

HIGHLIGHTS OF CABINET MEETING – FRIDAY 12 January 2024

1. Cabinet has taken note that the Combating of the Trafficking in Persons (Amendment) Act 2023 would be proclaimed to become effective on 15 January 2024. The objects of the Act would be to, inter alia, consolidate the existing legal provisions for combatting trafficking in persons and to provide for a modern legal framework to address the issue of trafficking in persons more effectively.

2. Cabinet has agreed to the promulgation of the Public Health (Testing of Infectious or Communicable Diseases) Regulations 2024, which, inter alia, provide for any person, including an incoming passenger, who is suspected to be infected with, or suffering from, an infectious or communicable disease would have to undergo tests as prescribed by the Sanitary Authority. The person should also provide such information as the Sanitary Authority might reasonably require to ascertain if the person -

- (a) presents any symptom of an infectious or communicable disease;
- (b) has been in contact with any person who has or may have an infectious or communicable disease; or
- (c) has otherwise been exposed to an infectious or communicable disease.

3. Cabinet has taken note that the Financial Services (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2024 would be promulgated. The Regulations would provide for the creation of new categories of financial business activities to be licensed by the Financial Services Commission. The Regulations would empower the Financial Services Commission to set up the spot commodity ecosystem and issue licences for the following –

- (a) a spot commodity market;
- (b) a spot commodity clearing house;
- (c) a spot commodity broker;
- (d) a spot commodity broker's representative;
- (e) a spot commodity trading adviser; and
- (f) a spot commodity trading adviser's representative.

4. Cabinet has agreed to the renewal of the Agreement between the Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology and the Roman Catholic Diocese of Port-Louis for the payment of grants to primary schools under the aegis of the Roman Catholic Education Authority (RCEA) for financial years 2022-2023, 2023-2024 and 2024-2025. In line with the policy of free primary education, Government provides grants to the RCEA based on an approved grant formula for the running of 46 primary schools that fall under its purview.

5. Cabinet has agreed to Mauritius ratifying the First Protocol to amend the Free Trade Agreement between the Republic of Mauritius and the Republic of Türkiye. The objective of the Protocol is to incorporate the enhanced market access which Mauritius had negotiated with Türkiye, thereby improving export potential on preferential terms. The Protocol was signed by both countries in June 2023.

6. Cabinet has taken note that Mauritius and the United Arab Emirates successfully concluded the negotiations on a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement. A Joint Statement was accordingly signed on 22 December 2023 announcing the successful conclusion of the negotiations on the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement.

7. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the fourth round of negotiations on the Preferential Trade Agreement between Mauritius and Indonesia recently held in Bali, Indonesia. The final round of negotiations had been tentatively fixed for the first quarter of 2024 in Mauritius.

8. Cabinet has agreed to the Road Development Authority implementing the project for the upgrading of Brisée Verdière – St Julien – Constance Road (B23) along the frontage of the New Flacq Teaching Hospital and the New Mini Traffic Centre.

9. Cabinet has agreed to –

- (a) the National Development Unit implementing two projects, namely the Flood Mitigation Measures at Canal Aliman (Phase 2B) River Widening Works and Rock Revetment at La Caverne, Vacoas and the Construction of drains at Cité EDC at Cottage; and
- (b) the Drains Infrastructure Construction Ltd implementing the project for Flood Mitigation Measures at Allée Mangués, Poste de Flacq.

10. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Economic Development Board, EnterpriseNGR (Lagos Financial Centre), Casablanca Finance City (Morocco Financial Centre), and Rwanda Finance for the setting up of an Africa Roundtable of the World Alliance of International Financial Centres (WAIFC). The objectives of the Memorandum of Understanding would be to –

- a) strengthen the competitiveness of financial centres in Africa;
- b) collaborate jointly through projects, research papers, communiqués and events to position the African Continent, to demonstrate the myriad of investment opportunities, and to showcase the strategic role which financial centres play within the African Continent;
- c) engage in joint initiatives to support the exchange of best practices between members, with a view to enhancing visibility both regionally and internationally, and to providing African financial centres with a unified voice;
- d) facilitate the development of dialogue with major financial centres outside the African Continent; and
- e) build communication channels with African institutions including regulators and policy makers, as well as African financial services industry associations and advocate for regulatory coordination amongst members of the Africa Roundtable of the WAIFC to promote cross-border investments and financial services.

