

HIGHLIGHTS OF CABINET MEETING – FRIDAY 27 OCTOBER 2023

1. Cabinet has agreed to the introduction of the French-Speaking Union Bill into the National Assembly. The object of the Bill is to provide for the establishment, operation and management of the French-Speaking Union. The salient objectives of the French-Speaking Union would be to, inter alia, -

- (a) promote the French language in its spoken and written forms;
- (b) promote friendship and understanding between the French-speaking peoples of the world and to engage in any educational, academic, cultural and artistic work to further its objective; and
- (c) promote and encourage the publication, exhibition, distribution and sale of French books, magazines, newspapers and other literary works.

2. Cabinet has agreed to the introduction of the Mauritius Agricultural Marketing (Amendment) Bill into the National Assembly. The object of the Bill is to amend the Mauritius Agricultural Marketing Act to provide that the wholesale by auction of locally-produced vegetables, fruits and flowers shall no longer be conducted in markets and fairs, but shall henceforth be conducted at the national wholesale market.

3. Cabinet has agreed to the promulgation of the Professional Architects' Council (Fees) (Amendment) Regulations 2023 which provide for the revision of the fees of the Council.

4. Cabinet has taken note that the Captive Insurance (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2023 would be promulgated with a view to catering for both pure and third-party captive insurance.

5. Cabinet has taken note of the measures being taken by the Central Water Authority to address the water supply problems, particularly in water-stressed regions of the island, during the Dry Season 2023/2024, as part of a Contingency Plan elaborated jointly by the Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities and the Central Water Authority.

6. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the University of Technology, Mauritius (UTM) and the University of Pretoria of the Republic of South Africa. The MoU aims at enhancing the relations between the two Higher Education Institutions by developing academic and cultural interchanges in teaching, research and other activities.

The MoU provides for collaboration between the School of Business Management and Finance of the UTM and the Faculty of Engineering, Built Environment and Information Technology of the University of Pretoria in, inter alia, the following areas –

- (a) exchange of academic staff and university students;
- (b) exchange of academic materials produced by either, or both institutions;
- (c) establishment of joint research programmes;
- (d) supervision of joint Master's and Doctoral degrees;
- (e) organisation of conferences, seminars and symposia, on topics of mutual interest to both institutions; and
- (f) act as external examiner for academic programmes and MPhil/PhD thesis.

7. Cabinet has taken note that the quarantine period under the Quarantine Act 2020 would come to an end on 31 October 2023.

8. Cabinet has taken note that Hon. Shri V. Muraleedharan, Minister of State for External Affairs and Parliamentary Affairs of India, in his capacity as the Special Representative of the Prime Minister of the Republic of India, would be visiting Mauritius on 01 and 02 November 2023, to participate as Special Guest to mark the 189th Anniversary of the Arrival of Indentured Labourers in Mauritius.

He would attend the signing ceremony of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Mauritius Research and Innovation Council and the Indian Space Research Organisation on cooperation on the development of a joint satellite and inaugurate various projects which have been realised with the assistance of the Indian Government, namely the –

- (a) launch of Stamps and Souvenir Sheet for the 75th Anniversary of Diplomatic Relations with India;
- (b) unveiling of the Inauguration plate of the L'Esperance Mini Soccer Pitch; and
- (c) inauguration of the 8 Mw Solar PV Farm Project at Henrietta.

The Minister would also proceed with the inauguration of the UTSAV - Mega Trade and Cultural Fair, which was being organised by the High Commission of India, under the patronage of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, from 01 to 05 November 2023 at the Swami Vivekananda International Convention Centre.

9. Cabinet has taken note of the status of projects being implemented by the National Housing Development Company (NHDC) Ltd. The NHDC has, since November 2019 to date, delivered 2,470 housing units. In addition, two housing projects consisting of the construction of 203 and 223 housing units at Mare d'Albert and La Valette, respectively were ongoing. The NHDC has also undertaken rehabilitation works in various housing estates. From November 2019 to date, an amount of Rs357.8 Million had been disbursed to 4,736 beneficiaries under the Roof Slab Scheme.

10. Cabinet has taken note that the National Assembly would host the 54th Plenary Assembly of the Southern African Development Community Parliamentary Forum (SADC PF), from 22 to 26 November 2023, in Mauritius.

The SADC PF is a regional inter-parliamentary body comprising Members of Parliament from 16 SADC Member States representing over 3,500 parliamentarians in the SADC Region. Its aim is to provide a platform to support and improve regional integration through parliamentary involvement and promote best practices in the role of parliaments in regional integration and cooperation. Around 110 participants from SADC countries were expected to attend the Plenary Assembly.

11. Cabinet has taken note that a Training Course on Biofouling Management Plans and Record Books would be held on 07 and 08 December 2023, in Mauritius.

The training course would be organised under the GloFouling Partnerships, which is a partnership between the Global Environment Facility, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the United Nations Development Programme. The objectives of the GloFouling Project would be to –

- (a) address the transfer of harmful aquatic species through biofouling in some of the developing regions of the world;
- (b) drive actions at multiple levels for legal, policy and institutional reforms in countries to implement the IMO Biofouling Guidelines to develop capacity and enact a national policy;
- (c) rope in active private sector participation to identify effective solutions and technologies to deal with biofouling;
- (d) control and manage ships' biofouling, thus providing a globally-consistent approach on how biofouling should be controlled and managed to minimise the transfer of invasive aquatic species through ships' hulls; and
- (e) spur the development of best practices and standards for improved biofouling management in other ocean industries.

