

## **CABINET DECISIONS – 25 OCTOBER 2013**

1. Cabinet has taken note of the Roadmap, prepared following the National Dialogue on Ocean Economy held in July this year, that provides a broad conceptual and policy framework for the development of an Ocean Economy. The economic activities, that have been identified as possible priority areas, have been divided into clusters, namely –

- (a) Seabed Exploration for Hydrocarbon and Minerals;
- (b) Fishing, Seafood Processing and Aquaculture;
- (c) Deep Ocean Water Applications;
- (d) Marine Services and Marine Renewable Energy;
- (e) Seaport-related Activities; and
- (f) Ocean Knowledge.

Government may, subsequent to the implementation of the project for the development of the ocean economy, promote additional ocean-related economic activities.

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2. Cabinet has taken note of the main recommendations for the Review of Certificate of Primary Education as announced in Government Programme 2010-2015 and in line with the strategies enunciated in the Education and Human Resource Strategy Plan (2008-2020). The Ministry of Education and Human Resources proposes to implement the following short term measures that have been recommended by the Working Groups for the Review of the CPE at a National Forum, –

- (a) the holding of re-sit in one subject for candidates who have passed in three subjects and would require one subject to obtain an award of CPE;
- (b) the review of the requirements of the award of a CPE to candidates who have scored 4E's but nevertheless failed; and
- (c) special consideration to CPE candidates, wards of newly settled expatriates, who have scored excellent marks in all subjects, except a language subject, i.e., English or French, as they did not have sufficient time to master that language subject.

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3. Cabinet has taken note that the First Edition of the Open African Judo Championships would be held in Mauritius in November 2013. The Championships, the third ranking major international competition organised by the International Judo Federation after the "Grand Prix" and the "Grand Slam", would be held for the first time in the African Continent. It is expected that, some 125 judokas from around the world, would compete in the various categories. The event would be an opportunity to our local athletes to interact with high calibre international athletes.

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4. Cabinet has taken note of the Strategic Plan 2014-2016 for the prevention of substance abuse and treatment and rehabilitation of substance abusers in Mauritius. The Strategic Plan comprises five strategic objectives, namely –

- (a) reinforcing the institutional and legal framework of NATRESA to effectively respond to the challenges of drug consumption;
- (b) strengthening of prevention campaigns to address the issue of substance abuse;
- (c) adopting a holistic approach for the treatment, rehabilitation and psychosocial management of drug users, including methadone beneficiaries;
- (d) developing a research culture and strengthening networking at national and international levels; and
- (e) setting up of a sound and effective monitoring and evaluation system to improve data collection for ongoing evaluation of programmes and interventions.

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5. Cabinet has taken note that the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment would promulgate the Printing Industry (Remuneration Order) Regulations to incorporate the recommendations of the National Remuneration Board regarding the employees of the Printing Industry. The National Remuneration Board has, amongst others, recommended -

- (a) a wage increase varying between 7% to 47% to the existing categories of workers and new salary scales for “computer to plate operator” and “quality controller”;
- (b) the payment of an allowance of 20% of the basic wage for work performed during night or evening shift;
- (c) increase in maternity allowance from Rs 500 to Rs 3,000;
- (d) increase in death grant from Rs 2,000 to Rs 3,500; and
- (e) the minimum age for the employment of an “apprentice” being raised from 15 years to 16 years.

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6. Cabinet has taken note that the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment would promulgate the Occupational Safety and Health (Safety of Scaffolds) Regulations to further protect workers who perform work on scaffolds during construction works. The regulations would apply to every workplace where a scaffold is constructed, erected, installed, used, repositioned, altered, maintained, repaired or dismantled.

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7. Cabinet has agreed to the introduction in the National Assembly of the Supplementary Appropriation (2013) Bill. The object of the Bill is to provide for the supplementary appropriation of an additional sum of Rs2.5 billion for the current financial year to enable Government to meet its expenditure commitments in respect of the following:

- (a) urgent land drainage works following the flash floods in February and March this year;
- (b) implementation of the Errors, Omissions and Anomalies Committee Report; and
- (c) construction/rehabilitation of roads, including additional works following landslides

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8. Cabinet has taken note that the Open University would run a free special teacher professional development programme, based on Emerging Trends & Technologies in the Virtual Classroom offered on the Massive Open Online Course platform by Coursera in partnership with the University of California Irvine, and targeting pre-primary, primary and secondary levels of education. The programme aims at providing support to Mauritian participants and a gateway to personal and professional development through free online e-resources and a face-to-face support framework within an online independent learning course. Two best students would be awarded scholarships for a degree course at the Open University, Mauritius. The Programme would cater, in the first instance, for some 60 participants.

