

HIGHLIGHTS OF CABINET MEETING – FRIDAY 15 MARCH 2024

1. Cabinet has taken note that the Excise (Amendment of Schedule) (No. 2) Regulations 2024, the Customs Tariff (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2024 and the Customs (Amendment) Regulations 2024, would be promulgated in order to provide, inter alia, for –

- (a) a review of the duty-free entitlement on alcoholic products of incoming passengers; and
- (b) a postponement of the scheduled increase in Excise Licence Fees for the sale of alcoholic products.

2. Cabinet has taken note that the Customs Tariff (Amendment of Schedule) (No. 2) Regulations 2024 would be promulgated to provide mainly for the implementation of the fourth round of tariff cut commitments under the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement between Mauritius and India.

3. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the official visit of the Prime Minister to Agalega. The Airstrip of Agalega, the Saint James Jetty and small development projects, namely *Centre Communautaire Village 25*, *Bibliothèque du Nord*, *La Fourche Fish Landing Station*, *Boutique du Nord*, *Centre Polyvalent Sainte Rita*, *Kiosque La Pointe du Nord* and *Kiosque La Pointe du Sud* were jointly inaugurated by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius and the Prime Minister of the Republic of India on 29 February 2024 through digital connection and live from New Delhi.

The Prime Minister also launched the First Day Cover on the Airstrip of Agalega and Saint James Jetty, unveiled the commemorative plaques, effected guided tours of the airstrip and jetty as well as ribbon cutting at *La Fourche* Fish Landing Station. He visited the handicraft and culinary exhibition by the Agalegans at the *Centre Communautaire Village 25* and participated in a cultural show by the Agalegan artists and Group of Clarel Arnel. The Prime Minister visited the South Island on 01 March 2024 where he unveiled the commemorative plaque of *Centre Polyvalent Sainte Rita* (New Administrative Block) and visited, inter alia, memorial and historical places such as the church, shipwreck Wajao, old mill, old stable and the cemetery. The Prime Minister had a meeting with the representatives of the Agalegan community.

4. Cabinet has agreed to the construction of drains at Morcellement Devoyenne and Morcellement Antelme at Forest Side as well as Morcellement Soobhany at 16eme Mille.

5. Cabinet has taken note of the status of implementation of coastal protection, landscaping and infrastructural works by the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change for the abatement of beach erosion along coastal areas in Mauritius. The coastal rehabilitation works consist of a mix of soft and hard measures as well as nature-based solutions including installation of artificial reefs (reef balls), plantation of mangroves and seagrass, and the restoration of native dune vegetation.

As at date, more than five kilometres of eroded coastline had already been rehabilitated at eight sites, namely Case Noyale, Baie du Tombeau, Grand Baie Sunset Boulevard, St Martin, Pointe aux Feuilles to Grand Sable, Petit Sable to Bambous Virieux, Providence and Bambous Virieux to Anse Jonchée. Coastal protection works were currently ongoing at Bois des Amourettes.

For the forthcoming five years, some 8.5 kilometres of eroded shoreline were expected to be rehabilitated at 16 priority sites, namely Trou aux Biches, Albion, Blue Bay public beach, La Preneuse public beach, La Mivoie Rivière Noire, Le Morne (Trou Chenille), La Prairie public beach, Bel Ombre, Riambel, Rivière des Galets (Cavadee Platform), St Felix public beach, Pointe d'Esny, Pointe des Régates, Bois des Amourettes, Poste de Flacq and Pointe des Lascars (Barachois).

6. Cabinet has agreed to the holding of the Fourth Research Coordination Meeting on Assessment of Simultaneous Application of Sterile Insect Technique and Male Annihilation Technique from 19 to 23 April 2024 and the Fourth Research Coordination Meeting on Genetic Approach for Development of Genetic Sexing Strains for Sterile Insect Technique Applications from 02 to 06 November 2024, in Mauritius.

The Research Coordination Meetings, sponsored under the Joint Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the International Atomic Energy Agency Programme, would be attended by some 42 researchers from 19 countries. The objectives and expected outcomes of the meeting would be to -

- (a) adapt newly developed fruit fly techniques to the local conditions of Mauritius for effective and efficient fruit fly control;
- (b) build capacity of local stakeholders for the enhancement of environmentally sound solutions for the effective biocontrol of fruit flies;

- (c) conduct research on the simultaneous application of Sterile Insect Technique and Male Annihilation Technique; and
- (d) develop networks between countries attending the meetings for information sharing, management of fruit flies with novel environment-friendly techniques and further research-oriented collaboration.

7. Cabinet has taken note that the Ordination Ceremony of Mgr. Michel Moura as Second Apostolic Vicar (Bishop), would be held on 19 March 2024 at the Cathedral of St Gabriel, Rodrigues. At the invitation of the *Vicariat Apostolique de Rodrigues*, the Prime Minister would attend the event.

8. Cabinet has taken note that the Airports Council International has awarded Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam (SSR) International Airport, the Best Airport – Africa Region 2023 in the category of 2 to 5 million passengers. The rankings of the Airports Council International Airport Service Quality programme for the year 2023 were released on 11 March 2024, confirming the leading position of the SSR International Airport for the third consecutive year in that category.

9. Cabinet has taken note of an oil spill of approximately 1,000 litres of Low Sulphur Fuel Oil which occurred on 11 March 2024 at the upstream of Rivulet Terre Rouge due to a defective valve in the piping system supplying fuel to the boiler of the laundry at Washright Services Ltd, Le Hochet, Terre Rouge.

