

HIGHLIGHTS OF CABINET MEETING – FRIDAY 14 APRIL 2023

1. Cabinet has taken note that the Local Government (Exemption of Municipal Tax on Family Home) Regulations 2023 and the Local Government (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2023, which relate to the abolition of municipal tax on family home, would be promulgated in April 2023.

The abolition of municipal taxes was a measure which was announced in the Budget Speech 2022/2023 and the promulgation of the Regulations would provide for the following, in respect of payment of municipal taxes –

Category	Payment of Municipal Tax
Households owning a single house	- Exempted
Households owning more than one house in any Municipal area	- Exempted only for the house which is the main residence of the owner. The owner would have to sign a Declaration Form to that effect.
Mixed-Use Building	- Exempted only for the residential part thereof. The person would pay normal rates for the other part of the building.

The Regulations shall be deemed to be effective as from 01 July 2022.

2. Cabinet has taken note that the Public Procurement (Amendment) Regulations 2023 would be promulgated so as to exempt the Mauritius Meat Authority from the provisions of the Public Procurement Act, for the purchase of livestock for resale and/or slaughter.

3. Cabinet has taken note that the Fourth Schedule to the Education Regulations 1957 would be amended to include a degree in Tourism, Hospitality and Events Management as well as a degree in Tourism, Leisure and Recreation Management, in respect of qualifications for eligibility for the post of Educator (Secondary) to teach Travel and Tourism.

4. Cabinet has taken note of the coming into operation of the Environment Protection (Control of Single Use Plastic Products) (Amendment) Regulations 2023. These Regulations provide for an extension of moratorium from 15 January 2023 up to 14 January 2025, for the banning of the following non-biodegradable single use products -

- (i) plastic bowls and plastic cups used solely for the packaging of food products such as dairy products; and
- (ii) plastic trays used solely for the Modified Atmosphere Packaging of food such as fresh meat and pre-cooked/cooked food products.

The Regulations would be deemed to have come into effect on 15 January 2021.

5. Cabinet has taken note that the Gambling Regulatory Authority (Personal Management Licence) (Amendment) Regulations 2023 would be promulgated. The Regulations provide for –

- (i) the issuance of a Personal Management Licence (PML) by the Horse Racing Committee of the Horse Racing Division to a non-citizen and non-resident horse owner who is already registered with a Racing Authority in a foreign jurisdiction; and
- (ii) exemption of a person leasing horses from a registered equestrian centre from the requirement of having a PML licence.

6. Cabinet has taken note that in view of the celebration of Eid-ul-Fitr on either Saturday 22 April 2023 or Sunday 23 April 2023, the Salary Pay Day in the Public Sector for the month of April 2023 has been preponed to Friday 21 April 2023.

7. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of an Agreement between the Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), for the participation of Mauritius in the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2025.

The PISA is an international learning assessment, which provides for an international benchmark of learning outcomes that enable countries to follow progress over time. PISA targets 15-year-old students, an age at which students in most countries are nearing the end of their compulsory education. PISA measures competencies in three major domains of study, namely science, reading and mathematics and focuses on students' abilities to think critically and apply their knowledge creatively in novel contexts.

8. Cabinet has agreed to the launching of the Pre-Qualification exercise for the construction of the Rivière des Anguilles Dam. The construction of the Dam aims at meeting the increasing water demand for the southern part of the island, including the Grand Port and Savanne regions, as well as the south west coast from Le Morne to Tamarin, in order to achieve a sustainable water supply and promote socio-economic development in the region.

9. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Land Drainage Authority and the Rodrigues Regional Assembly in order to establish collaboration between the two institutions with respect to the management of drainage infrastructure in Rodrigues. The scope of works covered under the Memorandum of Understanding would include –

- (a) identification of flood prone areas and mitigating measures;
- (b) elaboration of a Land Drainage Masterplan for Rodrigues; and
- (c) exchange programme between the Land Drainage Authority and the Rodrigues Regional Assembly for on-the-job training of staff/engineers from the Commission for Public Infrastructure and Planning.

10. Cabinet has taken note of the status regarding the implementation of the Premium Visa regime as at 31 March 2023. Out of a total of 5,140 applications received as at 31 March 2023 –

- (a) 3,732 applications had been approved;
- (b) 764 applications had not been entertained for not fulfilling the required criteria;
- (c) 587 related to incomplete applications for which missing documents were awaited; and
- (d) 57 applications had been set aside as the applicants were no longer interested in the Premium Visa regime.

