

CABINET DECISIONS – 21 AUGUST 2009

1. Cabinet has taken note that meetings on ESA-EC Interim Economic Partnership Agreement (IEPA) would be held in Mauritius on 29 August 2009, when the Interim Agreement would be signed by all parties concerned. The Agreement covers market access compatible with the World Trade Organisation (WTO) rules, fisheries and development. The Interim Agreement provides, as from 01 January 2008, duty and quota free access on all products exported to the EU, with the exception of sugar and rice which are subject to longer transition periods.

Several high officials and foreign dignitaries, including ESA Trade Ministers; the Deputy Minister of Trade of Sweden, Mr G. Wielonden, as representative of the Presidency of the EU Council; the EU Trade Commissioner, Baroness Catherine Ashton; ACP Secretary General, Sir John Kaputin and the COMESA Secretary General, Mr Sindiso Ngwenya, would attend the Meetings.

On the occasion, a Business Forum would be held to bring together the private sector of the COMESA region, the European Union and Mauritius to explore business opportunities under the Agreement.

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2. Cabinet has taken note that the High Powered Committee, under the Chairmanship of Dr the Hon Navinchandra Ramgoolam, GCSK, FRCP, Prime Minister, held a second meeting on 20 August 2009 to take stock of latest developments as regards Influenza A(H1N1), review measures already taken and consider further measures to avoid proliferation of the disease. The Committee decided, inter alia, to close all educational and training institutions from 21 to 30 August.

Cabinet has further taken note that the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life has taken the following additional measures to better combat the disease -

- (a) preparation of protocols and guidelines to be used in schools;
- (b) recruitment of additional doctors and nurses to assist the hospital personnel; and
- (c) operation of hotlines on a 24-hour basis in the five Regional Hospitals as follows –

| <b><u>Hospitals</u></b>  | <b><u>Hotline No</u></b> |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| J. Nehru Hospital        | - 156                    |
| Victoria Hospital        | - 157                    |
| Dr A. G. Jeetoo Hospital | - 158                    |
| SSR National Hospital    | - 159                    |
| Flacq Hospital           | - 160                    |

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3. Cabinet has taken note that the International Conference on Diabetes and Associated Diseases would be held in Mauritius from 12 to 14 November 2009. The Conference would allow participants to, inter alia, -

- (a) understand diabetes and associated diseases and future challenges;
- (b) exchange ideas with leading experts on diabetes and associated diseases, including cardiological problems and their implications; and
- (c) update themselves on evidence-based primary prevention and secondary strategies and develop effective primary health care plans.

Leading Experts would facilitate the Conference.

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4. Cabinet has taken note that, following agreement reached between Dr the Hon Navinchandra Ramgoolam, GCSK, FRCP, Prime Minister and Mr N. Sarkozy, President of the Republic of France during the former's official visit to France, the 'Agence Française de Développement' would provide a grant of one million Euros to support the "Maurice Ile Durable" projects, reinforce technical capacity on renewable energy, finance technical assistance for the improvement of energy efficiency projects and strengthen the structure of the "Maurice Ile Durable" Fund. An agreement between the Ministry of Renewable Energy and Public Utilities and the 'Agence Française de Développement' would be signed shortly.

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5. In the context of Branding Mauritius exercise, Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Tourism, Leisure and External Communications, jointly with the Ministry of Local Government, Rodrigues and Outer Islands, the Ministry of Agro Industry, Food Production and Security, the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life and the Ministry of Environment and National Development Unit, would carry out an island-wide clean-up campaign during the third week of September 2009.

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6. Cabinet has taken note of the status of the implementation of the Plaines Wilhems Sewerage Project. The construction of 25 km of trunk sewer to convey effluents to the Treatment Plant at St Martin has been completed and the construction of 235 km of reticulation networks and connections to 29,000 households would start shortly.

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7. Cabinet has taken note that the *Organisation Internationale de La Francophonie* would organize a *Séminaire de formation d'entrepreneurs culturels en gestion de projets et d'entreprises – filière musique – Océan Indien*, in Mauritius from 9 to 14 November 2009. The objectives of the Workshop are to:-

- (a) reinforce competencies in project management and cultural entrepreneurship;
- (b) improve analytical skills, as well as formulation and presentation of projects for funding;
- (c) improve negotiation skills while dealing with funding agencies; and
- (d) facilitate the setting up of a network of economic operators in the field of music in the Southern Hemisphere.

Participants from Mauritius, Comoros, Djibouti, Madagascar, Reunion Island and Seychelles would attend the Workshop.

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8. Cabinet has taken note that UNESCO, in collaboration with the Mauritius Institute of Health, proposes to hold a Regional Training Workshop on Greenstone Software from 7 to 11 September 2009 in Mauritius. Greenstone is a software used to digitalize audio-visual, text resource and facilitate e-Government applications. The Workshop would contribute to reinforce regional cooperation and lead to capacity building for the digitalization of applications to uplift the general standard of service.

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9. Cabinet has taken note that the Hon Felix C. Mutati, Minister of Commerce, Trade and Industry of Zambia, at the head of a delegation comprising, inter alia, the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Tourism, would be on an official visit to Mauritius. The visit will take place back to back with the signing of the Interim Economic Partnership Agreement scheduled for 29 August 2009.

