

Cabinet Decisions taken on 26 August 2005

1. Cabinet has taken note that the President of the Republic acting on the advice of the Minister of Local Government will issue Writs for Municipal Council Elections to be held on Sunday 2 October 2005 with Nomination Day on 10 September 2005 and Village Council Elections on Sunday 11 December 2005 with Nomination Day on 21 November 2005.

2. Cabinet has taken note of the official launching of the first volume of the Mauritian Sign Language Dictionary containing about 1,000 local signs which have been collected, validated and codified. The Dictionary is an important tool for the training of interpreters, special needs teachers, parents, social workers and all those involved with the deaf community. It is also of capital importance for the cognitive development and education of hearing impaired children. Cabinet has also agreed to consideration being given to the introduction of Sign Language on the MBC/TV.

3. Cabinet has taken note of the status of a project for the design and construction of about 1,100 Firinga Type housing units and of arrangements being made for the construction of a first batch of 596 housing units at Chebel, Henrietta, Balisson (Rose Belle), Rivière des Anguilles, Ville Noire and Bambous in phase 1 of the project.

4. Cabinet has taken note that arrangements have been made with the Hon Chief Justice for Magistrates of District Courts to be on call from 900 hrs to 1700 hrs on Saturdays and from 900 hrs to 1300 hrs on Sundays.

5. Cabinet has taken note that the STC has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the STC India and Rajat Pharmacem Ltd of India on the supply of pharmaceutical formulations to Government hospitals.

6. In line with the declared objective of Government to reinstate the Forms I to VI Colleges, Cabinet has agreed to convert the existing Sixth Form Colleges into Forms 1 to VI Colleges and admitting students in Form 1 in these colleges on the basis of the existing system of regionalisation and grading, except for the nine high demand colleges which will continue to operate as a Sixth Form College in January 2006. These will be converted into a Forms 1 to VI College as from January 2007. The Minister of Education & Human Resources will meet the Rectors of Secondary Schools shortly to finalise the modalities of admission in 2006.

7. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the mission of the Prime Minister to the 25th Summit of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) held in Gaborone, Botswana on 17 and 18 August 2005. In his address, the Prime Minister outlined the achievements and challenges under the Mauritius Chairmanship during the period August 2004 to August 2005, and indicated that SADC should not be used as a platform for declarations of benevolence and good intent but should investigate the root causes of underdevelopment and find concrete solutions to ensure that SADC Member States find their rightful place in the globalised economy. He emphasised on people as centre of development and on the responsibility of SADC leaders to formulate national and regional policies which meet their basic expectations. In the margin of the Summit, the Prime Minister, together with President Mogae of Botswana and President Mkapa of Tanzania, laid the foundation stone of the SADC Headquarters.
An Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement (IPPA) between Mauritius and Botswana was signed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Trade & Cooperation.

The Prime Minister also met HE Joaquim Alberto Chissano, former President of the Republic of Mozambique and Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General, with whom he exchanged views on the UN Secretary-General's Report, *"In Larger Freedom: Towards Development, Security and Human Rights for All"*, which addresses issues such as reforms of the Security Council, use of force, terrorism, creation of an Inter-Government Peacemaking Commission and a Human Rights Council.

8. Cabinet has agreed to Mauritius hosting a Regional Workshop on Aerodrome Operations Planning (AOP) organised by the International Civil Aviation Organisation in October/November 2005. The workshop will cover a broad range of issues in the AOP field, particularly in terms of aerodrome emergency planning, rescue for fighting services, bird hazard reduction, aerodromes certification and airport planning, design, construction and maintenance. Participants from 23 Eastern and Southern African countries will participate in the Workshop.

9. Cabinet has agreed to the policy framework, the institutional structure as well as the procedures for a new Procurement Bill to replace the Central Tender Board Act. The new Bill will be in compliance with international best practices and COMESA procurement directives, the UN Commission on International Trade Law, Model Law on Procurement of Goods, construction and services and the Model Public Procurement Law as per the WTO Agreement on Government Procurement.

