

HIGHLIGHTS OF CABINET MEETING – FRIDAY 31 JANUARY 2025

1. Cabinet has taken note that Moody's had, in a press release published on 30 January 2025, maintained the Government of Mauritius' long-term foreign and local currency issuer ratings at Baa3 but changed the outlook from stable to negative, and kept the local currency country ceiling unchanged at A2. According to Moody's, the initial scorecard indicated a rating in the range of Ba1-Ba3 for Mauritius, that is, a downgrade to a non-investment status, mainly as a result of the significant deterioration in public finances and the high debt burden. However, Moody's maintained the Baa3 rating of Mauritius, hopeful that the Government would be able to reverse the deteriorating trends in the economic and fiscal situation.

Nonetheless Moody's had changed the outlook to negative in view of enormous efforts required to address the challenging fiscal situation left behind by the previous government, and considering the socially and politically difficult fiscal adjustments involved.

The risk for a downgrade in the future remained high. To avoid a downgrade in the future, Moody's expects that the Government pursues comprehensive structural reforms and a credible fiscal consolidation programme starting from financial year 2025-2026, offering the prospect of reversing the fiscal deterioration and maintaining creditworthiness.

2. Cabinet has taken note of the setting up of a High-Level Steering Committee, for monitoring the implementation of measures enunciated in the Government Programme 2025-2029. The High-Level Committee would comprise senior officers and advisers of the Prime Minister's Office as well as Supervising Officers of relevant Ministries. Professionals having suitable expertise and experience in specific fields would also be co-opted to attend meetings of the Committee, as and when required.

Regular Special Cabinet Meetings would be held to take stock of the progress achieved in the implementation of measures in the Government Programme 2025-2029.

3. Cabinet has agreed to the introduction of the Financial Crimes Commission (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill into the National Assembly.

The object of the Bill would be to restore the prosecutorial powers of the Director of Public Prosecutions under the Financial Crimes Commission Act 2023. Accordingly, no prosecution of an offence under the Financial Crimes Commission Act 2023 or the Declaration of Assets Act shall be instituted except by, or with the consent of, the Director of Public Prosecutions.

In addition, any offence to be compounded under the Financial Crimes Commission Act 2023 and the Declaration of Assets Act shall henceforth be made with

the consent of the Director of Public Prosecutions. Consequently, related amendments would be brought to the Courts Act, the Criminal Appeal Act and the District and Intermediate Courts (Criminal Jurisdiction) Act.

4. Cabinet has agreed to the promulgation of the Income Tax (Financial Assistance for Payment of Special Allowance) Regulations 2025 to provide financial support to the following categories of employers facing financial difficulties for the payment of the 14th Month Bonus -

- (a) a charitable institution or a non-government organisation registered with the National Social Inclusion Foundation;
- (b) a registered religious body;
- (c) a trade union; and
- (d) an enterprise, other than an export enterprise or an SME, whose turnover for the year of assessment 2023-2024 did not exceed Rs750 million and operating in the following sectors –
 - (i) Business Process Outsourcing;
 - (ii) security services;
 - (iii) cleaning services; or
 - (iv) construction.

Financial support would also be provided to employers facing financial difficulties for the payment of salary compensation 2025 on a monthly basis for the period January 2025 up to June 2025, in respect of a full-time employee whose basic salary did not exceed Rs50,000, to the same category of employers which would be given support to pay the 14th Month Bonus. The amount of financial support would be as follows -

- (a) Rs610 monthly per eligible employee of a charitable institution, a non-government organisation, a religious body or a trade union if no funding had been received in respect of that employee from the National Social Inclusion Foundation; and
- (b) for SMEs (having turnover not exceeding Rs100 million), Export-Oriented Enterprises and enterprises having turnover not above Rs750 million and operating in the Business Process Outsourcing, Security or Cleaning Services or Construction sectors -
 - (i) Rs610 monthly where the employer had incurred losses or whose profits for the year of assessment 2023-2024 would be reduced by more than 50 per cent after appropriate adjustments including payment of the 14th Month Bonus and salary compensation 2025 were factored in; and

- (ii) Rs305 per employee where the employer profits for the year of assessment 2023-2024 would be reduced by more than 10 per cent but not exceeding 50 per cent after appropriate adjustments including payment of the 14th Month Bonus and salary compensation 2025 were factored in.

5. Cabinet has taken note that Mauritius had been sanctioned by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) for non-payment of shared contributions to the SADC Mission in Mozambique and contributions for the SADC Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo for the period 2023-2024.

Pursuant to these sanctions, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade effected payment due amounting to USD11,057,492 and appealed to the SADC for the lifting of the sanctions imposed so as to enable Mauritius to resume its participation in the meetings of the SADC.

6. Cabinet has agreed to the National Development Unit implementing the Flood Mitigation project at La Valette, Bambous as recommended by the Land Drainage Authority.

