

**HIGHLIGHTS OF CABINET MEETING – FRIDAY 24 FEBRUARY 2023**

1. Cabinet has agreed to instructions being conveyed to the Attorney General’s Office for the drafting of the Education (Amendment) Bill, to provide, for the setting up of the National Examinations Board for the Secondary Education sub-sector for the organisation and the conduct of examinations in designated subjects at secondary level and to the conferment upon the University of Mauritius of the power to award certificates thereof on the recommendations of the National Examinations Board.

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2. Cabinet has agreed to the promulgation of the Education (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2023. The Regulations would allow a person who holds any degree in the subject to be taught and who is enrolled on a course leading to a PGCE or any alternative qualification in education from a recognised institution may join the teaching profession in a temporary capacity and be confirmed only upon obtention of the certification. This provision would apply exceptionally for the years 2023 to 2026.

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3. Cabinet has taken note of the promulgation of the Customs Tariff (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2023 which would provide for the implementation of the third round of tariff cut commitments under the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement between Mauritius and India.

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4. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the *Université de Bordeaux, Centre Hospitalier Universitaire de Bordeaux, Université de la Réunion, Centre Hospitalier Universitaire de la Réunion*, the University of Mauritius and the Ministry of Health and Wellness for specialised postgraduate training in the medical field.

The objective of the collaboration would be to enable Mauritian General Practitioners to deepen, consolidate and update their medical knowledge and competencies by acquiring theoretical and practical (specialist) training.

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5. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change and DLA Piper UK for *pro bono* legal assistance on matters related to international climate change negotiations and capacity building. DLA Piper UK would be providing legal services which include -

- (a) assisting and supporting international climate, biodiversity and environmental negotiations;
- (b) reviewing and improving various statements, policies and documents issued, or proposed to be issued; and
- (c) supporting climate-related capacity building to the relevant staff and other key government actors.

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6. Cabinet has agreed to the organisation of a Conference on Substance Abuse for the Countries of the Indian Ocean by the National Drug Secretariat of Prime Minister's Office in Mauritius in April 2023. The organisation of this Conference is in line with the recommendations of the National Drug Control Master Plan 2019-2023 which provides, amongst others, for the promotion of regional and international cooperation in order to decrease drug trafficking in the region, in collaboration with regional and international bodies. The aim of the Conference would be to provide a platform for the countries of the region to –

- (a) strengthen sharing of knowledge, experience and intelligence through a formal network;
- (b) hold consultations with focus on the specificities common to them; and
- (c) respond to the different aspects of the drug issue in a collaborative manner.

Some 50 participants from seven countries, including Mauritius, were expected to participate in the Conference.

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7. Cabinet has agreed to the 6<sup>th</sup> National Security Adviser Level Meeting of the Colombo Security Conclave being held in Mauritius during the third quarter of 2023. The Colombo Security Conclave is a trilateral initiative comprising India, Sri Lanka and Maldives for cooperation in the field of maritime security. The focus of the Conclave comprises cooperation in combating human trafficking, counter terrorism, protection of critical infrastructure, information warfare and technology, cyber security and oil pollution response plan and COVID-19 concerns. Around 52 participants were expected to attend the meeting.

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8. Cabinet has taken note of the holding of a EU funded regional workshop on '*Countering transnational organised crime and terrorist groups by targeting Illicit Financial Flows in Eastern, Southern, Central Africa and Yemen*'. The workshop would be organised by the Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism Eastern, Southern, Central Africa and Yemen (AML/CFT ESCAY) Project Team, in collaboration with the Integrity Reporting Services Agency, from 14 to 16 March 2023 in Mauritius.

The workshop would be attended by representatives of 34 countries including all member countries of the Eastern and Southern Africa Anti-Money Laundering Group (ESAAMLG).

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9. Cabinet has taken note of the performance of the Export-Oriented Enterprises (EOE) Sector over the period January to December 2022. During that period, the EOE sector, which is a pillar of the Mauritian economy, represented around 67 percent of the total exports, excluding sugar.

Provisional exports data available indicate that value of exports of the EOE sector has increased by 17.2 percent over the period January to December 2022 to reach an amount of around Rs50.01 billion, as compared to some Rs42.65 billion during the corresponding period in 2021.

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10. Cabinet has taken note of the situation following the recent passage of the Very Intense Tropical Cyclone "Freddy", which affected Mauritius as well as Rodrigues from 17 to 21 February 2023. With regard to rainfall data, the highest amount recorded was 56.5mm in Quatre Bornes and the highest gust recorded was 126 km/h at Champ de Mars.

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11. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Industrial Development, SMEs and Cooperatives in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme, would conduct an "*Assise de L'Entrepreneuriat*" on 15 and 16 March 2023, with the participation of some 50 entrepreneurs in various sectors. Emphasis would be laid on themes such as Finance, Technology and Innovation, Marketing and Networking, amongst others.

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12. Cabinet has taken note of the recommendations made by the *Agence Française de Développement* (AFD), under technical assistance provided by that organisation for the improvement of the social protection system in Mauritius. The AFD, through its agency, namely Expertise France, carried out a study of the existing Social Protection System in Mauritius and submitted its reports on various areas.

Cabinet also noted that a Steering Committee comprising relevant stakeholders would be set up to analyse the feasibility of implementing the recommendations of the reports.