10. Cabinet has agreed to the setting up of a Committee to look into the organization of the National Day Celebrations 2006, which will mark the 38th Anniversary of Independence and the 14th Anniversary of the Republic of Mauritius.

11. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the first meeting of the Empowered Negotiating Team on the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement (CECPA) between India and Mauritius held on 08 August 2005 in Delhi. The negotiating team has concluded agreements on three priority areas with short term results; viz. -
(a) a Custom Cooperation Agreement for better monitoring and speedy clearance of consignment;
(b) an Agreement on Standards which would lead to acceptance of each country's certification; and
(c) Mutual Recognition Agreements in respect of the Architectural and Accounting Professions.

12. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the visit of delegations from Manipal Academy of Higher Education (MAHE), India from 17 to 21 May 2005 and Birla Institute of Technology and Science (BITS), Pilani from 30 May to 1 June 2005 with a view to setting up tertiary institutions in Mauritius.

13. Cabinet has taken note of the current situation regarding the running of the Bachelor of Dental Studies (BDS) Programme by the two Dental Colleges in Mauritius and of measures initiated by the Ministry of Education & Human Resources to ensure consistency, quality and standard of the respective programmes and the integrity of the Mauritian Tertiary Education Sector.

14. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund Board with Dr Mrs Vijayalaxmi Teelock as Chairperson and Mr A. Hutchamah as Vice-Chairperson.

15. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the mission of the Minister of Arts & Culture to the Colloquium of Ministers of Culture of SADC Countries held in Windhoek, Namibia on 17

August 2005. The Ministers reviewed the sectoral policies identified at the first Colloquium held in Pretoria and reaffirmed inter alia that –

- (a) culture has an integral and vital part to play in the development of the African continent;
- (b) the legislation on intellectual property rights should be strengthened to protect indigenous knowledge; and
- (c) cultural industries should be promoted with a view to creating jobs and alleviating poverty.

16. Cabinet has taken note of the activities to be organized on Sunday 18 September 2005 to mark the 105th Birth Anniversary of Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam. The programme will comprise inter alia –

- (i) a wreath-laying ceremony in front of the statue of Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam at Esplanade Professor Basdeo Bissoondoyal;
- (ii) launching of a booklet on the former residence of Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, now known as SSR Memorial Centre for Culture;
- (iii) award of prizes to winners of the Painting Competition on the theme "Places Honouring SSR"; and
- (iv) a cultural programme at SSR Memorial Park, Kewal Nagar, Belle Rive.

17. Cabinet has taken note of the measures being implemented by the Ministry of Industry, Small & Medium Enterprises, Commerce & Cooperatives for the sustained industrial development, the smooth integration of the manufacturing sector into the global economy and for the promotion of the development of a world class manufacturing sector, viz.,

- (i) the setting up of a Reform Unit to spearhead administrative reforms and the introduction of Quality Circles;
- (ii) the reduction in processing time for registration of SMEs by the Small Enterprises and Handicraft Development Authority (SEHDA);
- (iii) decentralization of the business counseling and facilitation services of Small Enterprises and Handicraft Development Authority through the Citizen Advice Bureau Offices;
- (iv) launching of an Enterprise Empowerment Scheme to provide grants and loans to start up in an effort to democratize industrial ownership. Some 100 small entrepreneurs are expected to benefit from this scheme annually; and
- (v) setting-up of an Office of Fair Trading which will act as a watchdog over abusive monopolistic powers and carry out market analysis and monitoring.

18. Cabinet has taken note that the former Government had decided not to apply the Automatic Price Mechanism for the second quarter ending June 2005 in order not to effect the price increase of petroleum products on 2 July 2005 but after a period of six months, i.e., in October 2005, and that the Consumer Protection (Control of Prices of Petroleum Products) Regulations were amended accordingly. Cabinet has also taken note of the price structure of LPG and petroleum products.

19. Cabinet has taken note of progress achieved in the setting up of the World Hindi Secretariat and that the Minister of Education & Human Resources would shortly finalise the modality for the operation of the Secretariat with the Indian Authorities. Cabinet has taken note that Mr A. Unnuth and Mr S. Tengur have agreed to form part of the Governing Council.
