

HIGHLIGHTS OF CABINET MEETING – FRIDAY 01 AUGUST 2025

1. Cabinet has taken note that on 31 July 2025, the US President issued a new Executive Order with new tariffs underlining that some countries have been willing to negotiate and have shown commitment to address existing trade imbalances with the US. According to the new Executive Order, the new tariff rate applicable to Mauritius will be 15%. The Executive Order will take effect on 07 August 2025.

It is to be recalled that on 02 April 2025, the US President had issued an Executive Order introducing country-specific reciprocal tariffs based on trade imbalances, effective as from 09 April 2025. All countries, including AGOA beneficiaries, were initially subject to these measures and Mauritius faced a 40% tariff. Subsequently, the US announced a 90-day pause and reduced the tariff rate to 10% till 09 July 2025 with all trading partners. A further postponement to 01 August 2025 was announced on 07 July 2025, alongside revised rates for several countries. Since the imposition of the tariff, Government has engaged with the US Authorities at various levels. In reply to a correspondence from the Prime Minister, the US President stated that both Mauritius and the US could negotiate a deal that not only addresses the trade imbalances but also enhances the partnership between the two nations.

Mauritius will pursue discussions with the US Authorities in the interest of the export-oriented sector.

2. Cabinet has agreed to the re-establishment of the Regional Cooperation and Integration Council, under the chair of the Deputy Prime Minister.

In 1996, a Regional Cooperation Council was set up by Government, as a high-level public-private sector forum to address regional policy issues. Its objective was also to create a synergy between Government and economic operators to tap into the vast opportunities that our membership into regional bodies offers.

Until recently, not enough priority was given to regional cooperation, including the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) which is now in force.

As highlighted in the Government Programme 2025-2029, it is important for Mauritius to strengthen regional dynamics and enhance economic integration, particularly with the coastal states of the Indian Ocean while at the same time, supporting the efforts of our partners on the continent to achieve the goals set by the AfCFTA.

The Regional Cooperation and Integration Council will also comprise other Ministers and public and private sector institutions including the Economic Development Board.

As geo-political and global economic uncertainties make it imperative for Mauritius to embark upon a more innovative and strategic developmental diplomacy, the more so as the region and the continent in general are considered as an emerging economic powerhouse, a coherent and more engaging policy will allow the country to ensure economic prosperity through regional integration.

3. Cabinet has taken note that the Attorney-General had convened an Inter-Ministerial Meeting on 31 July 2025 to discuss the report of the Court of Investigation on the grounding of MV Wakashio and avenues open for a claim to be made by the State of Mauritius. Cabinet has agreed to the full report of the Court of Investigation being referred to the Director of Public Prosecutions, as until now, the request he made since 2023 to the then Attorney-General, Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security has not been entertained. Government intends to make the report public.

Cabinet has also taken note that the Wakashio Commemorative Plaque which was installed at the Mahebourg Waterfront, but removed by the previous Government, will be reinstated during a ceremony to be organised on 06 August 2025 by the District Council of Grand Port.

Cabinet has further taken note that action is being initiated for the designation of a Deputy Commandant of the National Coast Guard from amongst serving Senior Officers of the Mauritius Police Force.

4. Cabinet has taken note that the company Udaan Aviation recently involved in a fraudulent activity in Madagascar in the aviation sector, has no dealings in Mauritius. However, UDAAN POTENTIALS LTD, a private domestic company incorporated on 28 November 2019, was struck off the Register of Companies on 16 January 2025 under section 309(1)(b) of the Companies Act 2001. UDAAN POTENTIALS LTD was not a licensee of the Financial Services Commission.

5. Cabinet has agreed to Mauritius entering into a new Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA) with the Republic of Botswana. The objective of this Agreement is to replace the existing DTAA which was signed in September 1995 and entered into force in March 1996, with a new DTAA which complies with the OECD/G20 Base Erosion and Profit Shifting recommendations.

The new DTAA will not only clarify the taxing rights of each country on income covered by the Agreement but also -

- (a) provide certainty to investors in their dealings with Mauritius or Botswana;
- (b) create a conducive environment for greater cross-border investment flows between our two countries;
- (c) establish a framework for exchange of information between the tax authorities of Mauritius and Botswana, with a view to combatting tax evasion and other tax malpractices; and
- (d) provide a mechanism to taxpayers for the resolution of tax disputes.

