

HIGHLIGHTS OF CABINET MEETING – FRIDAY 14 JULY 2023

1. Cabinet has agreed to the introduction of the Private Recruitment Agencies Bill into the National Assembly. The main object of the Bill is to repeal the Recruitment of Workers Act and replace it with a new and more appropriate legislative framework. The new legislation consolidates and strengthens the law with regard to the recruitment of citizens of Mauritius for employment locally and abroad, and for the recruitment of non-citizens for employment in Mauritius.

The Bill also reflects ethical recruitment standards in line with the recommendations of the International Labour Organization and the International Organization for Migration.

2. Cabinet has agreed to instructions being conveyed to the Attorney General's Office for the drafting of a new legislation to replace the existing Protection from Domestic Violence Act, with a view to, inter alia, protecting spouses from acts of domestic violence.

The new legislation would be a comprehensive and multidisciplinary one, criminalising all forms of violence, and encompassing issues of prevention, protection, survivor empowerment and support (health, economic, social, psychological), aiming at reinforcing the legal parameters to protect victims of domestic violence, making the perpetrator of domestic violence accountable for his or her behaviour or acts. The new Bill would also make provisions for support and rehabilitative services to deter perpetrators from committing further acts of domestic violence. The powers of Enforcing Officers, Police Officers, amongst others, would be reinforced.

3. Cabinet has agreed to review the following criteria for the provision of a water tank and a domestic water pump under the Water Tank Grant Scheme, as announced in the 2023/2024 Budget –

- (a) an increase in the provision of the water tank storage from “at least 400 litres” to “1,000 litres or more” for a quantum of Rs10,000;
- (b) an increase in the grant for the purchase of domestic water pump from Rs3,000 to Rs4,000;

- (c) the supplier for the water tanks would now be required to provide the beneficiary under the Water Tank Grant Scheme with some essential fittings for an amount of Rs1,000;
- (d) households which had already benefitted from a grant for the purchase of a water tank under the existing scheme would not be eligible under the new scheme; and
- (e) applications which had already been processed and approved under the existing Scheme by the Development Bank of Mauritius, and in respect of which applicants had been informed, would not be eligible to apply under the new Scheme.

4. Cabinet has taken note of the activities being carried out to commemorate World Day against Trafficking in Persons on 30 July 2023. The theme for this year is “Reach every victim of trafficking, leave no one behind”.

The campaign for World Day Against Trafficking in Persons 2023 aims to raise awareness of the population regarding the disturbing developments and trends identified by the latest UNODC Global Report on Trafficking in Persons. The following activities would, inter alia, be conducted –

- (a) sensitisation campaigns by the Crime Prevention Unit and “*Brigade Pour la Protection de la Famille*” of the Police Department;
- (b) organisation of a workshop by the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions to raise awareness on Trafficking in Persons, in collaboration with the International Organisation for Migration; and
- (c) mass awareness campaigns on commercial sexual exploitation of children as well as other activities by the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family Welfare; and
- (d) organisation of a dissemination workshop on a “Code of Conduct for the Recruitment and Employment of Migrant Workers in Mauritius”, by the Prime Minister’s Office in collaboration with Mauritius Export Association and the Ministry of Labour, Human Resource Development and Training.

5. Cabinet has taken note of the holding of the second meeting of the Eastern and Southern Africa Commission on Drugs (ESACD) in Mauritius on 10 and 11 August 2023. The ESACD, an EU-funded initiative, was established and launched in February 2023, with the aim of –

- (a) developing evidence-based policy recommendations for political and civil society leaders on how to address drug trafficking more holistically;
- (b) mobilising public awareness and political commitment around the issue; and
- (c) promoting local and regional capacities to address multifaceted drug problem.

The second meeting of ESACD would focus on law enforcement, trafficking and organised crime. The objective of the meeting would be to discuss evidence-based findings and recommendations by experts contracted by the ESACD to produce thematic papers on the issues of drugs and drug policy in the region, including law enforcement and maritime efforts and to map a way forward.

6. Cabinet has taken note that Mauritius would host the Regional Preparatory Meeting of SIDS from the Atlantic, Indian Ocean and South China Sea (AIS) Region on the implementation of the Samoa Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway from 24 to 26 July 2023. The Meeting would be jointly organised by Mauritius in collaboration with the United Nations through the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the UN Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States.