7. Cabinet has agreed to the Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities signing a Country Partnership Framework (CPF) with the International Solar Alliance (ISA), which would be structured around three priority areas, namely Advocacy and Analytics, Capacity Building, and Programmatic Support. The CPF would serve as a strategy for the ISA Secretariat in guiding country level engagement. Under the CPF, ISA would provide support to Mauritius in the following areas –

- (a) development of a Country Partnership Strategy;
- (b) development or review of Solar Roadmaps;
- (c) development of facilitative regulatory frameworks to promote the deployment of solar-based applications;
- (d) development of a high-quality bankable project pipeline;
- (e) capacity-building on technical, regulatory, and financing needs of Mauritius;
- (f) scaling solar rooftop;
- (g) establishment of a Solar Technology Application Resource Centre;
- (h) scaling floating solar projects;
- (i) scaling solar agrivoltaics and solar water pumping systems;
- (j) scaling solar for green hydrogen; and
- (k) solar PV battery and waste management.

8. Cabinet has agreed to the *Université des Mascareignes* signing a Memorandum of Agreement with ITL Trustees Ltd (as Trustee of the Mitsui O.S.K Lines Ltd Charitable Trust).

The objective of the Agreement would be the implementation of a project entitled “Development of a Seagrass Monitoring System using Remote Sensing for Enhanced Management of the Mauritius Coastal Zone”. The Charitable Trust would provide funding to the tune of Rs1M to the *Université des Mascareignes*, for the implementation of the project.

The purpose of the “Seagrass Monitoring System using Remote Sensing for Enhanced Management of the Mauritius Coastal Zone” project would be to characterise and monitor seagrass ecosystems around Mauritius using advanced remote sensing technology and Geographic Information Systems.

9. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the University of Mauritius and the Town Planners’ Council of Mauritius.

The purpose of the Memorandum of Understanding would be to establish a cooperative relationship with the aim of developing and fostering academic linkages between the two institutions, namely in the following areas –

- (a) academic staff collaboration in research, teaching and learning;
- (b) general academic collaboration including the exchange of educational resource materials and publications;
- (c) assessment of units for credit for prior learning for academic programmes offered at each institution;
- (d) development and implementation of student mobility and staff exchange programmes; and
- (e) identification of special short-term academic programmes and projects of mutual benefit to both institutions.

10. Cabinet has agreed to the Ministry of Arts and Culture submitting the report on “State of Conservation for the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Property” to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) World Heritage Centre.

The State of Conservation Report 2024 provides an update on measures aiming at safeguarding and enhancing the Outstanding Universal Value of the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Property. The Report also provides an update on the status of the archival and archeological research at the *Parc à Boulets*.

11. Cabinet has taken note of the holding of the 20th Annual Meeting of the Indian Ocean Global Ocean Observing System from 05 to 09 May 2025 in Mauritius. The objectives of the Annual Meeting would be to –

- (a) provide an opportune platform for Mauritius to take stock of the state-of-the-art marine research findings in the Indian Ocean region;
- (b) enable direct participation of Mauritius to the advancement of ocean observations in the region;
- (c) enable Mauritius to benefit from capacity-building initiatives of Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission-UNESCO and the second International Indian Ocean Expedition; and
- (d) contribute to bring Mauritius to the forefront of Marine Scientific Research and facilitate regional integrations and co-operation between Indian Ocean Coastal States.

12. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Health and Wellness would launch oncosurgery services at the National Cancer Centre in the context of the commemoration of World Cancer Day on 04 February 2025. The National Cancer Registry Report 2023 would also be launched on that day and a series of activities would be held during the month of February and March.

A team comprising Dr Sriprakash Duraisamy and Dr Balaji Ramani, renowned Oncologists from RECNAC Oncology Private Ltd, Chennai would be in Mauritius from 12 to 16 February 2025 to offer free oncology services to around ten complicated cases, who were on waiting list.

13. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent participation of the Minister of Arts and Culture in the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention in Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India. The Junior Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade also participated in the Convention along with a 300-member delegation from Mauritius.

During the Convention, the Minister intervened in the plenary session on the theme “Diaspora Dialogues: Stories of Culture, Connection and Belongingness”. The Junior Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade also intervened in a plenary session on the theme “Green Connections – Diaspora Contribution to Sustainable Development”.

The Ministerial delegation had a meeting with Dr the Hon Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, Minister of External Affairs of the Government of India which was followed by an interaction of the Mauritian delegates with the Indian Minister of External Affairs.

The Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awards (Overseas Indians Award) were conferred to 27 beneficiaries from 24 countries to honour their exceptional and meritorious contribution in their respective field. Dr (Mrs) Sarita Boodhoo, GOSK, former Chairperson of the Bhojpuri Speaking Union was one of the awardees for recognition of her achievement in the preservation of the Bhojpuri language and its rich cultural heritage.

14. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the –
- (a) Board of the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority, with Ms Claire Le Lay-Commins as part-time Chairperson;
 - (b) Board of the State Insurance Company of Mauritius, with Mr Ashok Prayag as part-time Chairperson;
 - (c) Board of the Mauritius Recreation Council, with Mr Lucien Laval Nicol Ombrasine as part-time Chairperson;
 - (d) Executive Committee of the National Youth Council, with Mr Shaad Chellapermal as part-time Chairperson;
 - (e) Board of the State Trading Corporation, with Dr Takesh Luckho as part-time Chairperson;
 - (f) Petroleum Pricing Committee, with Mr Kumulsingh Purmah as part-time Chairperson; and
 - (g) Board of the Mauritius Educational Development Company (MEDCO) Ltd, with Mrs Marie Joëlle Sandrine Valère-Bolli as part-time Chairperson.
