

HIGHLIGHTS OF CABINET MEETING – FRIDAY 02 AUGUST 2024

1. Cabinet has agreed to the introduction of the National Flag, Arms of Mauritius, National Anthem and Other National Symbols of Mauritius (Amendment) Bill into the National Assembly, the object of which would be to provide, as is currently the case, that monochrome, greyscale and line art version of the Arms of Mauritius and the Seal of Mauritius may, with such modifications and adaptations as may be necessary, be used on every official correspondence of the Government and on such other item of the Government, including the uniform of any Government department, as may be approved.

2. Cabinet has agreed to the introduction of the State Lands (Amendment No. 2) Bill and the Pas Géométriques (Amendment) Bill into the National Assembly. The object of both Bills would be to allow the lease of a barachois, situate wholly or partly upon State land or Pas Géométriques, as the case may be, and which has been vested in the Ministry responsible for the subject of fisheries, on such terms and conditions as may be approved.

3. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Prime Minister to the United Kingdom. During his mission, the Prime Minister met the Rt Hon Sir Keir Starmer, KCB, KC, MP, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Rt Hon David Lammy, MP, Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs. Discussions between the Prime Minister and his UK counterpart focused, inter alia, on the negotiations between Mauritius and the UK on the exercise of sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago. During the visit, meetings were also held with the external lawyers of Mauritius on the Chagos Archipelago issue.

4. Cabinet has agreed to the Government Information Service (GIS) signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the National Library on the digitisation and storage of the GIS archives of newspapers in order to pave the way for a collaborative venture between both institutions to preserve and transfer the Archives of Newspapers of the Documentation Section of the GIS, dating as far back as 1952, to the National Library to be thereafter digitalised by the latter.

5. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Rabindranath Tagore Institute, Mauritius, and the Rabindranath Tagore University (RNTU), Bhopal, India. The latter was established in 2010, named after India's first Nobel Laureate poet, painter, and thinker, Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore.

The scope of collaboration under the Memorandum of Understanding would include the following –

- (a) academic and research collaboration in the areas of mutual interest;
- (b) exchange of academic information, scholarly information, materials and publications;
- (c) exchange of students and faculty;
- (d) sponsorship of cooperative seminars, workshops, capacity building programme and other academic meetings; and
- (e) offer of online and face-to-face courses.

6. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a Memorandum of Agreement between the University of Technology, Mauritius and the Competition Commission, Mauritius. The Memorandum of Agreement would provide for collaboration in the field of competition and enable the implementation of the following activities of mutual interest –

- (a) organisation of joint workshops, specialised seminars, guest lectures and webinars with the purpose of disseminating practical information on competition economics and law;
- (b) conduct of joint market studies to gather primary data and promote research in the field of competition;
- (c) sponsorships of academic research projects on competition matters; and
- (d) joint elaboration and delivery of executive programmes for different stakeholders, with the aim to foster knowledge for better awareness, advocacy and assessment of competition matters.

7. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a Small Scale Funding Agreement between the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change and the United Nations Environment Programme for the implementation of the provisions of the Montreal Protocol.

To facilitate compliance with the provisions of the Protocol and enhance the capacity of National Ozone Offices, the Multilateral Fund of the Montreal Protocol provides financial assistance to developing country parties under the Institutional Strengthening Project. In that connection, the following activities would be implemented -

- (a) monitoring and control of the importation of Ozone Depleting Substances (ODSs) and the use of Hydrochlorofluorocarbons, including continued capacity building programmes for Customs Officers and other law enforcement officers to combat the illegal trade of ODSs;

- (b) awareness programmes and information exchange in the refrigeration and air conditioning sector to ensure that the importation of refrigerants is compliant with existing legal provisions; and
- (c) support to the operation of the National Ozone Unit at the level of the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change;

8. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of an Agreement with Ukraine on mutual abolition of visa requirements for holders of Diplomatic, Service, Ordinary passports and other travel documents such as Seaman's Identification Card, Crew Member Certificate, Certificate for Return to Ukraine for nationals of Ukraine. Currently, nationals of Ukraine travelling to Mauritius obtain a visa on arrival up to 90 days. However, Mauritian nationals travelling to Ukraine need to apply for a visa prior to departure. Under the Agreement, nationals of both countries, holding valid travel documents as specified in the Agreement shall enter into, stay in, exit from and transit through the territory of the State of the other country without visas, for a period not exceeding 90 days within 180 days.

