

HIGHLIGHTS OF CABINET MEETING – FRIDAY 28 JULY 2023

1. Cabinet has taken note that amendments would be brought to the First Schedule to the Freeport Act, through the promulgation of the Freeport (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2023, by including a new Freeport Zone at Riche Terre in order to further promote freeport trade and to position Mauritius as a logistics, marketing and distribution hub in the region.

2. Cabinet has agreed to the promulgation of the Motorways and Main Roads (Amendment) Regulations 2023, with a view to modifying the description of Powder Mills Road (B18) to include the newly upgraded Céré Street, Pamplémousses. The Céré Street had been upgraded by the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit, according to the norms and standards of the Road Development Authority.

3. Cabinet has taken note that the Central Water Authority (Dry Season) Regulations 2023 would be amended to allow a person entitled to carry out irrigation of sugarcane to abstract water from a watercourse, provided that such watercourse does not feed any impounding reservoir and where the Central Water Authority does not abstract water for domestic water supply. In addition, such abstraction should not cause prejudice to any interest that a person may hold in the concerned watercourse. These Regulations would apply until end of August 2023.

4. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) of the Republic of Mauritius and the Financial Intelligence Unit of the United Arab Emirates. The objective of the MoU is to facilitate, the analysis of suspected cases of money laundering, associated predicate offences or terrorist financing, with a view to disseminating information which may ultimately result in investigations and prosecutions by competent authorities in their respective countries. The MoU sets out the arrangements for the two institutions to, inter alia, –

- (a) cooperate in assembling, developing and analysing information relevant to suspected money laundering, associated predicate offences or terrorist financing;
- (b) freely exchange, spontaneously or upon request, the widest range of available or obtainable information;
- (c) conduct queries on behalf of the requesting FIU and provide all information that it would be able to obtain if such queries were carried out domestically;

- (d) refrain from disclosing information affecting sovereignty and national security; and
- (e) exchange information safely and through reliable mechanisms or channels.

5. Cabinet has taken note of the signing of the Instrument for the ratification of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Protocol on the Inter-State Transfer of Sentenced Offenders. The Protocol which was signed during the 24th Meeting of the Ministerial Committee and the SADC Organ on Politics Defence and Security Cooperation in July 2022, sets out, inter alia, the general principles for the transfer of Sentenced Persons, obligation to furnish information, the supporting documents to enable the transfer, the grounds for transfer, implications of the transfer on the Sentencing State, cost implications in relation to the transfer, relations with other States and regional and international organisations.

6. Cabinet has taken note that 48 sites/regions/villages/towns/ agglomerations/beaches across the island would be cleaned and embellished by the National Environment Cleaning Authority in collaboration with Government institutions including local authorities, Non-Governmental Organisations and the private sector, in the context of the implementation of the National Cleaning Programme 2023/2024. Cleaning and embellishment works would be carried out along road sides in green spaces and health tracks, parks and gardens, dumping sites, walls, bus shelters, and touristic/historical sites.

7. Cabinet has taken note that the Mauritius Expo Virtual Exhibition Platform was launched on 27 July 2023 by the Economic Development Board in the presence of 150 manufacturing companies. The platform includes multiple functionalities such as an Information Desk, a 3D Virtual Lobby, an Auditorium and an Exhibition Hall featuring more than 15 subsectors of the manufacturing industry. As at date, 170 companies had registered on the platform to showcase their locally manufactured products to the global community and potential buyers. The virtual platform is fully secured and linked to social media channels, namely Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.

8. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the 25th Meeting of the Mauritius-Seychelles Joint Commission of the Extended Continental Shelf held recently in Mauritius. The Joint Commission is responsible for establishing policies and regulations relating to the natural resources and related activities in the Joint Management Area. The main outcomes of the discussions held pertained, inter alia, to sea cucumber exploratory fisheries, the implementation of the Strategic Plan, a Memorandum of Understanding for maritime surveillance and marine scientific research.

9. Cabinet has taken note that the Government Online Centre (GOC) which is Government's data centre, would undertake a major intervention to replace its core network equipment. That intervention would start on Friday 04 August 2023 as from 1700 hours and was expected to be completed by 2300 hours on Sunday 06 August 2023.

The exercise would have a high impact on all the services hosted at the GOC including the Government Email Service, the Government Portal, all websites of Ministries/ Departments, and all applications owned by other Ministries such as the Mauritius eRegistry from the Registrar General, and the Companies and Businesses Registration Integrated System of the Companies Division, amongst others. There would be a cut off and none of the services would be available as from Friday 04 August 2023 from 1700 hours to Sunday 06 August 2023 at 2300 hours.

10. Cabinet has taken note of the activities being organised by the Civil Status Division to mark the Africa Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Day and the Identity Day observed every year on 10 August and 16 September, respectively.

The Africa Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Day is a special day for Africans to celebrate their heritage, particularly with regard to the recognition of the legal identity from birth to death of all persons, and the affirmation of key human and civil rights, including the right to recognition under the law. The Identity Day aims at raising awareness about people worldwide, particularly in Africa, who lack proof of identity, and to reaffirm the commitment to achieve total inclusion.

