerability of SIDS countries and made an appeal for a more responsive international financial architecture. He also highlighted the necessity to operationalise the Loss and Damage Fund and the need for SIDS to have access to cost effective technology, renewable energy and digital infrastructure. He moreover appealed for access to diverse, safe and sustainably produced nutritious food to ensure food security.

The Global Biofuel Alliance, which is an initiative by India, was launched during the Summit. The objectives of the Alliance are to expedite the global uptake of biofuels through facilitating technology advancements, intensifying utilisation of sustainable biofuels, shaping robust standard setting and certification through the participation of a wide spectrum of stakeholders.

The Prime Minister of Mauritius furthermore participated in the Wreath Laying Ceremony at Rajghat to pay tribute to Mahatma Gandhi. The Prime Minister along with other Leaders signed the Peace Wall after the Ceremony.

In the margins of the G20 Leaders' Summit, the Prime Minister of Mauritius had a bilateral meeting with Hon Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India. During the meeting the Prime Minister discussed various issues relating to, inter alia, the status of the ongoing talks with UK on the exercise of sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago, the various projects being implemented with the assistance of the Government of India, the progress in the setting up of the Ayush Centre of Excellence, the exemption provided to Mauritius for the exportation of 14,000 tons of non-basmati rice and support for the

sourcing of 200 electric buses. The Prime Minister of Mauritius also had the opportunity to interact with several Indian Ministers.

The Prime Minister of Mauritius had a meeting with His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates and Ruler of Abu Dhabi to discuss new areas of cooperation to enhance the existing bilateral relations between the two countries.

The Prime Minister of Mauritius met Hon Rishi Sunak, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom and discussed opportunities to enhance cooperation between the two countries as Commonwealth Partners in areas of shared interest, including strengthening trade and tackling the impact of climate change.

The Prime Minister of Mauritius moreover had a meeting with His Excellency Mr Yoon Suk Yeol, President of the Republic of Korea and reviewed the existing bilateral cooperation especially in infrastructure development and traditional areas such as Agriculture and Tourism.

In the sidelines of the Summit, the Prime Minister also met the President of Comoros and current President of the African Union, the President of France, the Prime Minister of Japan, the Prime Minister of the Netherlands, the President of Nigeria, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia, the Vice-President of Spain, the President of the European Commission, as well as the Director General of World Trade Organization with whom he discussed issues of bilateral interests.

2. Cabinet has taken note that since its meeting of 17 March 2023, Mauritius and the UK held further constructive negotiations on the exercise of sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago on 02 and 03 June 2023 and on 31 July and 01 August 2023.

Cabinet has also taken note that the Prime Minister met the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom in the margins of the G20 Summit on 09 September 2023 in New Delhi. The two Prime Ministers assessed the progress made in the negotiations since they spoke in February 2023, and agreed to meet again soon. The next round of negotiations will take place later this month.

3. Cabinet has agreed to the promulgation of the Private Secondary Education (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2023 which provide that -

(a) every Manager shall, not later than four months before the beginning of each academic year of the school, submit to the Private Secondary Education Authority in such form and in such manner as it may determine, an estimate of the income and expenditure expected to be received or incurred by the school, as the case may be, in the next ensuing academic year; and

(b) every Manager shall, not later than two months after the end of each academic year of the secondary school, submit to the Private Secondary Education Authority, an Income and Expenditure Account in respect of that academic year.

4. Cabinet has agreed to the renewal of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Department for Continental Shelf, Maritime Zones Administration and Exploration of Mauritius and the Board of Trustees of the Leland Stanford Junior University, United States of America, for a joint collaboration, inter alia, in the fields of Marine Spatial Planning research and Legal Framework and Underwater Cultural Heritage.

The objective of the Memorandum of Understanding is to cater, inter alia, for collaboration in the fields of Marine Spatial Planning research and Underwater Cultural Heritage. The areas of cooperation between the Parties comprise, inter alia, the development of joint research projects, the exchange of high-level qualified researchers and the promotion of access to infrastructure and facilities within cooperative projects in the maritime zones of Mauritius. It also provides for training of staff in carrying out underwater archaeological surveys to support the Marine Spatial Planning process.

5. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a loan agreement with the Saudi Fund for Development to part-finance the construction of the Rivière des Anguilles Dam with a storage capacity of 12.5 Mm³. The project would also comprise a Water Treatment Plant of capacity 50,000 m³/day and a Mini-Hydro Power Plant.

6. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction (the BBNJ Agreement). The BBNJ Agreement which was adopted by consensus at the Intergovernmental Conference in June 2023, is a major milestone for the rule of law in ocean governance and is of critical importance to the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources found in the high seas.

The BBNJ Agreement recognises the special circumstances of Small Island Developing States and their needs to build capacity to be able to derive economic returns from the resources found in areas beyond national jurisdiction, to obtain the means and technology to conserve the areas, and to enable appropriate funding mechanisms to support such measures.

7. Cabinet has agreed to review the wholesale and retail prices of the State Trading Corporation's branded one-litre soyabean edible oil 'Smatch' at Rs66.50 and Rs69.50 respectively with a view to making it more competitive. The relevant Regulations would be amended accordingly.

8. Cabinet has agreed to Mauritius volunteering to become a Commonwealth Champion Country for Artificial Intelligence (AI) Initiative. The Commonwealth Secretariat has extended an invitation to interested Commonwealth member countries to champion the AI initiative which is being developed. This initiative for AI emanated following the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in June 2022 where the Heads of States reaffirmed their commitment to equip citizens, especially women, girls, young people and others facing inequality with the skills necessary to fully benefit from innovation and opportunities in cyberspace.

The Champion Country for AI would play a leading role in promoting the development and use of AI technologies within the Commonwealth by sharing best practices and expertise with other countries. This initiative would work to ensure that member countries had access to the latest AI technologies and were able to benefit from the economic and social opportunities that AI could provide through policy, capacity and data infrastructure.

9. Cabinet has taken note of the status of the upgrading works being carried out by the National Development Unit (NDU) at Canal Dayot. The works had to be stopped in view of the refusal of some owners to allow access through their property on the site where such works have to be undertaken. Several meetings were held with the inhabitants concerned and out of 13 owners, only nine gave the right to access their property to enable the start of the work. Despite all efforts and justifications given for the implementation of the project during public relation exercises, four owners were still not agreeable to give permission to the NDU.

10. Cabinet has taken note of the renaming of the Anjalay Stadium into that of Anjalay Coopen Stadium. The Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage in collaboration with the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation, the Mauritius Sports Council and the National Art Gallery would organise activities to commemorate the 80th Death Anniversary of late Mrs Anjalay Coopen on 27 September 2023.

Late Mrs A. Coopen was known for her unwavering commitment to improving working conditions and the rights of labourers. She had emerged as a prominent figure due to her fearless spirit, resilience and dedication to the cause of justice. She is remembered as a symbol of courage and emancipation of women.

11. Cabinet has taken note that the Government of India issued a Notification to allow the exportation of 14,000 MT of Long Grain White Rice to Mauritius through the National Cooperative Export Limited.

Additionally, in order to ensure continuity of supply on the market, 1,000 MT of Long Grain Parboiled Rice has been procured by the State Trading Corporation and the consignment was expected to reach Mauritius by end September 2023. The State Trading Corporation has also awarded an additional contract of 1,000 MT Long Grain Parboiled Rice.

12. Cabinet has agreed to the President of the Republic being advised to make the Civil Establishment Order 2023 and the Civil Establishment (Rodrigues Regional Assembly) Order 2023 that establish offices in the public service of Mauritius, determine the number of persons who may be appointed to such offices and determine the emoluments to be attached to such offices.

