

HIGHLIGHTS OF CABINET MEETING – FRIDAY 12 JULY 2024

1. Cabinet has agreed to the introduction of the Finance (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill into the National Assembly. The object to the Bill is to provide for the implementation of measures announced in the Budget Speech 2024-2025 and for matters connected, consequential and incidental thereto.

2. Cabinet has agreed to the introduction of the Maurice Stratégie Board Bill into the National Assembly. The object of the Bill is to provide for the establishment of the Maurice Stratégie Board, which shall be known as the Maurice Stratégie. The Maurice Stratégie would take over the functions and powers of the Maurice Stratégie Co. Ltd and, as a research and planning bureau, would -

- (a) provide support to the Government through the development of short-term to long-term plans, visions and strategies;
- (b) undertake in-depth economic research and analysis to support policy choices;
- (c) drive public debate and provide recommendations to support collective choices on social, economic and environmental issues; and
- (d) evaluate Government policies.

3. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Department of Continental Shelf, Maritime Zones Administration and Exploration of the Prime Minister's Office and the Leibniz Institute for Baltic Sea Research Warnemünde (IOW), Germany. The aim of the MoU would be to create a suitable environment for collaboration in the fields of fundamental and applied marine scientific research. The MoU would foster and promote, inter alia, the following –

- (a) developing and implementing joint research;
- (b) organising joint research cruises and scientific meetings;
- (c) distributing and sharing scientific information, resulting from marine scientific research and surveys;
- (d) educational opportunities and exchange of personnel, including high-level qualified researchers and expertise in scientific and exploratory expeditions;
- (e) exchange of technical information; and
- (f) access to infrastructures and research platforms within joint projects.

4. Cabinet has agreed to the renewal of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Mauritius Institute of Education and the National Council of Educational Research and Training, India. The main objective of the MoU would be to promote educational cooperation and content sharing and support academic exchanges and joint research activities. The MoU would provide for the establishment of a Joint Working Group for the efficient execution of projects and the areas of cooperation would be geared mainly towards –

- (a) sharing of resources and exchange of administrative and academic expertise;
- (b) support to quality assurance in teaching and curriculum development;
- (c) placement and professional development of staff; and
- (d) engaging in collaborative research activities in various fields, including teacher education, curriculum and textbook development, amongst others.

5. Cabinet has agreed to the Mahatma Gandhi Institute signing a Letter of Exchange with the Government of the Republic of India for the Digitisation of the Indian Immigration Archives which hold original records that contain information for around 454,000 Indian Indentured Immigrants who came to Mauritius from 1842 to 1910. The records were inscribed on the Memory of the World Register of UNESCO in 2015.

The project would aim at converting the original records of the Mahatma Gandhi Institute Indian Immigration Archives into digital formats that can be processed, stored, and transmitted by electronic devices and systems. The digitisation would encourage the preservation of the records for present and future generations and provide the opportunity for easier storage, faster transmission, improved accessibility, and enhanced data analysis.

6. Cabinet has taken note that the Memorandum of Understanding between the Mahatma Gandhi Institute (MGI) and the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) for the establishment of a Chair in Sanskrit and Indian Philosophy at the MGI would be renewed. Several academics from India have occupied the ICCR Chair. The appointment of the ICCR Chair in Sanskrit and Indian Philosophy would be for a period of two academic years, extendable for one more year with the mutual consent of both parties.

7. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Republic of Mauritius and the Arab Republic of Egypt on the establishment of a Mauritius-Egypt Trade Committee.

The main functions of the Trade Committee would be to facilitate and promote trade in goods and services, enhance collaboration in human resource development and capacity, amongst others. Priority areas for cooperation in trade and industry between the Parties would be identified and implemented on the basis of a joint action plan, including addressing obstacles to trade in goods and services. It would provide guidance on reducing non-tariff barriers for a more streamlined process for the clearance of goods.

8. Cabinet has agreed to the Ministry of Health and Wellness signing a Facility Assessment Agreement with the King's College National Health Service Foundation Trust of the United Kingdom for the implementation of a Hospital Facility Assessment Project in Mauritius. The project would aim at comprehensively assessing healthcare facilities to improve the quality and accessibility of healthcare delivery services.

The main objectives of the Hospital Facility Assessment Project would be, inter alia, to address gaps in customer care towards patients, reduce the waiting time for patients at public health facilities, identify deficiencies and areas for improvement in the healthcare infrastructure and develop a comprehensive roadmap for enhancing healthcare services based on the assessment findings, including recommendations for infrastructure upgrades, technology integration and training. The assessment would provide valuable insights and recommendations for improvements in the healthcare infrastructure and services.

9. Cabinet has taken note that HE Dr Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, External Affairs Minister of India, would be on an official visit to Mauritius on 16 and 17 July 2024.

10. Cabinet has agreed to the Republic of Mauritius joining the Greening Government Initiative which is an international community of practice launched by the Governments of the United States and Canada to engage and support Governments around the world in increasing environmental sustainability and develop collaborative relationships to advance their greening agenda.