11. Cabinet has taken note that, in line with the 1990 Innocenti Declaration, the Ministry of Health and Wellness would organise a series of activities in the context of World Breastfeeding Week 2023 scheduled from 01 to 07 August 2023. The theme for this year is "Enabling breastfeeding: making a difference for working parents". The objectives of World Breastfeeding Week 2023 are to –

- (a) inform people about working parents' perspectives on breastfeeding and parenting;
- (b) anchor optimal paid leave and workplace support as important tools to enable breastfeeding;
- (c) engage with individuals and organisations to enhance collaboration and support for breastfeeding at work; and
- (d) galvanise action on improving working conditions and relevant support for breastfeeding.

12. Cabinet has taken note that the Africa Partnership Conference would be organised by the Economic Development Board on 02 and 03 October 2023. The Conference would act as a platform to connect project promoters from African countries, including Investment Promotion Agencies, venture capitalists, fund managers, Development Finance Institutions, tax advisors, institutional investors and entrepreneurs thereby fostering collaboration and facilitating insightful debates on crucial matters shaping Africa's growth prospects. The Conference aims at positioning Mauritius as a leading investment and trade hub in the region.

13. Cabinet has taken note that the "International Conference on Climate Smart Agriculture would be organised by the University of Mauritius from 15 to 17 August 2023. The Conference would be organised in the context of an on-going farmer-participative project funded by the European Union (EU) under its Global Climate Change Alliance + Flagship Initiative "Supporting Climate Smart Agriculture for smallholders in the Republic of Mauritius" and the Australian Government.

The Conference would showcase the various activities completed under the project and enable sharing of information and data collected as part of that EU-Australia funded project, with local stakeholders as well as the regional and international scientific and farming communities, with a view to encouraging the uptake and adoption of Climate Smart Agriculture practices for climate resilient agriculture and food production.

14. Cabinet has taken note of the participation of a Mauritian delegation of some 675 athletes and officials in the 11th edition of the Indian Ocean Island Games from 25 August to 03 September 2023 in Madagascar. The theme of the Games is "Together, in victory, embracing unity and diversity".

The Republic of Mauritius would be represented in sports competitions, including athletics/para-athletics, badminton, basketball, boxing, cycling, football, handball, judo, karate, kickboxing, petanque, rugby, swimming/para-swimming, tae kwon do, tennis, table tennis, volleyball, weightlifting and wrestling. In addition, Mauritius would participate in youth events including assembly of youth, theatrical performance and traditional dance.

15. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent participation of the Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development in the 2023 African Caucus Meeting in the Republic Cabo Verde and the Africa Leadership Magazine (ALM) Africa Summit 2023 in London. The African Caucus comprised Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors of all African Countries and members of the African Union. The theme of the 2023 African Caucus Meeting was "New Modalities and Mechanism to Finance Economic Development in Africa", with a focus on debt, energy and climate financing as well as private sector development in Africa.

The Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development also attended the ALM Africa Summit 2023 as distinguished honouree and recipient of the 2023 African Minister of the Year. The theme of the Summit was “New Opportunities for African Investments, Partnerships and Collaborations” where policymakers, private sector leaders, civil society leaders, thought leaders and stakeholders from across Europe, US and Africa participated to discuss issues regarding the promotion of African trade and investments globally.

16. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent participation of the Minister of Financial Services and Good Governance in the third Extra-ordinary meeting of the African Continental Free Trade Area Council of Ministers responsible for Trade in Nairobi, Kenya. The meeting considered the outstanding rules of origin for the textiles and clothing and automotive sectors and took note of progress made with respect to the ongoing negotiations on the draft Protocol on Investment, Protocol on Women and Youth in Trade and the Protocol on Digital Trade. The Council of Ministers also noted the progress made in the ongoing negotiations on the draft Protocol on Women and Youth in Trade and Protocol on Digital Trade.

17. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent participation of the Minister of Financial Services and Good Governance in the 116th Session of the African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) Council of Ministers in Brussels, Belgium.

The Council considered and adopted several reports including the Committee of Ambassadors' Report. The Council also adopted various decisions and resolutions with respect to Critical Raw Materials, SIDS Resource Mobilisation Conference, International Tax Governance and Anti-Money Laundering/Combating the Financing of Terrorism, Future Perspective of the Organisation of the African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS), OACPS relations with UK, India, China and the Gulf Cooperation Council and a Resolution on the Angolan Strategy for the Presidency of the OACPS Summit for the period 2023-2025 requesting the OACPS Secretariat to support the implementation of the Strategy.

18. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent participation of the Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation in the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Council 2023 session in Geneva, Switzerland. He participated in the High-Level Segment of the session on the theme: “Creating a fit for the future ITU”. In the margins of the ITU Council Session, the Minister, inter alia, met the Minister of Communication and Digital Technologies of the Republic of South Africa and the Minister of ICT and National Guidance of the Republic of Uganda.
