

HIGHLIGHTS OF CABINET MEETING – FRIDAY 31 MAY 2024

1. Cabinet has agreed to the promulgation of the Education (Amendment) Regulations 2024, which would provide for an increase in the eligibility criteria in terms of parents' income thresholds for the 24 Additional Scholarships which were offered by Government every year based on Merit and Social Criteria as follows –

- (a) for the 16 Scholarships based on Merit and Social Criteria, the monthly eligibility income threshold of parents would be increased from an aggregate of Rs18,000 to Rs37,000; and
- (b) for the eight Additional Scholarships, the eligibility income threshold would be increased from an aggregate of Rs10,200 to Rs18,500.

2. Cabinet has agreed to the proclamation of the Food Act 2022 and the promulgation of the Food Regulations 2024. The Regulations would provide, inter alia, for adherence to international standards, namely the Codex Alimentarius, with the objective of improving the ease of doing business without compromising on the safety and nutritional quality of food.

3. Cabinet has taken note that the Allied Health Professionals Council (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2024 would be promulgated to provide for the appropriate qualifications requirements of allied health professionals.

4. Cabinet has taken note of the promulgation of the Consumer Protection (Control of Sale of Imported Live Animals for Home Slaughter) (Amendment) Regulations 2024. The Regulations provide for the fixing of the retail price of live cattle at Rs174 per kilo, effective from 28 May 2024 until two days after the festival, in the context of the forthcoming Eid-UI-Adha Festival.

5. Cabinet has taken note of the promulgation of the Central Water Authority (Dry Season) (Amendment No. 4) Regulations 2024 to extend its application until 30 June 2024.

6. Cabinet has taken note that the Public Procurement (Amendment No. 3) Regulations 2024, the Public Procurement (Suspension and Debarment) (Amendment) Regulations 2024 and the Public Procurement (Disqualification) (Revocation) Regulations 2024 would be promulgated. The Public Procurement (Disqualification) Regulations 2009 would be revoked.

7. Cabinet has taken note that the Executive Board of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) had at its meeting held on 15 May 2024, considered the 2024 Article IV Consultation Staff Report for Mauritius, thereby concluding the Article IV Consultation with Mauritius. The IMF revised upward its initial figures with a real GDP growth reaching 8.9 percent in 2022 and 7 percent in 2023, such that GDP had exceeded its pre-pandemic level. The IMF was of the view that the “outlook for the [Mauritian] economy is favourable”. In 2024, real GDP growth would be driven by construction and the recovery of tourism to pre-pandemic levels, “inflation would decline further to 4.9 percent in 2024 and 3.5 percent thereafter, in line with the Bank of Mauritius’ medium-term inflation target”. Moreover, the IMF was projecting public debt to continue declining over the medium term. The IMF was also expecting the external current account deficit to drop to around 4 percent of GDP over the medium term.

8. Cabinet has agreed to the signing a Memorandum of Understanding between the Brunel University, London, United Kingdom and the Mauritius Institute of Education (MIE). The main objective of the Memorandum of Understanding would be to promote academic cooperation between the two institutions in relation to research in education. The areas of cooperation would be geared mainly towards -

- (a) provision of research capacity building for staff members of the MIE, including staff exchange;
- (b) organisation of training sessions for early career researchers in Mauritius and UK;
- (c) participation in projects focused on educational research, revision and internationalisation of curriculum; and
- (d) provision of shared access to online educational research repositories.

9. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Mauritius Institute of Biotechnology Ltd and the University of Mauritius which would provide for cooperation in the areas of biotechnology, namely -

- (a) performance monitoring and collaboration with the Centre of Biomedical and Biomaterials Research of the respective parties;
- (b) organise/participate in joint biotech enterprise events, joint seminars, business development exercises regionally and globally in support of the Mauritian Bio-Pharma industry;
- (c) seeking and supporting new biotech partners and their respective project launches in Mauritius and Africa;

- (d) review/share/acquire Intellectual Property assets or projects, in-licensing/out-licensing of projects between the two institutions for purposes of regional development; and
- (e) development and implementation of biotechnology partnerships with local and international entities.

10. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a Grant Agreement under *Facilité d'Amorçage de Préparation et de suivi du Projets* between the Government of Mauritius and the *Agence Française de Développement*. The grant would be used, amongst others, to -

- (a) conduct feasibility study of priority projects which would be identified in the Master Plan for the Water Sector;
- (b) conduct a social and environment impact assessment of those priority projects; and
- (c) develop project concepts in order to obtain grants from multilateral agencies such as Green Climate Fund.

11. Cabinet has taken note that the unveiling ceremony of the statue of Late Sir Anerood Jugnauth would be held on Saturday 15 June 2024 at Esplanade Professor Basdeo Bissoondoyal, Port Louis Waterfront and has further taken note that the statue would be designated as National Heritage under the National Heritage Fund Act.

12. Cabinet has agreed to the implementation of a new protocol for the movement of livestock from Rodrigues, which would be applicable with immediate effect and until further notice.

13. Cabinet has taken note that Oxford Insights released an independent Report entitled "Government AI Readiness Index 2023", providing a thorough evaluation of preparedness of countries across the globe to implement Artificial Intelligence (AI) in public services and offering strategic recommendations for enhancing the national AI capabilities. The classification of countries in the AI Readiness Index Report 2023 was based on three pillars, namely Governance, Technology Sector, and Data and Infrastructure.