The Greening Government Initiative would aim at developing collaborative relationships, share ongoing efforts, present projects, discuss potential ways to work together and address challenges. The Initiative would also seek to build climate resilience in the public sector, help meet the Paris Agreement commitments and make Government operations more green and sustainable through greening initiatives, including the following –

- (a) increasing the use of renewable energy;
- (b) transitioning to net-zero emissions of Government buildings and fleets;
- (c) enhancing resilience of Government buildings;
- (d) establishing sustainable procurement practices; and
- (e) identifying nature-based solutions.

11. Cabinet has taken note that the Mauritius Sugar Syndicate has fixed the ex-Syndicate price per ton of sugar for crop 2023, as follows –

- (a) Final price sugar - Rs30,951/ton sugar;
- (b) Final Bagasse price - Rs2,971.92/ton sugar (based of Rs3.50/Kwh);

- (c) Final Molasses price - Rs2,202.85/ton sugar; and
- (d) Total revenue to be derived by sugarcane planters - Rs36,125.77/ton sugar.

The Mauritius Sugar Syndicate was finalising the modalities for the payment of the new price to all sugarcane planters.

12. Cabinet has taken note that the University of Mauritius, in collaboration with the Washington State University, USA, would organise the 11th Advances in Hospitality and Tourism Marketing and Management Conference from 15 to 19 July 2024 in Mauritius.

The objective of the Conference would be to thoroughly examine contemporary hospitality and tourism issues, stimulate dialogue and develop new perspectives in the field of hospitality and tourism, within a globalised environment. The event would provide a unique forum for attendees from academia and industry, to actively exchange, share and challenge state-of-the-art research and case studies. Papers and presentations would address both the theoretical, methodological and practical aspects of tourism and hospitality marketing and management.

13. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Health and Wellness would join the United Nations Health4Life Fund (H4LF). As a multi partner trust fund, the H4LF is an innovative financial collaboration designed to facilitate the cooperation of low and middle income countries in overcoming diverse obstacles and improve prevention and treatment of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) and mental health conditions, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals.

The H4LF was established as a crucial component of the United Nations International Agency Task Force on the Prevention and Control of NCDs and for improving mental health, involving the World Health Organization, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations International Children Emergency Fund. It aims at improving care and reducing the five main risk factors, i.e. tobacco use, harmful use of alcohol, physical inactivity, unhealthy diet and air pollution across the life-course from early childhood to old age.

14. Cabinet has taken note of the implementation of the National Plan (2024-2028) for the Management of Insecticide Resistance in Mosquito Vectors of Diseases. The National Plan which was developed with the technical support of the World Health Organization, seeks primarily to preserve the effectiveness of existing and future vector control interventions.

The National Plan was intended to inform the vector control programme leaders, operational staff, and decision-makers on the extent of the phenomenon and the threat it represents for the control, elimination and prevention of reintroduced vector borne diseases. It would also guide the deployment of the most effective strategies to combat mosquito vectors and the proper management and use of insecticides. It would also be beneficial to the technical and financial partners, including academic and research institutions in helping to mobilise the necessary resources to monitor and manage resistance to insecticides.

15. Cabinet has taken note that, as at 11 July 2024, there were 59 active cases of Dengue Fever in Mauritius, of which four persons had been hospitalised in both public and private hospitals. For Rodrigues, 16 active cases of Dengue Fever had been recorded and one person was hospitalised.

Cabinet further noted that since 11 January 2024, 59 cases of Leptospirosis had been reported in Mauritius and three persons had been hospitalised as at 11 July 2024. The Ministry of Health and Wellness was pursuing the sensitisation campaigns on Dengue Fever and Leptospirosis in collaboration with relevant stakeholders.

16. Cabinet has taken note of activities being organised by the Nelson Mandela Centre for African Culture for the celebration of Nelson Mandela International Day 2024, which is celebrated every year on 18 July. The theme for this year's celebration is "It is still in our hands to combat poverty and inequity", emphasising the need for collective action to address social and economic disparities. The following activities would be organised on Thursday 18 July 2024 -

- (a) a Memorial Lecture on the theme of the Day at the Mahatma Gandhi Institute;
- (b) a "fresque murale" by local artists on the facade of the building of the NGO "Future Hope";
- (c) organisation of educational workshops, interactive sessions and motivational talks on the theme "Unveil Your Potential and Create Your Future Self" for the personal and artistic development of the youths; and
- (d) performance by the youth of Ste Croix to showcase their talents.

17. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent participation of the Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation in the UNESCO Policy Dialogue on Artificial Intelligence (AI) Governance and in the closed meeting of the UNESCO AI Ethics Experts without Borders Network held in Paris, France.

The objective of the Policy Dialogue on AI was to address the pressing issues and the changing landscapes as well as the emerging challenges of implementing a responsible and effective system of AI governance and to take stock of progress achieved with the Readiness Assessment Methodology currently under implementation in over 50 countries. A policy paper exploring the potential impacts of AI on political life and democracy was launched during the event. The Minister participated as panelist in the session entitled "From Ethical Principles to Action: Leveraging UNESCO's Recommendation on the Ethics of AI".
