

HIGHLIGHTS OF CABINET MEETING – FRIDAY 06 JANUARY 2023

1. Cabinet has taken note that the Mauritius Meteorological Services (Warnings) Regulations 2023 would be promulgated. The purpose of the Regulations would be to provide a legal framework for the cyclone warning system in Mauritius, including the introduction of new phases, as well as for early warning in respect of other hazards, namely heavy rain, heavy swell, storm surge and strong wind.

The existing cyclone warning system would now be upgraded to six tiers with the introduction of a safety bulletin. The Mauritius Meteorological Services would also issue heavy rain warning, which would consist of three tiers with the introduction of a heavy rain watch.

2. Cabinet has taken note of the updated report of the Mauritius Meteorological Services with regard to the seasonal outlook for summer 2022-2023 for Mauritius and Rodrigues. After careful analysis of the behaviour of all indicators and taking into consideration analogue patterns, the Mauritius Meteorological Services has concluded that –

- (a) the onset of summer rain would be further delayed and was now expected during the second week of January 2023;
- (b) as from the second half of January 2023 up to the end of April 2023, atmospheric conditions would become conducive to the occurrence of extreme weather events such as violent thunderstorms and heavy rainfall;
- (c) temperatures would be close to normal;
- (d) occasional above normal temperatures together with prolonged periods of high humidity and light wind conditions, could result in torrid conditions particularly during the months of January to March 2023;
- (e) the number of named storms evolving in the South West Indian Ocean basin for the 2022-2023 cyclonic season was likely to be between seven and nine; and
- (f) heavy swells generated by tropical cyclones evolving in the vicinity of the Mascarene Islands might affect the shores of the Islands of Mauritius, Rodrigues, Agalega and St Brandon.

3. Cabinet has taken note that the Prime Minister would chair a meeting on that very afternoon to assess the current water situation in the country and the strategy being adopted by the Central Water Authority to address the water deficit.

4. Cabinet has taken note of the status on the grounding of the Fishing Vessel (FV) Yu Feng No. 67 off St Brandon on 05 December 2022 and of the measures contained in the Wreck Removal Plan submitted by the Salvage Master. The assistance of international experts has been secured and currently, two of them along with the salvage team, were already in St Brandon.

Cabinet has also taken note of preliminary findings of surveys carried out which were, inter alia, as follows –

- (a) there was no sign of oil, sheen and tar balls;
- (b) no dead birds and fish had been observed; and
- (c) water samples collected from 15 to 21 December 2022 in the lagoon on the starboard and port side of the vessel had not revealed the presence of oil and grease.

Cabinet has further taken note that 195 metres of booms were in place inside the lagoon in front of the wreck.

5. Cabinet has taken note of the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic prevailing in Mauritius. As at 04 January 2023, there were 54 active cases of COVID-19, out of which 15 were admitted at the New ENT Hospital. Over the period 29 December 2022 to 04 January 2023, no death was attributed to COVID-19.

Cabinet has also taken note that there was no suspected case of mpox in Mauritius during the period 29 December 2022 to 04 January 2023.