Cabinet has further taken note of actions initiated by the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change, the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security and other relevant stakeholders to assess the extent of oil spill and arrangements being made by that company for the containment and cleanup of the oil spill.

10. Cabinet has taken note of the activities being organised to commemorate World Water Day 2024 which is celebrated on 22 March every year, to raise awareness on the vital importance of water in safeguarding human security and maintaining the health of the planet's ecosystems. The theme for World Water Day 2024 is "Water for Peace."

The Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities in collaboration with the Central Water Authority (CWA), the Wastewater Management Authority and the Water Resources Unit (WRU) would organise, inter alia, the following activities –

- (a) an exhibition on water hosted by the *Agence Française de Développement at l'Institut Français de Maurice*;
- (b) an exhibition and open days highlighting CWA facilities at La Marie Water Treatment Plant;
- (c) a tree planting event at Salazie Service Reservoir and at La Nicolière Water Treatment Plant, in collaboration with HSBC and the Lions Club of Quatre Bornes;
- (d) an Epanet training session with officers of that Ministry, the CWA, the WRU and the Irrigation Authority; and
- (e) an amateur artist fresco competition for both aspiring and amateur artists.

11. Cabinet has taken note of the activities being organised by the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change to mark Earth Day an International event which is celebrated on 22 April every year. The theme retained for Earth Day 2024 is 'Planet vs Plastics.' To commemorate Earth Day 2024, the following activities would be organised -

- (a) a Prize Giving Ceremony relating to an informative poster competition, a short video film competition and a 3-D maquette competition;
- (b) launching of a mobile application, namely MONATIR which would provide vital and dynamic environmental information to the public, including Air Quality Index, penalties for major environmental offences, details of importers/manufacturers of biodegradable/ compostable bags and single use products, details on waste management facilities, details on highly frequented public beaches and associated amenities; and
- (c) sensitisation of the public through talks, radio programmes, and dissemination of a message via the website of the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change and the Government Email Services.

12. Cabinet has taken note of the activities being organised to mark World Health Day 2024, observed on 07 April every year. The theme chosen for this year's celebration is "My health, my right." The Ministry of Health and Wellness would launch a series of activities on 08 April 2024 which would include screening and counselling for Non-Communicable Diseases, exhibition on health-related issues and healthy meals demonstration in form of food plate models. In addition, the following activities would be organised during the month of April -

- (a) special interventions on MBC TV and Radio including a TV programme '*Priorité Santé*' to sensitise the public on healthy lifestyle and prevention of diseases;
- (b) TV and radio programmes on –
 - (i) adopting healthy lifestyles, namely the importance of physical activity, good diet and the negative impact of alcohol, tobacco and substance abuse;
 - (ii) keeping the environment clean and safe to mitigate the propagation of vector-borne diseases;
- (c) screening for NCDs in the community and at worksites; and
- (d) talks in the community, Social Welfare Centres, Women Centres, Community Centres to sensitise the population on healthy lifestyles.

13. Cabinet has taken note that, as at 14 March 2024, there were 380 active cases of Dengue Fever in Mauritius of which 57 had been hospitalised in both public and private hospitals. For Rodrigues, 158 active cases of Dengue Fever had been recorded as at 14 March 2024, of which 21 were hospitalised. Mass fogging and larviciding as well as a sensitisation campaign were on-going. Mosquito repellent creams were being distributed to inhabitants of Dengue Fever hot spot regions.

14. Cabinet has taken note that the Financial Services Commission of Mauritius had been re-elected as the Africa/Middle East Regional Committee representative to the International Organization of Securities Commissions Board for the term 2024-2026.

15. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent participation of the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Land Use Planning, Minister of Tourism in the *Internationale Tourismus Börse* (ITB) Fair in Berlin, Germany and meetings in the United Kingdom.

Representatives of the Ministry of Tourism, the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority and the Rodrigues Tourism Office, as well as around 100 Mauritian operators of the travel and tourism sector, including representatives of hoteliers, destination management companies and tourism associations participated in the Fair. The Deputy Prime Minister conducted a number of meetings with main partners from Germany and surrounding countries, including commercial airlines and tour operators.

The Deputy Prime Minister had several meetings in London to reconnect with the main partners in the UK market and to discuss the strategy to further boost arrivals from the UK. He also had the opportunity to meet representatives of the UK travel trade media and shared the performance of the Mauritian market after COVID-19, leading to full recovery in many markets and growth in some markets, including the UK.

16. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent official visit of the Minister of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping in the context of the maiden voyage of MV Peros Banhos to Rodrigues. During the ceremony held in the presence of the Chief Commissioner and other members of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, to welcome MV Peros Banhos, it was highlighted that the cargo vessel would play a strategic role in further developing the freight service between Mauritius and Rodrigues.

In the margins of the visit, a number of fisherwomen obtained, inter alia, fishing outfit, with a view to enhancing their safety and security at sea. Furthermore, fishing associations and cooperatives societies were each provided with 500 metres of fishing nets, together with a brand-new large net of 1,000 metres. The Minister also had a working session with the Commissioner for Agriculture and Fisheries.

17. Cabinet has taken note that, pursuant to section 9(2) of the Financial Intelligence and Anti-Money Laundering Act, the President of the Republic has re-appointed Ms Carine Charlette as Director of the Financial Intelligence Unit for a further period of three years.