With a score of 53.27, Mauritius was ranked 1st among 48 sub-Saharan African countries and 61st out of 193 countries globally. Mauritius was the first country in Africa with a five-year term AI Strategy since November 2018 which contributed remarkably for its ranking.

14. Cabinet has taken note that the Computer Emergence Response Team of Mauritius (CERT-MU), had been accredited with the Security Incident Management Maturity Model (SIM3) certification on 14 May 2024. The Security Incident Management Maturity Model (SIM3) was a maturity model that had been in use since 2009 and had been applied by teams all over the world. Mauritius was the only country in Africa and second country outside Europe to achieve this certification thereby making it compliant with such a significant maturity model in the international arena.

15. Cabinet has taken note that Mauritius had been selected by the Government of Japan, for the implementation of a project to disseminate the “Kaizen Approach” in Mauritius and some neighbouring countries, under the Japan Technical Cooperation Framework. The project would be implemented by the Japan International Cooperation Agency at the National Productivity and Competitiveness Council (NPCC). Mauritius would benefit from the implementation of the project, inasmuch as –

- (a) it would enhance the capability of the NPCC, to act as a Centre of Excellence for “Kaizen Approach”;
- (b) the NPCC would play a key role in spreading the “Kaizen Approach” in Mauritius and neighbouring countries, as well as promoting regional integration;
- (c) it would assist NPCC in generating revenue since the latter would be remunerated for expert consultancy services in “Kaizen Approach”; and
- (d) it was aligned with the policy of the Government to improve the productivity and competitiveness of the Mauritian enterprises.

16. Cabinet has taken note of the status of implementation of the project “Accelerating the Transition to a Net-Zero Nature-Positive Economy in Mauritius” by the Ministry of Industrial Development, SMEs and Cooperatives with the financial assistance of the Global Environment Facility and the technical support of the United Nations Environment Programme. The project aims at accelerating the decarbonisation of the manufacturing sector and creating the enabling conditions to support the integration of net-zero and nature-positive initiatives at national level.

17. Cabinet has agreed to the provision of a financial assistance of USD25,000 to the Republic of Madagascar, as a gesture of solidarity following the passage of Tropical Cyclone Gamane which hit Madagascar in March 2024.

18. Cabinet has taken note of the holding of the 1st International Conference on Smart Energy Systems and Artificial Intelligence (SESAI), from 03 to 06 June 2024 in Mauritius. The conference which would be organised by the University of Mauritius in collaboration with the *Université de Lorraine*, France, would promote international collaboration and cooperation among researchers, organisers and institutions working in the field of Smart Energy Systems and Artificial Intelligence. The event would provide –

- (a) a platform for researchers, practitioners, policymakers and industry experts to share their latest findings, research outcomes, and insights into the integration of SESAI; and
- (b) a forum for policymakers, regulators and industry leaders to discuss policy frameworks, regulations, incentives and market mechanisms that can accelerate the adoption of SESAI.

19. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the 38th Council of Ministers of the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) held recently in Mauritius. The chairmanship of the IOC was handed over to HE Mr Sylvestre Radegonde, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Tourism of the Republic of Seychelles, at the close of the meeting. The following issues were, inter alia, discussed during the Council of Ministers -

- (a) Regional Maritime Security Architecture;
- (b) Conference on Food Security;
- (c) Climatic Resilience;
- (d) Ministerial Conference on Port Security; and
- (e) *Surveillance Epidémiologique et de Gestion des Alertes (SEGA) One Health.*

20. Cabinet has taken note that the International Atomic Energy Agency Regional Workshop on Dosimetry for Irradiation Facilities in Mauritius which was initially scheduled from 24 to 28 June 2024, had now been re-scheduled from 26 to 30 August 2024.

21. Cabinet has taken note that, as at 30 May 2024, there were 159 active cases of Dengue Fever in Mauritius, of which 19 persons had been hospitalised in both public and private hospitals. For Rodrigues, 24 active cases of Dengue Fever had been recorded of which two persons were hospitalised. Cleaning of barelands, vector control activities as well as sensitisation were ongoing.

Cabinet further noted that since 11 January 2024, 42 cases of Leptospirosis had been reported in Mauritius. There were three active cases as at 30 May 2024. The Ministry of Health and Wellness was conducting a sensitisation campaign on Leptospirosis in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, including the MBC and media.

22. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent official visit of the Minister of Commerce and Consumer Protection to Rodrigues, the main purpose of which was to have consultations with local stakeholders on the upcoming Consumer Protection Bill and to take stock of enforcement in the areas of Consumer Protection and Legal Metrology.

During the visit, the Minister held discussions with consumer associations and the business community in the presence of the Commissioner and representatives of the Commission for Women's Affairs, Child Development, Family Welfare, Consumer Protection and Price Fixing.

23. Cabinet has agreed to the constitution of the National Panel for the Indentured Labour Route Project, with Mr Goorooduth Chuckun, OSK, as part-time Chairperson.

24. Cabinet has taken note of the constitution of the Board of the Professional in the Arts Council, with Mr Gaëtan Abel as part-time Chairperson.