The purpose of the AIS Regional Meeting would be to formulate a common position for the AIS SIDS in preparation for the discussions on the outcome of the next International Conference on SIDS which would be held in Antigua and Barbuda in 2024.

7. Cabinet has taken note of the holding of a National Workshop on Nuclear Security Architecture in Mauritius by the Office of the Nuclear Smuggling Detection and Deterrence, in collaboration with the Radiation Safety and Nuclear Security Authority, from 31 July to 02 August 2023. The main objectives of the workshop are to –

- (a) develop a functional understanding of the interagency process, agency jurisdictions, and operational capabilities;
- (b) identify and share best practices related to detection of smuggled nuclear and other radioactive material;

- (c) exchange lessons learned in the prevention of radiological and nuclear smuggling and terrorism; and
- (d) provide an overview of emerging and current radiation detection systems for the detection of smuggled nuclear and other radioactive material.

8. Cabinet has taken note of the holding of a Consultative Inception Workshop relating to the “Implementing Sustainable Low and Non-Chemical Development in SIDS” (ISLANDS) project by the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme, on Thursday 10 August 2023. The main objectives of the workshop are to, inter alia –

- (a) familiarise and raise awareness of key stakeholders on the detailed project strategy and the project organisation structure;
- (b) discuss and review the results framework and monitoring plan; and
- (c) discuss reporting, monitoring and evaluation mechanism and the responsibilities and roles of stakeholders.

9. Cabinet has taken note that as at 12 July 2023, there were 25 active cases of COVID-19, out of which two were admitted at the New ENT Hospital. Over the period 06 to 12 July 2023, no death was attributed to COVID-19.

10. Cabinet has also taken note that with regard to cases of Dengue in Mauritius and Rodrigues, the situation was being monitored closely.

11. Cabinet has taken note that the Indian Ocean Commission has informed of a case of avian flu in a poultry farm in Reunion Island. New disinfection mats were being used at the airport in Mauritius and Rodrigues and precautionary measures put in place since October 2022 were still being maintained. The Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security and the Ministry of Health and Wellness were monitoring the situation closely in Mauritius and Rodrigues.

12. Cabinet has taken note of the list of public holidays for the year 2024, which is as follows –

NEW YEAR	Monday 01 January
NEW YEAR	Tuesday 02 January
THAIPOOSAM CAVADEE	Thursday 25 January
ABOLITION OF SLAVERY	Thursday 01 February
CHINESE SPRING FESTIVAL	Saturday 10 February
MAHA SHIVARATREE	Friday 08 March
INDEPENDENCE AND REPUBLIC DAY	Tuesday 12 March
UGAADI	Tuesday 09 April
EID-UL-FITR**	Wednesday 10 April
LABOUR DAY	Wednesday 01 May
ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY	Thursday 15 August
GANESH CHATURTHI	Sunday 08 September
DIVALI	Thursday 31 October
ARRIVAL OF INDENTURED LABOURERS	Saturday 02 November
CHRISTMAS	Wednesday 25 December

**** The exact date of this festival is subject to confirmation as its celebration depends on the visibility of the moon**

13. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent participation of the Minister of Financial Services and Good Governance in the 43rd Session of the African, Caribbean and Pacific – European Union (ACP-EU) Joint Parliamentary Assembly (JPA) held at the European Parliament in Brussels. Mauritius presently holds the Presidency of the Organisation of the African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) Council of Ministers. The Minister of Financial Services and Good Governance participated in the session dedicated to the interaction Parliamentarians had with the representatives of the European Commission and the Joint ACP-EU Council of Ministers. The JPA adopted a number of resolutions on, inter alia, the rules of procedures that would apply to the new OACPS-EU Partnership Agreement once the latter enters into force, AML/CFT, SMEs, Terrorism and the situation in Haiti.

14. Cabinet has taken note that at the 76th Session of the Executive Committee of the African-Asian Rural Development Organisation, held recently in Zambia, Dr M. Nardeosingh was re-elected to the post of Secretary-General of African-Asian Rural Development Organisation.