12. Cabinet has taken note of the holding of a workshop on Capacity Building in Heritage Impact Assessment from 13 to 20 November 2023, in Mauritius. The objectives of the workshop would be to, inter alia, –

- (a) train local and international participants in preparing and assessing Heritage Impact Assessments and Visual Impact Assessments by providing them an enabling environment fostering development in favour of heritage rehabilitation, reuse and enhancement;
- (b) equip the participants with current knowledge and skills of using Impact Assessment as a tool for informed decision-making regarding World Heritage Sites;
- (c) enhance the capacity and skills of participants to identify, assess and mitigate impact of development projects on cultural heritage resources;
- (d) introduce participants to the updated methodology spelt out in the new Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessment in a World Heritage Context; and
- (e) provide participants with knowledge on management and monitoring requirements as well as reporting mechanisms for World Heritage Properties as per the operational guidelines for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention.

13. Cabinet has taken note that the 15th edition of the Africa Aquatics Junior Swimming and Open Water Swimming Championships would be held from 06 to 10 December 2023 in Mauritius. The Junior Swimming Championships would be held from 06 to 09 December 2023 at the Côte d'Or National Sports Complex followed by the Open Water Swimming Championships on 10 December 2023 at the Mont Choisy public beach.

These Championships would bring together around 200 swimmers and officials from some 30 African countries and would provide valuable opportunity for young swimmers to compete at continental level.

14. Cabinet has taken note of the report of the Mauritius Meteorological Services with regard to the Seasonal Outlook for Summer 2023-2024 for Mauritius and Rodrigues. The summer season in Mauritius, Rodrigues, Agalega and St Brandon would start from 01 November 2023 to 30 April 2024. The official cyclone season would be from 01 November 2023 to 15 May 2024.

The main forecasts for the Summer Season 2023-2024 were as follows -

- (a) temperatures would be above the normal during summer 2023-2024;

- (b) the onset of summer rain would be delayed and was expected to occur during the second fortnight of December 2023; and
- (c) during January to March 2024, atmospheric conditions would become conducive to the occurrence of extreme weather events such as violent thunderstorms and heavy rainfall.

The updated Summer 2023-2024 Seasonal Outlook Report would be released to the public.

15. Cabinet has agreed to the Ministry of Health and Wellness conducting a Contraceptive Prevalence Survey in Mauritius and Rodrigues. The main objectives of the survey would be to -

- (a) assess the current contraceptive prevalence rate among women of reproductive age (15-49 years) and identify trends in contraceptive method preferences and usage patterns;
- (b) explore factors influencing contraceptive decision-making, including socio-economic status, education, cultural beliefs, and access to healthcare;
- (c) understand the relationship between contraceptive use, maternal health, and child wellbeing; and
- (d) contribute to global and regional databases on contraceptive prevalence and reproductive health indicators.

16. Cabinet has taken note of the activities being organised by the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family Welfare, in collaboration with the National Children's Council, in the context of the celebration of Universal Children's Day 2023.

The theme retained in the local context this year is "*Zanfan ena drwa fer bann aktivite rekreatif*". A recreational fun day would be organised on 20 November 2023 at Gros Cailloux Leisure Park whereby around 250 children, aged eight years and above, from Residential Care Institutions, Children's Clubs and Non-Governmental Organisations would participate in a number of recreational activities. The objectives of the recreational fun day would be to –

- (a) provide quality leisure activities to the children;
- (b) promote togetherness, consolidate bonding and create a stress free environment;
- (c) develop the overall personality of the children through extra-curricular activities;

- (d) motivate and boost up the confidence of the children via adventure activities; and
- (e) socialise and adjust with different ideas and opinions by working in teams and groups.

17. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent participation of the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Land Use Planning, Minister of Tourism in the 119th Session of the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) Executive Council and the 25th Session of the UNWTO General Assembly in Samarkand, Uzbekistan and his official mission in Dubai.

A series of events were held in the margins of the General Assembly, including a Forum on Investment during which the Investment Guidelines for Mauritius, jointly prepared by the UNWTO in collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism and the Economic Development Board, had been launched. In the sidelines of the event, the Deputy Prime Minister had meetings with the Ministers of Tourism and Heads of Delegation, including that of Algeria, Argentina, Bahrain, France, Germany, Jamaica, Jordan, Maldives, Tunisia, Uzbekistan, the UAE and of African States. He also met with high dignitaries of the Bhukara and Tashkent Provinces of Uzbekistan during which discussions focused on the potential of developing tourism exchanges between the two countries.

During his mission in Dubai, the Deputy Prime Minister had consultations with major stakeholders with a view to developing a marketing plan for the Middle East tourism markets.

18. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent official visit of the Minister of Commerce and Consumer Protection to Rodrigues. The Minister had working sessions with the Chief Commissioner of Rodrigues and the Commissioner for Women's Affairs, Child Development, Family Welfare, Consumer Protection and Price Fixing.

19. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Board of the National Transport Corporation, with Mr Amarnath Jagannath as part-time Chairperson.

20. Cabinet has taken note of the appointment of Mr Jayprakash Roshansingh Seetohul as Chairperson of the Central Water Board for a period of two years.

21. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Executive Committee of the National Women Entrepreneur Council for a period of two years, with Mrs Françoise Marechal-Charlotte as part-time Chairperson.
