

HIGHLIGHTS OF CABINET MEETING – FRIDAY 12 MAY 2023

1. Cabinet has agreed to the introduction of the Status of the Artist Bill into the National Assembly. The main object of the Bill is to provide for the establishment of the Professional in the Arts Council. The Council would, in the discharge of its functions and exercise of its powers –

- (a) categorise persons engaged as professional artists, specialised professionals in the Arts, technical professionals and occasional professionals in the Arts, and register them as professionals in the Arts;
- (b) promote the status of professionals in the Arts;
- (c) enhance the social and economic status of professionals in the Arts;
- (d) implement the State Recognition Allowance scheme and pension scheme for professionals in the Arts;
- (e) enhance access to training and skills development for professionals in the Arts; and
- (f) develop and promote the marketing of artistic products and services nationally and internationally.

2. Cabinet has taken note of the Capacity Strengthening Support Programme in respect of the Plant Genetic Resources for food and agriculture, funded by the Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research. The programme would benefit the agricultural sector by -

- (a) making Plant Genetic Resources for food and agriculture more visible to the local planting community;
- (b) contributing to achieving local food security;
- (c) facilitating the access of agricultural researchers, academic institutions, breeders (private and public), farmers, and genebanks, to plant genetic resources;
- (d) increasing activities in research, conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources; and
- (e) ensuring transparency for both providers and users of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge.

3. Cabinet has taken note of the signing of a Technical Cooperation Programme in respect of technical support for the upgrading of the Food Technology Laboratory of the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security, funded by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). The following activities would be undertaken under the Technical Cooperation Programme –

- (a) review of the legal framework including the draft legal instruments for Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO) testing;
- (b) provision of in-house practical training by FAO international consultant on GMO testing and other molecular diagnostics in foods and feeds;
- (c) support to accredit the molecular tests and upgrade the laboratory as required;
- (d) hands-on training for two officers of the laboratory in an accredited European Union (EU) reference or EU recognised laboratory; and
- (e) national awareness and information campaign associated with GMOs, food fraud due to meat and fish adulteration and food safety issues related pathogens contamination.

4. Cabinet has taken note of the activities being organised by the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security to mark the International Tea Day 2023, celebrated on 21 May every year, to raise awareness of the importance of tea production in the tea supply chains and as means for livelihood and poverty reduction.

An exhibition *cum* sales would be held on Friday 19 May 2023 at Renganaden Seeneevassen Building, Port Louis, and would involve, inter alia, the participation of the National Agricultural Products Regulatory Office, the Small Farmers Welfare Fund, growers, factories and importers of tea and tea products.

5. Cabinet has agreed to declare 06 April as the Segga Day, the day on which Mr Joseph Emmanuel Serge Lebrasse passed away, to pay tribute to him. The Segga Day would be celebrated every year by organising cultural and artistic activities.

6. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the first meeting of the National Tripartite Council and the nomination of Professor Ved Prakash Torul and Dr Harris Neeliah as part-time Vice-Chairpersons of the Council. Three Commissions, namely the Commission on Employment Situation and Challenges, the Commission on Training and Re-skilling and the Commission on Employability have also been instituted by the Council.

7. Cabinet has taken note of the status regarding the implementation of the recommendations contained in Volume 1 relating to General Background and Related Issues and Conditions of Service and Part I of Volume 2 pertaining to Ministries and Departments of the Pay Research Bureau Report 2021. As at end of April 2023, 252 out of 254 recommendations of Volume 1 of the Report, representing 99 percent of the total recommendations and 532 out of 657 recommendations of Volume 2 of the Report, representing 81 percent, have already been implemented.

8. Cabinet has agreed to the holding of a Workshop on “Business Continuity and Resilience in Social Security Systems during Crisis” by the Ministry of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity in collaboration with the International Social Security Association (ISSA), from 27 to 29 September 2023. The Workshop would be a unique networking opportunity for Mauritius to exchange comprehensive information on social security systems with member states of ISSA and share cutting edge knowledge from international experts on business continuity and resilience during any forthcoming crisis.