11. Cabinet has agreed to the holding of the First Session of the Mauritius-Germany Bilateral Political Consultation to be hosted by Germany on 12 June 2023. The Bilateral Political Consultation, which would be held at Senior Officials level, would be co-chaired by HE Ambassador Christoph Retzlaff, Commissioner for Sub Sahara Africa and Sahel region, German Federal Foreign Office and the Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Mauritius.

12. Cabinet has taken note of the Regional Education Development Tournament and the Open Africa Cup Beach Wrestling Tournaments being held in Mauritius from 14 to 23 April 2023. The second edition of the Regional Education Development Tournament in Mauritius was being held at two sites, namely Pointe Jérôme National Outdoor Education and Recreation Centre and the Blue Bay Beach Arena. The residential training of coaches and referees would take place from 14 to 20 April 2023 and from 20 to 23 April 2023, respectively.

The Freestyle and Women Wrestling Tournament would take place on 22 April 2023 at the Pointe Jérôme National Outdoor Education and Recreation Centre while the Open Africa Cup Beach Wrestling Tournament would be held on 23 April 2023 at the Blue Bay Beach Arena.

Some 60 participants including wrestlers, referees and coaches from Comoros, France, Madagascar, Mauritius, Reunion, Rodrigues and South Africa were expected to participate in the above events.

13. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation in collaboration with the National Cybersecurity Committee would organise a workshop on 20 April 2023 on Cyber Resilience and Simulation, where the focus of discussions would be current trends on cyber threats and the main provisions of the Cybersecurity and Cybercrime Act. Around 100 participants from the Government, private sector and the civil society, among others, were expected to participate in the workshop.

Cabinet has also taken note that a cyber drill would be held on 21 April 2023 for the Energy Sector whereby two to three scenarios would be simulated for participants from the Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities and its Departments. The objective of the drill would be to increase preparedness of the stakeholders in the Energy Sector in the event of cyber-attack.

14. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the 24th Meeting of the Mauritius-Seychelles Joint Commission (JC) of the Extended Continental Shelf held recently in Seychelles. The main outcomes of the discussions held were, inter alia, as follows –

- (i) the JC took note that Seychelles had selected three companies to conduct the exploratory fisheries of sea cucumber in the Joint Management Area. The companies would start their activities after having completed the necessary modalities; and
- (ii) the JC took note that both Mauritius and Seychelles would coordinate and consult each other to finalise the Strategic Plan document 2023-2027.

In the margins of the Meeting, a Memorandum of Understanding for cooperation in the field of maritime surveillance and security of the Management Area of the Mascarene Plateau Region between the Seychelles Coast Guard and the National Coast Guard of Mauritius was also signed.

15. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology to Bucharest, Romania, where she, inter alia, attended the statutory meeting of the Bureau of the “*Conférence des Ministres de l’Education des Etats et Gouvernements de la Francophonie*”.

During the Bureau meeting, Ministers took stock of achievements under each of the thrust areas of the Strategic Plan, namely -

- (a) data-driven decision making;
- (b) Policy for Transformation of Education; and
- (c) strengthening Governance and Institutional Capacity.

16. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of a Special Virtual Session of the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) Council of Ministers which was chaired by the Minister of Land Transport and Light Rail, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade for the first time on 23 March 2023, in his capacity as new President of the OACPS Council of Ministers.

The meeting provided an opportunity for the Council of Ministers to take note of updates regarding the status of the signing of the Post-Cotonou Agreement, also known as the Samoa Agreement.

17. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the 11th round of technical negotiations between the European Union and Eastern and Southern African States (ESA 5) comprising Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius, Seychelles and Zimbabwe, on the deepening of the interim Economic Partnership Agreement held recently in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe.

Negotiations were held in parallel sessions, on ten issues, namely Trade in Services, Investment Liberalisation and Digital Trade, Intellectual Property Rights including Geographical Indications, Trade and Sustainable Development, Rules of Origin, Transparency in Public Procurement, Dispute Settlement and Institutional Provisions, Competition policy, Technical Barriers to Trade, Agriculture, and Fisheries.

18. Cabinet has taken note of the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic prevailing in Mauritius. As at 12 April 2023, there were 79 active cases of COVID-19, out of which 15 were admitted at the New ENT Hospital. Over the period of 06 to 12 April 2023, there was no death attributed to COVID-19.

19. Cabinet has taken note that following the detection of the Marburg virus in certain African countries, the Ministry of Health and Wellness would implement public health measures including surveillance of travellers at ports of entry.

20. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Board of the Beach Authority, with Mr Jean Marie Desire Levillant as part-time Chairperson.