9. Cabinet has taken note that the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) between Mauritius and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) was signed on 22 July 2024 by HE Dr Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi, Minister of State for Foreign Trade of the UAE and the Attorney General, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade on behalf of Mauritius during an official ceremony held in Dubai in the virtual presence of the Prime Minister of Mauritius, and the Ruler of Dubai, His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum. The CEPA was considered as a "Landmark Agreement", the first in Africa which would consolidate the economic relations between Mauritius and the UAE and increase bilateral trade and investment flows.

10. Cabinet has agreed to instructions being conveyed to the Attorney General's Office for the drafting of regulations, under the Forests and Reserves Act, to better control the exploitation of sandalwood on State and private forests land to address the illegal exploitation and exportation of sandalwood.

11. Cabinet has agreed to the implementation of the National Employment Policy 2024-2028 which would address the expressed needs, expectations and priorities for employment promotion in the following four policy priorities –

- (a) stimulate Employment Growth in Emerging and Sunset Sectors;
- (b) address Education and Skills Mismatch and Labour Shortage;
- (c) strengthen Labour Market Policies and Institutions; and
- (d) promote Quality Employment : Decent Work and Social Inclusion.

12. Cabinet has taken note of the implementation of a National HoneyNet System by the Computer Emergency Response Team of Mauritius (CERT-MU). The National HoneyNet System was meant for critical public organisations which would allow to detect attack patterns, techniques and tactics used by attackers. The National HoneyNet System would act as a decoy system with loosely configured network settings in order to lure cyber attackers.

13. Cabinet has taken note of the adoption of the 4th Universal Periodic Review Report of Mauritius by the Human Rights Council at the 56th Session of the Council. During the adoption session, several countries intervened and commended Mauritius on its progress for the promotion and protection of human rights, its public health policy, its social protection policies and measures taken to improve children's welfare. Non-Government Organisations also commended Mauritius for the efforts for improving human rights, including the inauguration of the International Slavery Museum.

14. Cabinet has taken note of the list of Public Holidays for the Year 2025, which is as follows –

New Year	Wednesday 01 January
New Year	Thursday 02 January
Chinese Spring Festival	Wednesday 29 January
Abolition of Slavery	Saturday 01 February
Thaiposam Cavadee	Tuesday 11 February
Maha Shivaratree	Wednesday 26 February
Independence and Republic Day	Wednesday 12 March
Ugaadi	Sunday 30 March
Eid-UI-Fitr**	Monday 31 March
Labour Day	Thursday 01 May
Ganesh Chaturthi	Thursday 28 August
Divali	Monday 20 October
All Saints Day	Saturday 01 November
Arrival of Indentured Labourers	Sunday 02 November
Christmas	Thursday 25 December

**** The exact date of this festival is subject to confirmation as its celebration depends on the visibility of the moon.**

15. Cabinet has agreed to the holding of 'Vishwarang 2024', an International Hindi Conference, from 07 to 09 August 2024 in Mauritius by the Rabindranath Tagore University (Bhopal, India) in collaboration with the World Hindi Secretariat, the Mahatma Gandhi Institute, the Rabindranath Tagore Institute, the Hindi Speaking Union, the Hindi Pracharini Sabha and the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation.

The aim of the 'Vishwarang 2024' would be to further promote the Hindi Language and Literature and the Indian Culture and Arts. Some 150 foreign delegates from around 20 countries, including Australia, Bahrain, Ghana, Indonesia, Japan, Kenya, Nepal, New Zealand, Nigeria, Qatar, Russia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, UAE, UK, USA, Vietnam, amongst others, would participate in 'Vishwarang 2024' along with local delegates.

16. Cabinet has taken note of the proposed visit of a team from the Centre for Agriculture and Bioscience (CAB) International from 05 to 08 August 2024 to Mauritius. The CAB International is an inter-governmental and non-profit organisation established by a United Nations treaty-level agreement between 48 Member Countries, including Mauritius.

