

## **HIGHLIGHTS OF CABINET MEETING – FRIDAY 19 JANUARY 2024**

1. Cabinet has taken note of the situation following the passage of Cyclone Belal, namely -
  - (i) an assessment was conducted at public beaches and coastlines around the island and it was noted that a consequential amount of marine debris including seaweeds, twigs, small branches and logs amongst others had accumulated along the shorelines on most public beaches. Above 220 uprooted trees had been observed. The Beach Authority initiated actions for the general cleaning of public beaches, including the carting and cutting of trees and those representing a hazard. Out of 46 coastal sites surveyed, most of them were found to be generally stable, except for erosion observed at the public beach of Flic-en-Flac, Le Morne, Le Morne Pointe Sud-Ouest, Bois des Amourettes and Blue Bay whereby the presence of escarpments was observed. No damage was observed in general at sites where coastal protection works were undertaken, except for damage to gabion at Souillac Cemetery and La Prairie. Remedial measures were being undertaken under the current coastal rehabilitation programme. The Beach Authority would be responsible for the restoration of the beach profile of eroded public beaches using sand *in situ*. The Beach Authority and local authorities would carry out general cleaning;
  - (ii) five registered artisanal fishing boats had been reported damaged and seven submerged. The concerned registered fishers had been requested to apply for assistance at the Fishermen Welfare Fund under the “Damaged Boat Scheme”. The shoreline and beaches that were in a very insalubrious state would be cleaned. Sea water was muddy in the lagoon at Tamarin, Black River (near Barachois), Petite Rivière Noire, Case Noyale, La Gaulette, Le Morne, Riviere des Galets and Souillac. Water at all other places was clear and clean;
  - (iii) no severe damage had been noted in sugarcane plantation as well as in tea plantation. Based on a preliminary survey carried out by the Food and Agricultural Research and Extension Institute and the Small Farmers Welfare Fund, the overall damage for the crop sector was estimated to be between 40 to 75 percent mostly in the South, East and Centre West regions, affecting some 8,000 planters. With regard to the supply of vegetables, since the start of the year, the Agricultural Marketing Board had already arranged for imports of 142 tonnes of carrots, 104 tonnes of cabbage and two tonnes of beans by ship to reach Mauritius the following week and in February 2024. Import permits in respect of carrots, cabbage, lettuce, among others were also being issued to regular importers for them to supply the local market as well as the hospitality sector till April 2024;

- (iv) on 15 January 2024, the Ministry of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity arranged for the opening of 163 Evacuee Centres across the island. Out of the 163 Evacuee Centres, evacuees were present in only 50 Centres, which accommodated 1,290 persons. Four additional centres were also opened on the same day and 377 persons took refuge in these four additional Evacuee Centres. The total number of evacuees in the 54 Centres was 1,667. Basic necessities were provided along with hot meals on 15 and 16 January 2024. As at 18 January 2024 only one centre was still open with 18 persons;
- (v) an assessment of the impact of the cyclone on the tourism sector was effected by the Ministry of Tourism in consultation with the Association of Hoteliers and Restaurants in Mauritius, the Small and Medium Hotels Association of Mauritius/L'Association des Hôtels de Charme, the Association of inbound operators Mauritius, the Federation of Pleasure Craft Operators and the Association of Leisure Operators. 75 tourism operators reported minor impacts while 22 tourism operators highlighted major impacts that their establishments had sustained;
- (vi) an assessment of the situation was conducted by the Land Drainage Authority in several localities, including Port Louis, Providence, Quatre Bornes, Nouvelle Decouverte, Vacoas and Moka. Flood mitigation measures were being adopted, accordingly;
- (vii) 43,748 Central Electricity Board (CEB) subscribers were without electricity as at 16 January 2024. Following interventions conducted by the CEB as at 18 January 2024 evening, 1,479 subscribers were still without electricity supply;
- (viii) the Central Water Authority had reported 3,022 faults out of which, 1,273 were outstanding as at 17 January 2024. Repair works were ongoing;
- (ix) all educational institutions and training centres were closed on 17 January 2024. Classes resumed in almost all educational institutions on 18 January 2024 except for eleven pre-primary schools, six primary schools, two secondary schools, two Special Education Needs Schools and one MITD training Centre. Following a further assessment of the situation, three pre-primary schools, two primary schools, one Special Needs School and one MITD Training Centre were expected to resume studies on Monday 22 January 2024;
- (x) the following financial assistance were, inter alia, being provided to those affected by the cyclone -
  - A. Assistance to Households
    - (a) Rs100 million for the payment of a one-off financial assistance of Rs2,000 to each household that has faced power cuts for 12 consecutive hours; and

- (b) Rs 1 million to provide a full food pack worth Rs2,000 – Rs5,000 to each family affected by the Cyclone, based on Police survey.

