

HIGHLIGHTS OF CABINET MEETING – FRIDAY 20 SEPTEMBER 2024

1. Cabinet has agreed to the promulgation of the Ports (Operations and Safety) (Amendment) Regulations 2024 and the Ports (Security) (Amendment) Regulations 2024. These Regulations would provide for the alignment of the maximum penalty following the amendments brought to section 65 of the Ports Act. The fines would be increased to an amount not exceeding Rs1 million and the maximum term of imprisonment would be increased from 12 months to two years, in line with provisions of the Ports Act.

2. Cabinet has agreed to the promulgation of the Road Traffic (Construction and Use of Vehicles) (Amendment No.2) Regulations 2024, which provide for, inter alia, an omnibus to be exempted from complying with any of the requirements pertaining to the provision of an entrance and exit door, subject to certain conditions.

3. Cabinet has taken note that subsequent to the signing of the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement between the Republic of Mauritius and the United Arab Emirates in July 2024, the following regulations would be promulgated –

- (a) the Customs Tariff (Amendment of Schedule) (No. 4) Regulations 2024 which provide for the implementation of preferential tariff commitments for imports from the United Arab Emirates; and
- (b) the Customs (Export to the United Arab Emirates under the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement) Regulations 2024 which provide for Rules of Origin requirements for goods exported from Mauritius.

4. Cabinet has taken note of the promulgation of the Central Water Authority (Dry Season) (Amendment No. 8) Regulations 2024, which provide for the complete suspension of sugarcane irrigation across the island over a specified time period from 23 September to 11 October 2024.

5. Cabinet has agreed to duty-free facilities being extended for the purchase of motor cars by priests or by religious federations employing priests. The religious federation would have to apply for duty-free facilities on a dedicated online platform and submit a list of all employed priests to the Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage for approval. The Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage would also register priests under specific conditions. In that respect, the Excise (Amendment of Schedule) (No. 4) Regulations 2024 would be promulgated to give effect to the implementation of the duty-free facilities to priests as from 01 October 2024.

6. Cabinet has agreed to *Maurice Stratégie* signing a Memorandum of Understanding with KCIOUS Ltd, with a view to establishing a framework for cooperation in the exchange and analysis of Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) data, while reinforcing mutual capabilities towards ESG research and modelling.

7. Cabinet has agreed to the implementation of an updated Port Disaster Management Plan by the Mauritius Ports Authority in case of incidents. The Plan would take into consideration the statutory changes in the handling of disasters through the enactment of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act. The Plan would also address emerging risks and would be used by all agencies responsible for disaster planning and management in the port area.

8. Cabinet has taken note that -

- (a) seven portions of State land of an aggregate extent of some 28A03P along the south eastern coast of Mauritius between Pointe aux Feuilles to Providence, Grand Port would be proclaimed as public beaches, following the implementation of coastal protection, landscaping and rehabilitation works carried out thereat; and
- (b) a plot of an extent of 0A09P would be proclaimed as Public Beach at Pointe aux Piments. Another plot of an extent of 0A09P of public beach would be deproclaimed from the Pointe aux Piments Public Beach and vested in the Ministry of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping for the Marine Park Centre.

9. Cabinet has taken note that the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport had been assessed as the overall winner of the Airports Council International (ACI) Africa Safety Award 2024 in Category 2, which groups African airports having recorded between 20,000 and 50,000 aircraft movements in the year 2023. The award positions the Airports of Mauritius Ltd as a leader in safety management and resilience, reinforcing its reputation as a trusted hub for passengers, airlines, and global partners.

ACI Africa Airport Safety Award was a testimony of the commitment to the continuous improvement of safety on the African continent as well as a recognition of the best African airports in terms of airport safety, which was considered as the main pillar of the air transport industry.

In 2022, the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport had won the Airport Safety Award “Best Safety Management Systems in Eastern Africa”.

10. Cabinet has taken note that Ms Teekeswari (Pallavee) Appigadoo, a Mauritian national, was attempting to become the first female pilot to fly from South Africa to Mauritius and back with a Cessna F172P, a single engine aircraft. She was undertaking the flight to raise funds for the Society for Aid to Children Inoperable in Mauritius (S.A.C.I.M). She left Johannesburg on 18 September 2024 and would arrive in Mauritius on 22 September 2024. She was expected to leave Mauritius on 03 October 2024.

11. Cabinet has taken note of the participation of three Mauritian athletes in the Commonwealth Weightlifting Championships from 17 to 24 September 2024 in Fiji. Ms Ketty Lent won a gold medal in the -81kg category (Snatch: 100kg, Clean and Jerk: 123kg, Total: 223kg). It is the first time that a Mauritian won a medal in this competition.

12. Cabinet has taken note that at a resumed sitting of the 10th Emergency Special Session of the UN General Assembly held in New York on 17 and 18 September 2024, a draft resolution tabled by the State of Palestine entitled 'Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legal consequences arising from Israel's policies and practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and from the illegality of Israel's continued presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory' was considered. At the General Assembly, 124 UN Member States voted in favour of the resolution, including Mauritius.

13. Cabinet has agreed to the implementation of a project for the renewal of pipelines in the region of Vallée des Prêtres and Cité La Cure by the Central Water Authority.

14. Cabinet has agreed to the course of action outlined in the Concept Paper entitled 'Rethinking the Mauritius International Financial Centre (Mauritius IFC) 2025-2030', which aims at providing solutions to the current challenges and devising strategies to sustain the growth of the Mauritius IFC.