13. Cabinet has taken note of the school calendar for Primary and Secondary Sectors for academic year 2024. The three school terms for the Primary and Secondary Sectors for academic year 2024 would be as follows –

Primary

First Term	Second Term	Third Term
Wednesday 10 January 2024 to Friday 05 April 2024 <u>Wednesday 10 January 2024</u> New Entrants admitted to Grade 1 <u>Thursday 11 January 2024</u> Resumption of all classes	Monday 22 April 2024 to Friday 19 July 2024	Monday 19 August 2024 to Wednesday 06 November 2024

Secondary

First Term	Second Term	Third Term
Wednesday 10 January 2024 to Friday 05 April 2024 <u>Wednesday 10 January 2024</u> New Entrants admitted to Grade 7 and to Grade 10 in Academies <u>Thursday 11 January 2024</u> Resumption of all classes	Monday 22 April 2024 to Friday 19 July 2024	Monday 12 August 2024 to Wednesday 30 October 2024

14. Cabinet has taken note of the names of storms and cyclones which would be used in the South-West Indian Ocean during the Cyclone Season 2023-24. The list of names of cyclones would be valid till 30 June 2024 and would be published on the website of the Mauritius Meteorological Services.

15. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the first round of negotiations on a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement between Mauritius and the United Arab Emirates. The discussions were held in parallel sessions on issues pertaining to Trade in Goods, Trade in Services, Rules of Origin, Customs Procedures and Trade Facilitation, Technical Barriers to Trade, Economic Cooperation, Small and Medium Enterprises, Digital Trade and Trade Remedies. The second round of negotiations would be held in due course.

16. Cabinet has taken note that the Secretariat of the Indian Ocean Commission would organise a Ministerial Conference on circular economy in Mauritius on 21 September 2023, preceded by a Senior Officials meeting on 18 and 19 September 2023. The Conference would address issues impeding the promotion of the circular economy and the reduction of marine pollution in the African and Indian Ocean Developing Island States. It would also adopt an action oriented Declaration which would pave the way towards ensuring a positive engagement for a collective transition towards circular economy through sustainable and inclusive growth opportunities.

17. Cabinet has taken note of rescheduling of the 6th National Security Adviser Level Meeting of the Colombo Security Conclave on 07 and 08 December 2023 in Mauritius.

18. Cabinet has taken note of the activities being organised by the Ministry of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity in collaboration with the National Empowerment Foundation and the National Social Inclusion Foundation, to mark the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty which is commemorated every year on 17 October. A main event would be organised on 04 October 2023 at Taher Bagh Hall, Port Louis.

19. Cabinet has taken note of the activities being organised by the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation in collaboration with the Mauritius Sports Council, the National Youth Council and the Mauritius Recreation Council to mark World Walking Day 2023 with the aim of promoting healthy living through walking. The World Walking Day would be held on Saturday 30 September 2023 across Mauritius and Rodrigues to promote a sense of togetherness.

20. Cabinet has taken note of the activities being organised by the Ministry of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping in the context of World Maritime Day 2023.

The World Maritime Day would be celebrated on 28 September 2023, with the objective of sensitising the public on the importance of shipping safety, maritime security and marine environment and also putting emphasis on the activities of the International Maritime Organization. The theme chosen for this year is "International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL) at 50 - Our commitment goes on".

21. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent participation of the Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation in the G20 Digital Economy Ministerial Meeting held in Bengaluru, India. During the meeting, the three priority issues identified by the Indian Presidency were discussed in depth and the importance of creating an enabling, inclusive, open, fair, non-discriminatory and secure digital economy was recognised by all the countries represented. The discussions led to an outcome document which was finalised at the Ministerial Meeting.

In the sidelines of the Meeting, the Minister had bilateral meetings with, inter alia, the Minister of Railways, Communications and Electronics & Information Technology of the Republic of India, the Minister for Digital Transformation of Japan, the Minister of State for Artificial Intelligence of the United Arab Emirates, and the Chief Economist of the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology of the People's Republic of China.

22. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent participation of the Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation in two High-Level Seminars in China. With a view to strengthening bilateral cooperation in digital transformation, next generations communications, Artificial Intelligence, as well as industrial Internet of Things, the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology of the People's Republic of China and the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) co-hosted the BRICS Future Networks Innovation Forum 2023 and a High-Level Seminar on the theme "Building a Digital Future for All".

In the margins of the Seminars, the Minister had bilateral meetings with the Vice Minister of Industry and Information Technology of the People's Republic of China and the Director, Telecommunication Development Bureau of the ITU.