The purpose of the visit would be to engage with key stakeholders in agriculture and accordingly identify opportunities for collaboration in terms of technology transfer, plant health, capacity building, digital development and access to low-risk production inputs.

17. Cabinet has taken note of the National Strategy (2024-2028) for Integrated Vector Management, prepared by the World Health Organization following a situational analysis on vector borne diseases conducted in Mauritius and Rodrigues in the context of the ongoing dengue outbreak. The National Strategy advocates for, inter alia, the -

- (a) establishment of a Technical Working Group to strengthen existing capacities and set up integrated surveillance system encompassing all vector borne diseases for better coordination;
- (b) reinforcement of the core entomological capacity and infrastructure for vector surveillance through recruitment, training of additional staff and enhancing collaboration with universities for specialised training of staff;
- (c) setting-up of a new laboratory, namely an insectary and laboratory platform incorporating the necessary biosafety and security facilities comprising proper air-controlled system to rear mosquitoes; and
- (d) setting-up of a branch of Vector Biology and Control Division in Rodrigues headed by an entomologist.

18. Cabinet has taken note that, as at 01 August 2024, there were four active cases of Dengue Fever in Mauritius, of which one person had been hospitalised. For Rodrigues, 16 active cases of Dengue Fever had been recorded and one person was hospitalised.

19. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the “Study on the Determinants and Consequences of Abortion in Mauritius”, conducted by the Ministry of Health and Wellness in collaboration with the World Health Organization. The study was conducted from December 2023 to January 2024 with the participation of 350 women aged between 18 to 49 years who were treated in public regional hospitals in year 2022 for complications following abortion.

Recommendations have been made to further improve the situation in regard to spontaneous and induced abortion. A Steering Committee chaired by the Director General Health Services, had been set up to administer and monitor the implementation of the recommendations of the study.

20. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Health and Wellness would join the “Rays of Hope” initiative of the International Atomic Energy Agency, which was launched on the occasion of World Cancer Day in February 2022, with the objective to help increase access to cancer care through establishing, and/or expanding, national cancer control capacities and capabilities using nuclear technologies, including medical imaging, nuclear medicine, and radiotherapy.

21. Cabinet has taken note of the activities being organised to mark World Breastfeeding Week 2024, which is a yearly feature, celebrated worldwide from 01 to 07 August, to raise awareness on the importance of breastfeeding and breast milk. The theme for this year is “Closing the gap: Breastfeeding support for all”. The Ministry of Health and Wellness, in collaboration with the World Health Organization, would organise an orientation workshop from 05 to 08 August 2024 to draft the required legal parameters to promote, protect and support breastfeeding in line with the International Code of Marketing of breast milk substitute.

22. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent participation of the Attorney General, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade in the African Trade Minister’s Consultative Meeting, the 21st African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) Forum held in Washington, DC, and bilateral meetings held in the margins of the Forum. The Minister of Labour, Human Resource Development and Training also formed part of the Mauritius delegation. The theme for this year’s Forum was “Beyond 2025: Reimagining AGOA for an Inclusive, Sustainable and Prosperous Tomorrow”.

The Attorney General, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade co-chaired the first plenary session with the United States Trade Representative. During his intervention, the Minister underscored the role of AGOA as a powerful tool for development and regional integration and emphasised the contribution of AGOA to the development of regional value chains. The Minister also had the opportunity, on the sidelines of the Forum, to meet several key US Officials, with whom he pressed, inter alia, on the importance of the reauthorisation of AGOA by the US Congress and the Chagos Archipelago Issue.

23. Cabinet has taken note of the constitution of the Skills Development Authority Board, with Mr Pradeep Foolchand as part-time Chairperson.

24. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the National Blood Advisory Committee, with Dr Shri Baboo Megduthjee Gaya as part-time Chairperson.

25. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Board of Directors of the Civil Service College, Mauritius, with Professor Dhanjay Jhurry, GOSK, as part-time Chairperson.

26. Cabinet has taken note of the appointment of Mr Karamlall Mantadin as Director of the Rabindranath Tagore Institute.

27. Cabinet has taken note of the appointment of Dr Lee Elisa Pheiffer as Executive Director of the Quality Assurance Authority.