6. Cabinet has agreed to the promulgation of the Mauritius Agricultural Marketing (Controlled Products) Regulations 2025. The Regulations make provision for, inter alia, -

- (a) by-catch fish removed from foreign non-licensed tuna longliners to be henceforth considered as a controlled product and to mandatorily have to be sold to the Agricultural Marketing Board (AMB);
- (b) procedures for the removal of by-catch fish from both licensed and non-licensed fishing vessels to be further regulated by empowering the AMB to be responsible for the Standard Operations Procedures for the receipt, delivery, purchase, handling, transportation, processing, storage and sale of by-catch fish;
- (c) a sub-committee, to be set up in accordance with the Mauritius Agricultural Marketing Act, which would be mandated to annually review the purchase price of by-catch fish and submit its recommendations to the Board of the AMB; and
- (d) penalties in terms of fines not exceeding Rs1,000 and imprisonment of up to 12 months for offences.

The regulations aim to regulate dealings in by-catch fish and are aligned with the recommendation of the Commission of Inquiry on Drug Trafficking.

The Mauritius Agricultural Marketing (Price of Controlled Products) (By-catch Fish) (Amendment) Regulations 2004 and the Mauritius Agricultural Marketing (Controlled Products) Regulations 2013 would be revoked following the coming into operation of the Mauritius Agricultural Marketing (Controlled Products) Regulations 2025.

7. Cabinet has taken note of the promulgation of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (Privileges and Immunities) Regulations 2025 under the International Organizations and Conferences (Privileges and Immunities) Act. The Regulations provide for privileges and immunities such as immunity from legal process, inviolability of archives and property of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) and protection of premises of the IORA Secretariat, amongst others.

8. Cabinet has agreed to the opening of the Embassy of Mauritius in Tokyo, Japan.

9. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Department for Continental Shelf, Maritime Zones Administration and Exploration (CSMZAE) and the Institute of Geology, Department of Earth System Sciences of the Universität Hamburg, Republic of Germany.

The MoU aims to create a framework of collaboration between CSMZAE and the Institute of Geology, regarding Marine Scientific Research in the Exclusive Economic Zone of Mauritius. The areas of cooperation, under the MoU, include the following –

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

10. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the study of coastal risks undertaken in Mauritius and Rodrigues by the *Bureau de Recherches Géologiques et Minières*, with financial assistance to the tune of EUR1 million from the *Agence Française de Développement*.

The objectives of the project were to assess the risks associated with coastal erosion and coastal submersion for Mauritius and Rodrigues as well as produce Geographical Information System maps for the current period and for incremental impacts of climate change up to the years 2050 and 2100. The project started in June 2022.

Based on findings, the Study has concluded that coastal hazards will increase in the future due to climate change and will have a greater impact on coastal areas. Tourist facilities, residential areas, economic sectors and strategic energy sites will be at risk. Accordingly, the Study has revealed that a number of measures, including the use of nature-based solutions, will have to be implemented with a view to reducing the vulnerability of the coastal zone. The Report and maps will be shared with stakeholders.

11. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent participation of the Minister of Industry, SME and Cooperatives in the 1st Global SME Ministerial Meeting held in Johannesburg, South Africa.

The International Trade Centre, which is a joint agency of the World Trade Organization and the United Nations based in Geneva, partnered with South Africa, under the country's G20 Presidency, to host the first-ever Global SME Ministerial Meeting. The initiative aimed to raise the political importance of SME development to a new level, by bringing countries to form a new platform for developing the growth of the sector and tackling the issues that impede its full potential. The Meeting centred around the theme "Navigating New Business Frontiers", focusing on how SMEs can drive economic transformation in their countries by enabling three key areas, namely -

- (i) Access to Finance;
- (ii) Digital Connectivity; and
- (iii) Green Transition.

During the event, the Minister intervened at the Ministerial Roundtable and presented the perspectives of Mauritius on the theme "Green and inclusive growth for SMEs – climate, nature, circularity and sustainability". He explained how Mauritius is supporting SMEs on the green journey, through innovative policies, financial incentives, capacity-building programmes, and strategic partnerships.