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13. Cabinet has taken note of the performance of Mauritian para-athletes in the 11<sup>th</sup> Sharjah International Open Para Athletics Meeting and the Dubai 2023 World Para Athletics Grand Prix. As at 23 February 2023, Mauritius had won a total of 15 medals, including 3 Gold, 3 Silver and 9 Bronze and was ranked 10<sup>th</sup> among 31 participating countries.

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14. Cabinet has taken note that the 27<sup>th</sup> African Volleyball Clubs Championship (Zone 7) (Men and Women) would be held in Mauritius from 25 February to 04 March 2023 under the aegis of the Mauritius Volleyball Association, in collaboration with the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation.

The competition sites would be Pandit Sahadeo Gymnasium and Navin Soonarane Gymnasium. The finals would take place on Saturday 04 March 2023 at Pandit Sahadeo Gymnasium.

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15. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the second edition of the National Youth Football Leagues 2022 held from 30 April to 26 November 2022 for boys and girls aged between 12 and 19 years old and the forthcoming youth football projects.

For the season 2023/2024, two divisions of eight teams each would be introduced in the Under 15 and Under 17 National Youth Football Leagues to give a more competitive edge to the tournament. As regards the other categories, the competition would be played on a single league basis. About 1,800 players were expected to participate in the different tournaments. Futsal and beach soccer competitions would also be introduced this year for the categories Under 13 and Under 15 for both boys and girls.

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16. Cabinet has taken note of the deployment of a mobile application for the MoKloud platform by the Ministry of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation. The digital documents available on the MoKloud platform were online extracts of birth and marriage certificates, COVID-19 Vaccination pass, proof of address from the Central Electricity Board and e-payslip for public officials.

The mobile application would enable citizens to have access to the platform directly on their mobile phones, to download and save their personal documents available on the platform, as well as verify the authenticity of the documents through a QR code scanner feature.

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17. Cabinet has taken note of the deployment of an electronic “Know Your Customer” (KYC) feature on the National Authentication Framework, namely MauPass by the Ministry of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation. In order to activate their MauPass accounts, citizens were required to undergo a KYC process which was conducted in person at Post Offices.

The deployment of an electronic KYC feature would allow the two-factor authentication process to be conducted online through the verification of a live selfie of a citizen against his picture on his National Identity Card or Passport, thus enhancing access to the MauPass platform, and facilitating Mauritian nationals abroad willing to activate their account remotely and have access to Government e-services and the MoKloud platform.

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18. Cabinet has taken note that the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has invited Mauritius to become a participant in the Working Group on Bribery with a view to facilitating its accession to OECD Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions (Anti-Bribery Convention). Government would respond positively to the invitation.

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19. Cabinet has taken note of the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic prevailing in Mauritius. As at 22 February 2022, there were 18 active cases of COVID-19, out of which six were admitted at the New ENT Hospital. Over the period of 16 to 22 February 2023, no death has been directly attributed to COVID-19.

Cabinet has also taken note that the quarantine period would be extended up to 31 August 2023.

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20. Cabinet has taken note of the activities that would be organised in the context of World Consumer Rights Day, observed on 15 March. The theme for this year would be “*Empowering Consumers Through Clean Energy Transitions*”. The Ministry of Commerce and Consumer Protection would organise the following activities to raise awareness of consumers on their rights and responsibilities, namely –

- (a) sensitisation and educational campaigns through talks in Secondary Schools, Women Centres and Citizens Advice Bureaus;
- (b) participation on radio/TV programme and publication of articles in the newspapers; and
- (c) dissemination of short video clips and distribution of flyers/booklets.

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21. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities to India where he participated as guest and speaker at the India Energy Week. The India Energy Week was one of the first major events held under India's Presidency of G20 and its theme was “Growth. Collaboration. Transition”. The spotlight session was on the theme “India: The critical cog in the global growth machine” whereas the Ministerial session delved on, inter alia, -

- (i) a low-carbon future requiring examining the current landscape while charting a new path ahead; and
- (ii) addressing global energy security needs in view of price and supply volatility.

The Minister also attended the 9<sup>th</sup> Asian Ministerial Energy Roundtable with the International Energy Forum and had discussions on the Road to a cleaner grid (decarbonisation and energy diversification for the power and utilities industry), among others.

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22. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent promotional and awareness campaign led by the Minister of Financial Services and Good Governance in India, in collaboration with the Economic Development Board. The delegation comprised both private and public sector representatives. The main objective of the mission was to, inter alia, reconnect with the Indian market and key stakeholders and inform them of the new palette of activities and the ease of doing business in Mauritius.

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23. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation in Dubai where he attended the World Government Summit. The theme for this year was “Shaping Future Governments” and was an opportunity for stakeholders to discuss their vision and strategies in various vital sectors that contribute to the development of government’s future policies in the wake of digitalisation.

During the mission, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed in the field of Information, Communication and Emerging Technologies with the Office of Artificial Intelligence, Digital Economy and Remote Work Applications to encourage and promote cooperation between the Government of Mauritius and the United Arab Emirates.

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24. Cabinet has taken note of the composition of the Standards Council with Mr Sanjiv Mulloo as part-time Chairperson.

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