

HIGHLIGHTS OF CABINET MEETING – FRIDAY 05 APRIL 2024

1. Cabinet has taken note of the promulgation of the Economic Development Board (Processing Fees) Regulations 2024, the Economic Development Board (Smart City Scheme) (Amendment) Regulations 2024, the Economic Development Board (Property Development Scheme) (Amendment) Regulations 2024, the Economic Development Board (Invest Hotel Scheme) (Amendment) Regulations 2024 and the Economic Development Board (Real Estate Development Scheme) (Amendment) Regulations 2024. These Regulations would provide for the implementation of measures announced in relation to schemes administered by the Economic Development Board for the –

- (a) harmonisation of the processing fee payable on the acquisition of a residential property and the introduction of new processing fees;
- (b) extension of the time limit for a promoter to sell one plot of serviced land to a non-citizen to 30 June 2026; and
- (c) payment of the contribution charged per property to the National Resilience Fund.

2. Cabinet has taken note of the promulgation of the Child (Foster Care) (Amendment) Regulations 2024 which would, inter alia, provide for-

- (a) an amended definition of Foster Home and a new definition for Foster Parent;
- (b) the appointment of a Chairperson of the Foster Care Advisory Committee;
- (c) the designation of a Secretary to the Foster Care Advisory Committee;
- (d) suspension, variation or revocation of the certificate of registration;
- (e) deregistration as Foster Home; and
- (f) conditions to be observed for the foster parent to travel abroad with the minor.

3. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Department for Continental Shelf, Maritime Zones Administration and Exploration and ABYSSA, France. The aim of the MoU would be to create a conducive environment for the parties to collaborate and enhance cooperation in the field of deep-sea exploration. The MoU would comprise and promote, inter alia, the following –

- (a) distribution and sharing of scientific information, resulting from deep sea surveys;
- (b) development of joint projects in deep sea exploration as well as conduct of marine scientific research;
- (c) opportunities for education and exchange of personnel in deep sea exploration and mapping surveys; and
- (d) access to infrastructure and research platforms within cooperative projects.

4. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Economic Development Board and the *Chambre de Commerce, d'Industrie et d'Agriculture Belgique – Luxembourg – Afrique – Caraïbes – Pacifique*. The objectives of the Memorandum of Understanding would be to establish a practical framework for cooperation with regard to investment and trade promotion and to strengthen institutional relations as well as capacity building through cooperation. The Memorandum of Understanding would also cover aspects of, inter alia, exchange of information on investment and trade policies, rules, regulations, procedures, incentives and opportunities and general updates on statistics and business data on Mauritius and Belgium.

5. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a Memorandum of Agreement between the Academy of Design and Innovation and the National Institute of Fashion Technology, India to develop international cooperation and exchange. The Memorandum of Agreement would, inter alia, encourage international cooperation and promote the exchange of students, skills and knowledge between the two institutions. It would also focus on the following areas –

- (a) exchange of faculty members and staff;
- (b) promotion of lectures, workshops, fashion shows and exhibitions as well as exchange of information and academic publications; and
- (c) offer of dual award and study abroad courses.

6. Cabinet has agreed to the Ministry of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping signing an Agreement with the Industrial Finance Corporation of Mauritius Ltd (IFCM Ltd) for the implementation of the scheme for the acquisition of semi-industrial fishing vessels by registered fishermen cooperative societies. The aim of the semi-industrial off-lagoon fishing scheme would be to provide financial assistance to fishermen cooperative societies for the acquisition of fully equipped semi-industrial fishing vessels. IFCM Ltd would provide credit finance and/or leasing facilities up to a maximum of 40 percent of the cost of the vessel.

7. Cabinet has taken note of the arrangements made by the Ministry of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity for the anti-influenza vaccination exercise for the year 2024. The Ministry would provide vaccines for -

- (a) elderly persons aged 60 and above;
- (b) children with disabilities attending specialised schools; and
- (c) all inmates of charitable institutions and private licensed homes.

The vaccination campaign 2024 would be launched on 08 April 2024 and would be conducted according to an established calendar. Details of the vaccination calendar, indicating the places, timing and dates would be communicated to the public through the press and a *communiqué* would be posted on the website of the Ministry of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity and affixed in the Social Security Offices, Social Welfare Centres, Community Centres and Elderly Day Care Centres. The vaccination exercise would also be extended to Rodrigues and Agalega Islands.

8. Cabinet has taken note that following the adoption of Resolution 77/276 by the United Nations General Assembly to request an advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the obligations of States in respect of climate change, 80 States, including Mauritius, and 12 organisations, including the African Union, submitted written statements to the International Court of Justice by the deadline of 22 March 2024.