During the visit, bilateral talks would be held on the financial services sector, incentive schemes to promote investment, tourism development and contract farming, as well as Economic Partnership Agreement, tripartite initiatives of SADC, COMESA and EAC for an enlarged Free Trade Area, removal of non-tariff barriers and the prioritization of the concerns of developing countries in the Doha Development Agenda. The Hon Mutati would also pay courtesy calls on important personalities.

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10. Cabinet has taken note that the African Tobacco Control Alliance of the Republic of Togo, after the Ministry of Health and Environment of Jamaica, has made a request to the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life to use the tobacco graphic health warnings developed for Mauritius for display on packages and packets of tobacco products to be put on sale in the Republic of Togo.

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11. Cabinet has taken note that talks would be held shortly to review the Bilateral Air Services Agreement with –

- (a) Netherlands, to enable Air Mauritius Ltd. to take advantage of its joint venture with Air France and to expand its network in the European market as from the next IATA Winter Season starting on 25 October 2009; and
- (b) South Africa, a potential market in the region that needs to be further developed in the light of the various promotional campaigns recently carried out on the route, and the FIFA World Cup to be hosted in South Africa next year.

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12. Cabinet has taken note of the financial situation of the National Transport Corporation following the implementation of the first phase of the Recovery Plan. The negative balance of about Rs 15m monthly between the recurrent revenue and the expenditure of the Corporation has been reduced considerably. Cabinet has further taken note that the Second Phase of the Recovery Plan, which would generate an additional savings of Rs 3m monthly, is being implemented as from 1 August 2009.

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13. Cabinet has taken note that the Quality Assurance Division of the Mauritius Standards Bureau has been awarded the first accreditation certificate jointly by the Mauritius Accreditation Service (MAURITAS) and the Norwegian Accreditation.

The Quality Assurance Division of the Mauritius Standards Bureau operates five management systems certification schemes and the MAURICERT Scheme with a view to promoting quality and standards, viz. -

- (a) the Quality Management System;
- (b) the Hazard Analysis and Criteria Control Point System;
- (c) Information Security Management System;
- (d) the Food Safety Management System;
- (e) the National Environment Management System; and
- (f) the MSB Certification Mark Scheme.

The accreditation of the Quality Assurance Division of the Mauritius Standards Bureau would confer added credibility to the certificates being issued by the Bureau and enable the certified companies to gain a competitive edge and have greater access to foreign markets.

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14. Cabinet has taken note that the Road Traffic (Construction and Use) Regulations, which no longer respond to the needs of a modern transport industry, would be reviewed to ensure that the new developments occurring in the industry are properly and effectively governed by modern regulatory parameters. The new regulations would provide for norms to be prescribed for the construction, equipment and maintenance of motor vehicles and trailers, as well as the manner in which these vehicles should be used on the road for the better safety and comfort.

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15. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare & Reform Institutions would sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Civil Affairs of the Government of the People's Republic of China aiming at strengthening cooperation and sharing experience in the field of Welfare of the Elderly and Ageing.

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16. Cabinet has taken note that Professor Atul Bhaskar, Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon specialising in paediatric and spine surgery, from India would visit Mauritius next week, when he would operate upon complex cases of scoliosis (deformity of spine).

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17. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the visit of Professor Wajid Ali Khan, Professor of Ophthalmology, and his team from the Al Shifa Trust Eye Hospital in Rawalpindi, Pakistan from 25 July to 01 August 2009. During his visit, Professor Wajid Ali Khan assessed 300 patients, inclusive of new cases, follow-up cases and post-operative ones, and carried out 49 complex surgeries, including 5 corneal grafts and 16 cases of vitrectomy.

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18. Cabinet has taken note that the Rotary Club of Curepipe has donated a fully computerised Non-Contact Tonometer to the S. Bharati Eye Hospital, Moka for the monitoring of ocular tension and screening of patients for glaucoma. The equipment would facilitate investigation and improve the quality of treatment.

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19. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the mission of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade to Sharm-El-Sheik, Egypt, where he participated in the 15th Conference of Heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Movement held on 15 and 16 July 2009. The theme of the Summit was “**International Solidarity for Peace and Development**” and the following main issues were considered -

- (a) global economic issues, especially the impact of the global financial and economic crisis on the Non-Aligned Member States;
- (b) a proposal by the South African delegation that the Non-Aligned Movement recommend to the UN General Assembly that 18 July be declared Nelson Mandela International Day; and
- (c) the commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba.

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20. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the Third Public-Private Sector Meeting on Trade Negotiations held on 10 August 2009 to consider the report on the roadmap for Trade Negotiations and brainstorm on the COMESA and SADC Customs Union. A CD containing a compendium of trade agreements and opportunities and a market access map was also launched on that occasion. The CD would help exporters identify trade opportunities.

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21. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the mission of the Minister of Information and Communication Technology to Hyderabad, India, where he signed a Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation for the sharing of the e-procurement solution developed and implemented by the Government of Andhra Pradesh, capacity building for staff involved in the implementation of the project and setting up of communication channels for the exchange of information in the field of e-procurement.

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22. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Valuation Tribunal for a period of six months with effect from 1 August 2009 with Mrs Shameen Banon Ayub Hamuth-Laulloo, Acting Vice-President, Industrial Court as Chairperson.

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