B. Assistance to vehicle owners

- (a) Rs200 million for the upfront payment of a one-off financial assistance to compensate individuals whose vehicle were submerged during the passage of the Cyclone; and
- (b) payment of the compensation would be done by Government through the Financial Services Commission.

C. Assistance to Planters, Breeders, Fishermen and Beekeepers

- (a) Rs130 million for the payment of a one-off financial assistance of Rs10,000 per arpent to non-sugar planters, including tea growers, registered with the Small Farmers Welfare Fund and Rs10,000 to Rs25,000 to breeders for deceased animals;
- (b) Rs50 million for the payment of a special support to planters for the repairs of damaged plastic or net covers of their sheltered farms;
- (c) the Development Bank of Mauritius would introduce a new loan scheme to planters for the rehabilitation of sugar cane, vegetable, fruits and flower cultivation and hydroponic units affected by Cyclone Belal. Planters would be provided with loans up to a maximum of Rs500,000 at a concessionary interest rate of 1 percent per annum;
- (d) Rs 1 million for the payment of a special support of Rs 10,000 to fishermen for repairs to their boats damaged by the Cyclone, in addition to the bad weather allowance; and
- (e) Rs250,000 for the payment of a financial support of Rs5,000 per bee colony loss during the Cyclone (up to a maximum of five bee colonies) to registered beekeepers.

D. Urgent Repairs of Public Infrastructure and Amenities

Rs500 million has also been earmarked under the Projects Development Fund for urgent repairs of public infrastructure and amenities damaged by the Cyclone. These works would be carried out by local authorities, the Road Development Authority and the National Development Unit, in consultation with the Ministry of National Infrastructure and Community Development.

#### E. Payment of Cyclone/Flood Allowance

The Ministry of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity had as at Thursday 18 January 2024, effected payment of cyclone allowance to 328 families (1,220 members) across the island to the tune of Rs310,000 and flood allowance to 983 families (3,701 members) across the island. Out of the 1,667 persons who took refuge in the Evacuees Centres, 83 families comprising 303 persons were eligible under the Social Register of Mauritius (SRM) and assistance would be provided to them, based on a needs assessment already carried out. With respect to Non-SRM families who took refuge in Evacuees Centres, additional support in terms of school materials in-kind and food packs would be provided.

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2. Cabinet has agreed to the participation of a Mauritian delegation in the 13<sup>th</sup> edition of the African Games, scheduled in March 2024 in Accra, Ghana. The delegation comprising some 90 athletes would participate in 12 sports disciplines, namely athletics, badminton, beach volley, boxing, cycling, judo, swimming, table tennis, tae kwon do, triathlon, weightlifting and wrestling.

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3. Cabinet has agreed to the setting up of a Steering Committee to spearhead the development of a Country Programme for Mauritius with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The Country Programme consists of in-depth and structured collaboration to strengthen the country's compliance with OECD norms, standards and values in various fields, such as economic development, the fight against money laundering, climate finance, the labour market and education. The Country Programme for Mauritius would cover the following themes -

- (a) tax reforms;
- (b) statistical standards;
- (c) promotion and regulation of cross-border investments;
- (d) fight against corruption, money laundering and terrorist financing;
- (e) green growth and ESG sustainability;
- (f) financial inclusion and digitalisation; and
- (g) social inclusion and gender equality.

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4. Cabinet has taken note of the setting up of a Single Point Office for cremation/incineration and burial procedures in designated localities around Mauritius, which would allow members of the bereaved family to complete all the cremation/incineration or burial procedures under one roof. The objective of setting up a Single Point Office is to provide a single location where all cremation/incineration or burial procedures could be completed quickly and efficiently so as to provide fast and efficient services to the concerned families.

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5. Cabinet has taken note that the results of the Cambridge School Certificate examinations 2023 were made available online through the CIE direct platform to all candidates on 18 January 2024. Out of a total of 12,919 school candidates who took part in the 2023 School Certificate examinations, 9,522 were successful thus resulting in a pass rate of 73.71 percent for the Republic of Mauritius. 10 Secondary schools had secured a 100 percent pass rate. The pass rate for girls was 75.73 percent and boys was 71.24 percent for the Republic of Mauritius.

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