Cabinet has further taken note that countries and organisations which had filed written statements may submit written comments to the International Court of Justice on the other written statements by the deadline of 24 June 2024.

9. Cabinet has taken note of the progress of work achieved in the execution of the Pipe Replacement Programme undertaken by the Central Water Authority in house, in respect of the replacement of some 200 Kms of pipes throughout the island.

10. Cabinet has taken note of the naming of the Geranium Municipal Gymnasium at Camp Levieux as “Serge Lebrasse Sports Complex”, in recognition of Late Mr Serge Lebrasse, who was one of the pioneers of the Mauritian Sega.

11. Cabinet has agreed to the holding of the Second Annual Meeting of the European Union funded project entitled 'Rapid Elimination of Invasive Insect Agricultural Pest Outbreaks by Tackling them with Sterile Technique Programs' (REACT) from 28 to 31 October 2024 in Mauritius. The pathways and expected outcomes of the REACT meeting comprise –

- (a) an understanding of the drivers of plant pest spread and establishment;
- (b) an analysis of both the ecological impact of the proliferation of plant pests and the socio-economic implications of farmers affected by those pests;
- (c) an increased preparedness of relevant authorities and stakeholders through the development of efficient surveillance methods and strategies for early detection and rapid biocontrol of pests; and
- (d) an extension of the range of tools and technologies for development of economically and environmentally sound solutions for effective pest management in farming and forestry in line with the principles of Integrated Pest Management.

12. Cabinet has agreed to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade in collaboration with the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) hosting a national workshop on the roles, objectives and activities of its affiliated institutions, on 15 and 16 April 2024 in Mauritius. The workshop would be on the theme 'Economic integration for a thriving COMESA anchored on green investment, value addition and tourism'. The expected outcomes of the workshop would be to gain better understanding of the objectives and activities of the COMESA affiliated institutions. It would provide a multi-stakeholder platform for dialogue and sharing of best practices amongst stakeholders to create a competitive business environment in the COMESA region.

13. Cabinet has agreed to the holding of the Bhojpuri Mahotsav (International Bhojpuri Festival) from 06 to 08 May 2024 in Mauritius. Delegates from Mauritius, India and Indian diaspora countries which form part of the Indentured Labour Route would participate in the Bhojpuri Mahotsav. The objectives of the festival would be to, inter alia –

- (a) celebrate Bhojpuri culture, heritage and arts;
- (b) bring together the descendants of indentured labour immigrants on a common platform to share experiences regarding the evolution and propagation of the Bhojpuri language in their respective countries;

- (c) further propagate among the younger generations the Bhojpuri language, which is the vehicle of the “Geet Gawai” which had been inscribed on the UNESCO list of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2016; and
- (d) discuss about the economic contribution of the descendants of the Girmitiya Indentured Labourers in the Bhojpuri Diaspora.

A National Organising Committee had been set up to ensure the proper organisation of the event.

14. Cabinet has taken note of the holding of a Ministerial Conference on Drug Trafficking and Substance Abuse on 24 and 25 April 2024 in Mauritius, in collaboration with the Indian Ocean Commission. The Ministerial Conference would aim to -

- (a) set up a network of leading national agencies coordinating drug response, through a Regional Cooperation Framework;
- (b) establish a Regional Drug Observatory; and
- (c) adopt a Western Indian Ocean Regional Strategy Against Drug Trafficking and Substance Abuse.

15. Cabinet has agreed to the holding of the First International Space Symposium on the theme “New Space for Mauritius” on 18 and 19 April 2024. The Symposium would be organised by the Mauritius Research and Innovation Council in the context of World Creativity and Innovation Day 2024. The objective of the Symposium would be to catalyse a transformative approach towards integrating space and satellite technology as a key socioeconomic pillar for Mauritius. Moreover, the Symposium aims at fostering dialogue among international experts, researchers, and local stakeholders, exploring how space technologies could be harnessed to address local and regional challenges.

16. Cabinet has taken note of the holding of a stakeholders’ round table on multi-sectoral actions to accelerate the prevention and management of obesity in Mauritius from 23 to 25 April 2024. The Round Table which would be organised by the Ministry of Health and Wellness with the collaboration of the World Health Organization, would serve as a platform to facilitate the exchange of knowledge, promote shared responsibility and encourage the integration of policies across various domains and would contribute in identifying strategies to build a healthier population through the prevention and management of obesity and NCDs. The objectives of the round table would be, inter alia, to –

- (a) review the status of obesity and overweight in Mauritius and evaluate the progress of implementation of current interventions and national operational strategies to address obesity by relevant Ministries and other stakeholders;
- (b) develop a roadmap to accelerate progress to stop obesity through a whole-of-society approach; and
- (c) contribute to better coordination between national and international partners, inter-sectoral and intra-sectoral collaboration, structural capacity building and resource mobilisation for the fight against obesity in Mauritius.

