

HIGHLIGHTS OF CABINET MEETING – FRIDAY 09 JUNE 2023

1. Cabinet has agreed to the promulgation of the Energy Efficiency (Labelling of Regulated Machinery) (Amendment) Regulations 2023 to extend mandatory energy labelling to electronic displays, household tumble dryers and household washer dryers. The Regulations also provide for dealers to display the energy labels of appliances on their websites.

2. Cabinet has taken note that the Income Tax (Common Reporting Standard) (Amendment No 2) Regulations 2023 would be promulgated with a view to -

- (a) removing the present requirement for Mauritius to promulgate a new regulation each time it has to update its published list of Automatic Exchange of Information participating jurisdictions as currently published in the Third Schedule to the Mauritius Income Tax (Common Reporting Standard) Regulations 2018. The Regulations would enable the Mauritius Revenue Authority to continuously update its published list of participating jurisdictions in line with Automatic Exchange of Information Portal of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development; and
- (b) making the anti-avoidance provisions in the existing regulation more effective by widening its scope to capture, in addition to “any arrangement”, “any practice” which a reportable person might use to derogate from his reporting obligation.

3. Cabinet has taken note that the Environment Protection (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2023 would be promulgated to provide for the designation of the Permanent Secretary responsible for the subject of agriculture as the enforcing agency for wetlands. The amendment would strengthen the enforcement and compliance mechanism and help towards preserving the integrity of wetlands by enabling the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security to exercise powers in terms of -

- (a) issuing or causing to be issued a programme notice, an enforcement or a variation notice in case of contravention of any environmental law;
- (b) serving a stop order to prohibit any development or activity being carried out without the relevant licence or permit issued under the Environment Protection Act;
- (c) entering and searching a premise other than a dwelling house for the purpose of determining whether any environmental law, enforcement notice, prohibition notice or direction is being complied with; and

- (d) serving a fixed penalty notice for any offence committed under the Ninth Schedule of the Environment Protection Act in relation to littering and dumping.

4. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the National Environment Cleaning Authority (NECA) and the Mauri-Facilities Management Co. Ltd. The Memorandum of Understanding sets out the modalities for the assistance to be provided by Mauri-Facilities Management Co. Ltd to NECA for the implementation of the National Cleaning Programmes. These would include the cleaning and maintenance of sites such as green spaces, health tracks, children's playground, beaches and roads.

5. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of the Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement with the Government of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana. The Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement would clarify the taxing rights of both countries on income and would –

- (a) provide certainty to investors and also create a conducive environment for greater cross-border investment flows;
- (b) establish a framework for exchange of information between the tax authorities of Mauritius and Guyana with a view to combatting tax evasion and other tax malpractices; and
- (c) provide a mechanism to taxpayers for the resolution of tax disputes.

6. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Mauritius Co-operative Alliance Ltd and the National Co-operative Union of India. The primary objective of the Memorandum of Understanding is to strengthen collaboration between the two organisations in order to pursue in the most efficient way, the implementation of the co-operative values & principles on the international and national arena.

7. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change and the Bank of Mauritius to, inter alia, set forth a framework for collaboration, cooperation as well as information and knowledge sharing, including technical expertise to ensure the resilience of the financial sector against the effects of climate change, environmental degradation and biodiversity loss.

8. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Financial Intelligence Unit and the International Anti-Corruption Coordination Centre (IACCC).

The MoU sets out the arrangements relating to the creation of the IACCC Associate Membership Scheme and the coordination of the IACCC and the Associate Member's operational response. The MoU provides for the Authorities to cooperate with each other, in accordance with their respective legal framework and obligations, to provide, inter alia, the swift exchange of information and to assist on the development of intelligence picture on grand corruption cases.

9. Cabinet has taken note of a report relating to the operation of microlight aircraft and seaplane for sightseeing, recreational and leisure activities and agreed to additional microlight aircrafts being authorised to operate, subject to necessary clearances from the Department of Civil Aviation and other relevant institutions.

10. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a Reimbursable Advisory Services Agreement between the Ministry of Tourism and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the lending arm of the World Bank Group, in the context of the elaboration of a 10-Year Blueprint for the tourism sector.

The objective of the Blueprint is to formulate a new vision for the tourism sector to guide tourism development for the next ten years with a set of practical and implementable recommendations including policy and investment recommendations required to achieve increased annual growth of income from tourism and increased tourist arrivals in the next ten years, in accordance with international best practices.

11. Cabinet has agreed to the –

- (a) use of the official UNESCO Logo by the Municipal City Council of Port Louis given that the City of Port Louis had been designated to form part of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network in the field of music;
- (b) creation of a cultural and artistic trail from Caudan Arts Centre up to China Town over a stretch of an approximate length of 3.8 kms in order to portray Port Louis as a creative city; and
- (c) setting up of a Statutory Technical and Monitoring Committee for the implementation and monitoring of the actions required for the adherence to the requirements of UNESCO.

12. Cabinet has taken note of the e-Monitoring System which would enable real-time monitoring of the implementation of major Government projects/programmes and budgetary measures. The e-Monitoring System would operate under the aegis of the Project Implementation and Monitoring Agency which falls under the purview of the Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development.

13. Cabinet has agreed to the holding of the National Health Financing Dialogue in Mauritius organised by the Ministry of Health and Wellness in collaboration with the SADC Secretariat and the Global Fund from 11 to 15 September 2023. The National Dialogue would act as a multi-sectoral analytical, engagement and planning process for the implementation of domestic health financing strategies which would bring together civil society, the private sector, technical partners, and development partners to plan domestic health financing reform in Mauritius.