15. Cabinet has agreed to the review of the price control mechanism for essential commodities in Rodrigues with a view to streamline the determination of maximum retail prices, mirroring the system already operational in Mauritius.

The Ministry of Commerce and Consumer Protection would extend the Price Fixing Information System to Rodrigues, allowing for electronic submission, processing, and approval of costing returns, similar to the system used in Mauritius. The same maximum markup mechanism used in Mauritius would be applied in Rodrigues for most controlled products to ensure consistency. New regulations would be made to enforce the new price control mechanism in Rodrigues.

16. Cabinet has taken note that the Mauritius Revenue Authority would host the 44th Commonwealth Association of Tax Administrators Technical Conference from 21 to 25 October 2024 in Mauritius. The Conference would serve as a platform for member tax administrators to deliberate on significant policy and technical matters that are currently pertinent. The theme of the Conference is ‘Reshaping the Tax Administration in a Dynamic Landscape’

17. Cabinet has taken note of the enlargement of the Government Chatbot, an intelligent virtual assistant which is a state-of-the-art solution, to respond to citizens’ queries. In June 2023, the Government Chatbot also known as Mauritius Artificial Intelligence Assistant was launched at three pilot sites. The Government Chatbot would now be extended to five additional sites into a master bot powered by GPT. The master bot would be deployed on websites of eight Ministries/ Departments providing a unified and consistent Chatbot experience across the websites, allowing users to access comprehensive information and services.

The master bot would also provide for transactional services where citizens could book an appointment on “*moRendezVous*” platform, download a copy of their Birth and Marriage certificates and also either create a ticket or simply check the status of the tickets created on the Citizen Support Portal.

18. Cabinet has taken note of the status of implementation of the project relating to the upgrading of the *Maison des Pêcheurs* at Tamarin. The primary objective of the project was to revitalise the *Maison des Pêcheurs* so that the Mauritius Fishermen Cooperative Federation Ltd could carry out fish processing activities thereat, with a view to providing economic benefits to the fishing community. The project would revitalise the local fishing industry by enabling value-added fish processing activities under the stewardship of the Mauritius Fishermen Cooperative Federation Ltd.

19. Cabinet has taken note of the activities being organised in the context of World Animal Day, which is marked on 04 October every year to raise awareness on animal welfare and to recognise the roles that animals play in the lives of people. The theme for this year is ‘The world is their home too.’

The Mauritius Society for Animal Welfare in collaboration with the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security and relevant stakeholders would hold an event on 28 September 2024 at the Mahatma Gandhi Institute Football Playground, Moka, with a view to, inter alia, sensitising the public on the various ongoing schemes and programmes related to the welfare and well-being of animals. The event would, among others, comprise the following –

- (a) free sterilisation of dogs, adoption of dogs and cats and microchipping and registration of dogs;
- (b) official launching of the Pet Management System and Mobile Application for Survey; and
- (c) dog training demonstrations by the Mauritius Police Force, the Mauritius Prison Service and the Mauritius Revenue Authority.

20. Cabinet has taken note of the activities being organised in the context of World Post Day to be celebrated on 09 October 2024 under the theme “150 years of enabling communication and empowering peoples across nations”. The Mauritius Post Ltd would be organising, inter alia, the following activities –

- (a) launching of a First Day Cover to mark the 150th anniversary of the Universal Postal Union;
- (b) holding of an e-exhibition at the Postal Museum and some post offices from 14 to 31 October 2024; and
- (c) open days in Post Offices for the public and students from 14 to 18 October 2024.

21. Cabinet has taken note of the activities being organised by the Ministry of Health and Wellness in the context of World Heart Day which is observed on 29 September every year. The theme chosen this year is “Use Heart for Action”. An official ceremony would be held on 28 September 2024 at Victoria Hospital for the inauguration of the New Cardiac Outpatient Department. The following activities would also be organised by the Ministry of Health and Wellness in collaboration with relevant stakeholders during the months of September and October 2024 –

- (a) TV and Radio programmes to sensitise the population on the Non-Communicable Disease (NCD) risk factors and the importance of a healthy lifestyle;
- (b) talks on NCDs including cardiovascular diseases and their risk factors and the importance of adopting a healthy lifestyle in Community Centres, Social Welfare Centres and Government Schools;
- (c) distribution of pamphlets on obesity, keep fit, prevention of tobacco use, healthy living to the public during sensitisation and awareness campaigns; and
- (d) NCD screening at worksites and in the community for persons aged 18 years and above and in secondary schools for students of Grades 7, 9 and 12.

22. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent participation of the Mauritius delegation led by HE Mr Marie Cyril Eddy Boissézon, Vice-President of the Republic of Mauritius to the 9th Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) held in Beijing. The 2024 Beijing Summit was held on the theme “*Joining Hands to Advance Modernization and Building a Community with a Shared Future*”.

The Summit adopted two outcome documents, namely the FOCAC Declaration and the China-Africa Action Plan 2025-2027, to build major consensus between the two sides and chart a path for implementing high-quality China-Africa cooperation in the next three years. Beyond these agreements, the FOCAC Summit aimed at nurturing political, economic and social ties through high-level bilateral meetings and discussions with all participating delegations.

23. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Board of Trustees of the Rajiv Gandhi Science Centre Trust Fund with Dr (Mrs) Ellora Dhunoo, as part-time Chairperson.