17. Cabinet has taken note of the activities being organised by the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security to mark World Veterinary Day, commemorated on the last Saturday of the month of April, every year. The theme for this year was 'Veterinarians are essential health workers'. An event to mark World Veterinary Day would be held on 27 April 2024 at the premises of the Livestock and Veterinary Division of the Agricultural Services at Réduit. A commemorative plaque would also be unveiled to mark the 110th anniversary of the Veterinary Services in Mauritius. The World Veterinary Day would be an opportunity to showcase and sensitise breeders and the public at large of all the services provided by the Veterinary Services. Furthermore, the Indian Ocean Commission would hand over a veterinary ambulance to the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security under the '*Surveillance épidémiologique et gestion des alertes (SEGA) One-Health*' project.

18. Cabinet has taken note of the organisation of a National Eid Dinner by the Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage on 17 April 2024 at the Swami Vivekananda International Conference Centre, Pailles, to celebrate Eid-UI-Fitr at national level. Recital of verses of the Quran by the winners of the National Quran Competition 2024 organised by the Arabic-Speaking Union and Naat recital by winners of *Aqeedat ke Phool* Naat Competition 2023 organised by the Urdu-Speaking Union and the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation would be held during the gathering. In addition, the Islamic Cultural Centre, the Urdu-Speaking Union and the Arabic-Speaking Union would organise, inter alia, Quran recitation contest, Eid card competition as well as a lunch for inmates of orphanages and daycare centres.

19. Cabinet has taken note of the organisation of the National Tamil Language Festival 2024 by the Tamil-Speaking Union from 16 to 21 May 2024. The objective of the National Tamil Language Festival 2024 would be to –

- (a) celebrate Tamil language and culture;
- (b) bring together the Tamil community on a common platform to share their experiences regarding the evolution and propagation of the Tamil language; and
- (c) further propagate among the younger generations the Tamil language.

The following events would be organised, namely a workshop on the theme “Spoken Tamil Pedagogy” for Primary and Secondary School Tamil Educators, elocution contest on the theme “From Phonetics to Enchantment” for tertiary education students and a reading competition on the theme “From Phonetics to Melody” for primary school students would be organised.

20. Cabinet has agreed to the organisation of various activities by the Ministry of Public Service, Administrative and Institutional Reforms, in collaboration with Ministries and Departments, to mark the 2024 World Day for Safety and Health at Work which is celebrated on 28 April each year. The theme chosen for this year’s celebration was “Ensuring Safe and Healthy Work Now in a Changing Climate” and in that connection the following activities would be organised –

- (a) Safety and Health at Work Week from 22 to 26 April 2024;
- (b) a consultative meeting with Safety and Health Committees; and
- (c) focused activities by key players in safety and health comprising –
 - (i) Awareness and Sensitisation Campaigns;
 - (ii) Open Days;
 - (iii) Workshop;
 - (iv) Field Training Exercise; and
 - (v) Project Write-up Competition.

21. Cabinet has taken note that, as at 04 April 2024, there were 231 active cases of Dengue Fever in Mauritius of which 43 had been hospitalised in both public and private hospitals. For Rodrigues, 135 active cases of Dengue Fever had been recorded as at 04 April 2024, of which 18 were hospitalised. Vector control activities and sensitisation of the population were ongoing.

22. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent visit of the Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development to Rodrigues in the context of the National Budget for the Financial Year 2024-2025 and the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Budget presented on Friday 22 March 2023.

A pre-budget consultation meeting was held with stakeholders, including representatives of trade unions, civil society, NGOs, women associations, parent teacher associations and various economic sectors. A technical working session was held with the Chief Commissioner, the Deputy Chief Commissioner together with other Commissioners of the Executive Council with regard to priority projects and policies that could be considered for the forthcoming budget.

23. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent participation of the Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Investment Committee Peer Review and meetings with OECD officials in the context of the Country Programme for Mauritius, in Paris.

The Minister had side meetings with the French business community including MEDEF International and the *Conseil des Investisseurs Français en Afrique*. He also had meetings with, inter alia, the Deputy Secretary General and the Chief Economist of the International Monetary Fund, the Managing Director, Public Sector & Development Organisations of the Standard Chartered Bank.

24. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent participation of the Minister of Financial Services and Good Governance in the promotional and awareness campaign organised by his Ministry in collaboration with the Economic Development Board in India, with the purpose of reconnecting with the Indian business community. Several meetings were held with the Indian Business Community. Stronger collaborations with the industry association and professional bodies had been established and a thorough Public Relation campaign was also conducted in order to sensitise the Indian investing community on the value proposition of the Mauritius International Finance Corporation and create awareness on the products and services offered.