14. Cabinet had agreed to the participation of a Mauritian delegation in the 9th edition of the Francophone Games, scheduled from 28 July to 06 August 2023 in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo. The Republic of Mauritius intends to participate in four sports competitions, namely athletics, judo, table tennis and wrestling as well as in seven cultural events, namely singing, creative dancing, hip-hop, sculpture, painting, photography, and tales and storytelling.

15. Cabinet has taken note that the Mauritius Rugby Union would organise the Rugby Africa Men's Sevens Olympics 2024 Pre-Qualifiers tournament on 24 and 25 June 2023 at the Labourdonnais Sports Club, Mapou. 12 African countries, namely Algeria, Botswana, Burundi, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Lesotho, Mauritius, Nigeria and Senegal would participate in this competition.

16. Cabinet has taken note of the activities being organised by the Prime Minister's Office in collaboration with other stakeholders to commemorate the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking which is observed every year on 26 June. The theme for this year is "People first: stop stigma and discrimination, strengthen prevention". The aim of this year's campaign is to raise awareness on the importance of treating people who use drugs with respect and empathy; providing evidence-based, voluntary services for all; offering alternatives to punishment; prioritising prevention; and leading with compassion.

17. Cabinet has taken note of the activities being organised by the Cooperatives Division of the Ministry of Industrial Development, SMEs and Cooperatives to mark the International Day of Cooperatives 2023. The International Day of Cooperatives is celebrated each year on the first Saturday of the month of July.

The celebration marks the contribution of cooperatives and the promotion of the movement's successes and ideals of international solidarity, economic efficiency, equality, and world peace. The theme chosen for this year by the United Nations and the International Cooperative Alliance is "Cooperatives for sustainable development".

18. Cabinet has taken note of the activities being organised by the Seafarers' Welfare Fund on Monday 26 June 2023 to mark the celebration of the "Day of the Seafarer".

The "Day of the Seafarer" is observed every year on 25 June and aims to increase awareness among the general public of the unique and vital role of seafarer in the economy trade and regular civil life of the global community. The theme for this year is "MARPOL at 50 - Our Commitment goes on" to look at seafarers' contribution in protecting the marine environment.

19. Cabinet has taken note of the programme of activities being organised by the Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage and its parastatal bodies, namely the Mauritius Telugu Cultural Centre Trust Fund, the Chinese-Speaking Union, the Bhojpuri-Speaking Union, the National Library, the Marathi Cultural Centre Trust, the Hindi Speaking Union, the *Conservatoire National François Mitterrand*, the Nelson Mandela Centre for African Culture and the *Centre de Lecture et d'Animation Culturel* to celebrate Music Day on 21 June 2023. Music Day is celebrated every year so as to promote music and its cultural significance.

20. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent participation of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade in the second Ministerial Retreat and the second Extraordinary Session of the Meeting of the AfCFTA Council of Ministers responsible for Trade in Nairobi, Kenya.

The Ministerial Retreat and the Extra-Ordinary Council of Ministers deliberated, inter alia, on the following issues –

- (a) the outstanding Rules of Origin on Automotive and Textiles & Clothing;
- (b) presentation on the assessment of the estimated Tariff revenue losses and Adjustment Facility allocations;
- (c) proposals on frontloading liberalisation of trade in basic agricultural products for food and nutrition security;
- (d) ratification, domestication and utilisation of AfCFTA Agreement; and
- (e) implementation of AfCFTA operational tools focusing on Expanding the Guided Trade Initiative and introduction of AfCFTA National Trading Companies.

21. Cabinet has taken note of the recent participation of the Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change in a High-Level Event in Paris, France, ahead of the second session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee set up to develop an International Legally Binding Instrument on Plastic Pollution. Discussions focused on solutions and best practices to end plastic pollution and to convey to the negotiators, the expectations of the various governments, on the future provisions of the International Legally Binding Instrument on Plastic Pollution, currently under preparation.

The Minister participated as panelist in the first Leadership Dialogue on the promotion of sustainable production, consumption and use of plastics to achieve circular economy for plastics. He also participated in the second Leadership Dialogue on the promotion of sound management of plastic waste and the prevention of the disposal and littering of plastics in the environment.

22. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation to the Republic of Madagascar where he participated in the Ministerial Round Table in the 12th Session of the Conference on Digital Transformation in Africa. He also had the opportunity to network with key players in the ICT sector in Africa and paid a courtesy call on the Malagasy President.

23. Cabinet has taken note of the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic prevailing in Mauritius. As at 07 June 2023, there were 39 active cases of COVID-19, out of which five were admitted at the New ENT Hospital. Over the period 01 to 07 June 2023, one death was attributed to COVID-19.

24. Cabinet has agreed to the reconstitution of the Industrial Property Tribunal, with Ms Preety Sharmilla Bhima as part-time Chairperson.

25. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Prisons Board of Visitors with Mrs Ida Dookhy-Rambarun, Acting Vice President of the Intermediate Court (Criminal Division), as part-time Chairperson.

26. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Council of the Mahatma Gandhi Institute and the Rabindranath Tagore Institute with Mr Indradut Ram as part-time Chairperson.

27. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Training and Employment of Disabled Persons Board with Mrs Maria Magdalena Cassim as part-time Chairperson.

28. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Board of the National Council for Sports in Schools and Universities with Mr Stephane Rock as part-time Chairperson.

29. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Council of Registered Professional Engineers of Mauritius.

30. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Board of Trustees of the Professor Basdeo Bissoondoyal Trust Fund, with Mr Bhoopendranath Jhummun as part-time Chairperson