11. Cabinet has taken note that the Mauritius Meteorological Services in partnership with the World Meteorological Organization and FOCUS-Africa, would hold a workshop from 23 to 26 January 2024 in Mauritius. The aim of the workshop would be to establish a framework that would bring experts and users from the water and agricultural sector, and meteorological department to work together towards enhancing water resource management in the Republic of Mauritius and to develop better projections for rainfall and water storage need for the island up to a 50-year horizon.

12. Cabinet has taken note that the Africa Training Institute would host a conference on 23 and 24 January 2024 to mark its tenth anniversary. The event would feature high-level discussions on the broad theme of “Economic Policies and Capacity Development in the time of the Big Funding Squeeze”. The objectives of the conference include –

- (a) discussing how to navigate economic policy challenges in a context of elevated inflation and debt vulnerabilities, and which levers could be tapped by policymakers;

- (b) exploring how capacity development design and delivery could support resilience building and further strengthen policy implementation through stronger institutions and human capital;
- (c) discussing how the fund could be helpful in dealing with emerging issues such as climate change and support the creation of an enabling environment to tap the potential offered by digitalisation; and
- (d) taking stock of how the Africa Training Institute had served the member countries over the past decade and how it could further enhance its impact.

13. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development to France where he attended the 2023 Award Ceremony of the Prix Jean-Jacques Laffont which is awarded to a renowned international economist. Since 2005, the Toulouse School of Economics has been organising the Prix Jean-Jacques Laffont, and six of its winners have also been awarded the Nobel Prize in Economics.

Moreover, the Minister had a working session with a team of researchers from the Toulouse School of Economics. He also met with the Director of Toulouse School of Economics to discuss on the challenges and opportunities of implementing a Carbon Credit Framework for small island developing states such as Mauritius. During his mission, the Minister met the Secretary General of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and the Head of Global Relations for the Middle East and North Africa regions.

14. Cabinet has taken note that in view of the celebration of “Thaipooosam Cavadee” on Thursday 25 January 2024, the Salary Pay Day in the public sector for the month of January 2024 would be preponed to Monday 22 January 2024.

15. Cabinet has agreed to the grant of a one-off special leave of two hours on Monday 22 January 2024 as from 1400 hours to public officers of Hindu faith, subject to exigencies of service, in the context of the inauguration of the Ayodhya Ram Mandir in India, which is a landmark event as it symbolises the return of Lord Ram in Ayodhya.

16. Cabinet has taken note of the activities being organised by the Ministry of Health and Wellness in the context of World Cancer Day 2024, observed on 04 February of each year, in order to raise awareness and draw attention to the ongoing fight against cancer. The theme retained for the period 2022 to 2024 is ‘Close the care gap’. The Ministry would hold a series of activities during the month of February 2024 to commemorate World Cancer Day 2024 comprising, inter alia -

- (a) radio talks and TV programmes on the theme of World Cancer Day;
- (b) the dissemination of information on the causes of cancer in order to raise awareness about the potential risk of cancer;
- (c) talks and sensitisation campaigns at Community Centres, Women Centres, Social Welfare Centres, schools and community settings on the risk factors of cancer and the preventive measures to be taken; and
- (d) screening for breast and cervical cancer at Mediclinics, Area Health Centres, Women Centres, Social Welfare Centres and work sites.

17. Cabinet has taken note that the Board of the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund has approved the renewal of the contract of Mr Hariduth Chand Ramgoolam as Director of that institution for a further period of one year.