9. Cabinet has taken note that the International Convention on Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Co-operation Workshop would be held from 22 to 24 May 2023. The Workshop would be hosted by the Ministry of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping in collaboration with the International Maritime Organization. The objective of the Workshop is to train key management and on-scene commanders on international, national and local oil spill preparedness, response and co-operation, including the National Oil Spill Contingency Plan, response management and organisation, response policy, media relations, claims and compensation.

10. Cabinet has taken note that the Academy of Design and Innovation, in collaboration with ZEE Arts Gallery (an art incubator based in Dubai), the Nelson Mandela Centre for African Culture Trust Fund, the National Computer Board and the African Leadership College, would organise an Africa Consortium 2023 from 25 to 27 May 2023 to mark Africa Day under the theme ‘Transformation of future Africa’. The objective of the Africa Consortium 2023 is to bring together designers, artists, craftsmen, researchers and academics from African and non-African states, especially those who harbour a keen interest in Africa and its traditions. The following activities would be conducted –

- (a) an Art Exhibition (Africa Speaks – 54) with the objective to bring African Arts to Mauritius;
- (b) a conference on the theme “Transformation of African Culture”;
- (c) a roundtable on “Sectoral Focus on 3D Printing for Creative Fashion”;

- (d) a fashion show – “Quintessence of Africa” to showcase the richness of African colours and African Culture;
- (e) an African Creative Village to showcase talents, skills and knowledge in the field of design, fashion, art, music and culinary; and
- (f) an African Film Festival.

Cabinet has also taken note of the organisation of an event by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade at the Nelson Mandela Centre for African Culture Trust Fund on Thursday 25 May 2023 to mark the Africa Day 2023. The 25th of May 2023 commemorates the 60th anniversary of the foundation of the Organisation of African Unity and the 21st anniversary of its successor, the African Union.

11. Cabinet has taken note of the activities being organised by the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family Welfare in the context of the Day of the African Child 2023, celebrated on 16 June each year. The theme chosen for this year is “*Zanfan to kapav fer la diferans pou protez twa ek to prosin*”. A “16 Days 16 Rights” special campaign based on “*The Rights of the Child in the digital environment*” would also be conducted, targeting Primary and Secondary Schools where the young generation would be sensitised on their rights for 16 days, one right per day, and also their corresponding duties, responsibilities and obligations.

12. Cabinet has taken note of the prevailing situation in Sudan, particularly the peace process mediation efforts initiated by the African Union, the United States of America and Saudi Arabia. The Government of Mauritius is expressing its support for the mediation efforts while appealing to all concerned Parties to de-escalate the situation and call for a diplomatic solution to the crisis.

13. Cabinet has taken note that an online platform for the first registration of new and second-hand vehicles by Motor Vehicle Dealers had been launched on 05 May 2023 by the Ministry of Land Transport and Light Rail. The online system would enable Motor Vehicles Dealers to proceed with the first registration of vehicles on a 24/7 basis.

14. Cabinet has taken note that the Petroleum Pricing Committee (PPC) met on Thursday 11 May 2023. Subsequently, acting under the provisions of Regulation 8A of the Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Petroleum Products) Regulations 2011 (as amended), the Minister of Commerce and Consumer Protection has disapproved the recommendation of the PPC to increase the retail price of Gas Oil. The current retail price of Rs54.55 per litre for Gas Oil (Diesel) has therefore been maintained. The retail price of Mogas (L’Essence) has also been maintained at Rs74.10 per litre.

15. Cabinet has taken note of the report of the Mauritius Meteorological Services (MMS) with regard to the seasonal outlook for winter 2023 for Mauritius and Rodrigues. The winter season would be from May to October 2023. The MMS has predicted that Mauritius and Rodrigues might experience extreme weather events, including moderate to heavy showers, significant variation in temperatures and strong wind conditions. The Winter 2023 Seasonal Outlook Report would be released to the general public and updated by the MMS.

16. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the visit of HE Dr Naledi Pandor, Minister of International Relations and Cooperation of the Republic of South Africa, to Mauritius from 02 to 04 May 2023. The main objective of the visit was to review the status of the bilateral relations between Mauritius and South Africa, and to exchange views on regional and global issues of mutual interest. The General Cooperation Agreement (GCA) between the two countries was jointly signed by HE Dr Pandor and the Minister of Land Transport and Light Rail, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade. The GCA provides, inter alia, for the establishment of a Mauritius-South African Joint Commission. The agreement also provides a robust platform for the two countries to work together in diverse fields such as trade, investment, tourism, culture, education, science and technology, digital economy, and green development, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals. HE Dr Pandor also met with representatives of the business community to further reinforce the trade and investment relations between the two countries.

17. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development to Washington, D.C. where he participated in the Spring Meetings of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank Group together with Ministers of Finance of other member countries. He also attended the African Consultative Group Meeting on the theme "Addressing Africa's development challenges to build resilience and ensure debt sustainability" wherein discussions were centred on the need to address rising debt vulnerabilities, continue strengthening the international debt resolution architecture, and enhance social protection for higher and more inclusive growth.

The Minister also participated in –

- (a) the second G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors Meeting;
- (b) the Commonwealth Finance Ministers High-Level Working Group Meeting. Discussions during the Commonwealth meeting were centred on national fiscal policies, measures for financial sustainability, eligibility criteria for development finance and potential reforms required for a more equitable financial architecture; and
- (c) other meetings organised in the margins of the Spring Meetings with, inter alia, the IMF, World Bank, International Finance Corporation, Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States as well as Moody's Investors service.

18. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent participation of the Minister of Financial Services and Good Governance in the Africa Venture Capital Association Conference wherein he delivered an Opening Keynote Address on “Retrospection and Prospection - Transforming Africa through Private Capital”. A promotional and awareness campaign to promote the Mauritius International Financial Centre and its palette of financial services products and services in Egypt and for the African market was carried out in Cairo, Egypt in collaboration with the Economic Development Board. An interactive Business and Networking session between the Mauritian Financial Services Business community/operators and their Egyptian counterparts on the theme “Collaborating Towards Investment Financing Value Chain” was also conducted.

19. Cabinet has taken note of the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic prevailing in Mauritius. As at 10 May 2023, there were 90 active cases of COVID-19, out of which 16 were admitted at the New ENT Hospital. Over the period 04 to 10 May 2023, there was no death attributed to COVID-19.

Cabinet has also taken note of the Statement released by the World Health Organization (WHO) regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-19 was now an established and ongoing health issue which no longer constitute a public health emergency of international concern.

Cabinet has further taken note that according to the WHO, Mpox was no longer a global health emergency, but more efforts were needed to eradicate the disease.

20. Cabinet has taken note of the programme of activities for the celebration of the Dragon Boat Festival 2023 organised by the Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage, in collaboration with the Dragon and Lion Dance Federation, Le Caudan Waterfront Ltd, the China Cultural Centre, the Chinese Speaking Union and the United Chinese Association. The Dragon Boat Festival is celebrated on the fifth day of the fifth lunar month in the Chinese calendar which would correspond to 22 June 2023. A dragon boat race competition involving eight teams, including one team from Rodrigues, a traditional *défilé* of lions and dragons, and a cultural programme by local artists would be organised on Sunday 18 June 2023.

21. Cabinet has agreed to the de-proclamation of part of Moka-Camp de Masque-Flacq Road (A7) from its junction with Petit Verger over a distance of 600 metres up to the Carsquad Car Dealer. The Moka-Camp de Masque-Flacq Road (End of Public Use) Regulations 2023 would be promulgated and the said Road shall be deemed to have ceased to be dedicated to public use as from January 2023.