At the end of the Meeting, the "Call to Action" document was endorsed by participating Ministers, which emphasised the urgency of finding shared solutions to challenges that SMEs are facing around the world.

In the margins of the Global SME Ministerial Meeting, the Minister had the opportunity to meet -

- (a) Hon Stella Tembisa Ndabeni, Minister of Small Business Development of South Africa;
- (b) Hon Dr Jumoke Oduwole, Minister of Industry, Trade and Investment of Nigeria;
- (c) Senator the Hon Lisa Cummins, Minister of Energy and Business of Barbados; and
- (d) Mrs Pamela Coke-Hamilton, Executive Director of the International Trade Centre.

12. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent participation of the Junior Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade in the Ministerial Segment of the 20th Ordinary Session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN-20) in Nairobi, Kenya.

The Ministerial Conference on the Environment was convened under the theme “Four Decades of Environmental Action in Africa: Reflecting on the Past and Imagining the Future” and its overall objective was to strengthen collaboration to implement national, regional and global environmental frameworks.

During the Ministerial Segment, delegates adopted decisions on, inter alia –

- (a) ocean governance in Africa;
- (b) strengthening chemicals and waste governance;
- (c) climate change; and
- (d) biodiversity.

Decisions were also taken on Africa’s priorities for the years 2025-2027 and the Tripoli Declaration on “Environmental Action in Africa: Reflecting on the Past and Imagining the Future” was adopted.

In his intervention during the Ministerial dialogues, the Junior Minister laid emphasis on access to finance which remains a major challenge. He urged for a transformation of the global financial architecture with flexible modalities for rapid resource mobilisation in response to climate disasters. The need for Africa to build a unified and strategic implementation approach for a collective participation was underscored to ensure that the Agreement on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) delivered on its promise of equitable access, environmental protection and resilient ocean economies.

13. Cabinet has taken note of the recent participation of the Junior Minister of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade in the 47th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council of the African Union (AU) in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, which was held under the AU's Theme of the Year for 2025, namely "Justice for Africans and People of African Descent through Reparations".

During his intervention at the Ordinary Session, the Junior Minister took the opportunity to reiterate, on behalf of Mauritius, deep gratitude to all AU Member States and the AU Commission for their unwavering support in Mauritius' long-standing struggle to complete its decolonisation process and the obtention of its rightful sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago.

14. Cabinet has taken note of the activities to be organised to mark World Humanitarian Day 2025. World Humanitarian Day is celebrated on 19 August each year to honour and recognise the dedicated efforts of humanitarian workers worldwide, raise awareness about their crucial role, and advocate for their safety and protection as they risk their lives to help others in need.

To mark World Humanitarian Day 2025, the following activities will be organised -

- (a) an Awareness Session/Workshop on International Humanitarian Law, with resource persons from the Mauritius Prison Service, the Mauritius Police Force, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Centre and the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service. The target audiences will be Police Officers, Prison Officers, Fire Fighters and representatives of the International Humanitarian Law Committee members; and
- (b) a Blood Donation with the collaboration of the National Blood Transfusion Service.

15. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the –

- (a) Mauritius Meat Authority Board, with Mr Muhammad Anis Ibné Mustapha Rostom as part-time Chairperson;
- (b) Board of the Irrigation Authority, with Mr Salil Roy as part-time Chairperson;

- (c) Executive Committee of the Senior Citizens Council, with Mr Narraidoo Gava Naraïdoo, OSK, as part-time Chairperson;
- (d) Board of the Mauritius Renewable Energy Agency, with Dr Khalil Elahee as part-time Chairperson;
- (e) Board of the Manufacturing Sector Workers Welfare Fund, with Mr Anas Moussa Ismael Rawat as part-time Chairperson;
- (f) Board of Directors of Polytechnics Mauritius Ltd, with Dr Tomal Chadeea as part-time Chairperson;
- (g) Board of Trustees of the *Conservatoire National de Musique François Mitterrand* Trust Fund, with Mr Allan Marimootoo as part-time Chairperson; and
- (h) Mauritius Museums Board, with Mr Shiam Persand as part-time Chairperson.