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9. Cabinet has taken note that the Commonwealth of Learning Regional Focal Points Meeting, Africa & the Mediterranean would be held in Mauritius in May 2014. The objectives of the Meetings are to –

- (a) share information about the status of open and distance learning in each participating country;
- (b) provide a mid-term report of what Commonwealth of Learning has done in each country; and
- (c) identify the education and training priorities that the Commonwealth of Learning can support.

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10. Cabinet has taken note that, during the period January to September 2013, the value of exports of manufactured goods, excluding sugar and sugar by-products, reached Rs35.21 billion as compared to Rs34.03 billion over the corresponding period in 2012, i.e., an increase of 3.5%.

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11. Cabinet has taken note that the *Assises de l'Enseignement Superieur* would be held on 30 and 31 October 2013. The following international resource persons would make presentations –

- (a) Mr Brandon Lee, Chief Executive Officer, Council of Private Education, Singapore;
- (b) Professor Nikos Donos, Professor, Head of Periodontology, Director of Research at University College London;
- (c) Mrs Maureen Mac Laughlin, Assistant Director, Quality Assurance Agency, UK;
- (d) Professor Linda Evans, Professor of Leadership & Professional Learning, School of Education, University of Leeds; and
- (e) Mr Reetoo Banarsee, Senior Research Fellow, Imperial College.

It is expected that around 150 participants from the public sector, private sector organisations, non-governmental organisations, students' representatives, research institutions and international organizations, would participate in the *Assises*. Discussions are expected to lead to a set of recommendations on tertiary education, science, technology and research policy and strategies.

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12. Cabinet has taken note of the status of the ICT Skills Development Programme, introduced in October 2012, to address skills gap in the ICT/BPO Sector. The Programme has been established to encourage ICT/BPO companies to offer a work placement to unemployed youth for a minimum period of 12 months. As at date, 131 ICT/BPO companies have registered with the National Computer Board; 2,545 applicants have enrolled themselves for the Programme, out of whom 2,193 are job seekers and 352 are university students; and 565 unemployed are already on training and job placement in the different ICT/BPO companies.

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13. Cabinet has taken note of the setting up of 11 Computer Clubs in Rodrigues under the Computer Empowerment Programme. The objectives of the project are to contribute to the empowerment of the community, help provide information and communication infrastructure and promote ICT for educational, personal and social development by providing free Internet access.

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14. Cabinet has agreed to Mauritius ratifying the amendment to the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants. The main objective of the Convention is to protect human health and the environment from the highly dangerous, long-lasting chemicals by restricting and ultimately eliminating their production, use, trade, release and storage. The Stockholm Convention originally targeted 12 particularly toxic chemicals. However, during the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Conferences of Parties, 10 new chemicals, including pesticides, industrial chemicals and their by-products, have been added to the initial list of Persistent Organic Pollutants on the basis of their environmental and health risks.

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15. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security to Fiji where he participated in the 13<sup>th</sup> ACP Ministerial Conference on Sugar. The theme of the Conference was **The Evolving Policy Environment for the ACP Cane Industry**. The main themes covered at the Conference were:

- (a) Impact of Major Policy Developments;
- (b) EU Market Perspective and Impact of FTAs;
- (c) Outlook, Opportunities and Threats in the Sugar Sector - Strategic Assessment; and
- (d) Promoting Competitiveness of ACP Sugar Industries.

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16. Cabinet has agreed to a proposal of the Indian Authorities to review the criterion for eligibility to the post of Secretary General, World Hindi Secretariat and to the extension of the contract of appointment of Mr Gangadharsing Sooklall, Deputy Secretary General, World Hindi Secretariat for one additional year, pending the filling of the vacant post of Secretary General.

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17. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Arts and Culture to China. The Minister participated in the unveiling ceremony of the monument, marking the departure of the Chinese diaspora to the Indian Ocean, in the context of a UNESCO initiative in remembrance of the movement of slaves throughout the world. He also had discussions with the inner Mongolian authorities on cultural exchanges, and a meeting with film producers in Beijing for the promotion of film production in Mauritius.

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18. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment to the Republic of Italy where he participated in the Second Steering Committee on the Bilateral Agreement (*Declaration Conjointe*) signed with the Government of the Republic of Italy for the Project "*Faciliter une gestion responsable et efficace de la migration circulaire de travailleurs mauriciens vers l'Italie*". The Minister, amongst others, also discussed employment opportunities for Mauritians in the tourism and fisheries sectors in early 2014, and had a meeting with Mauritians following courses at the Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Bari.

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19. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives to Singapore and Malaysia. The objectives of the mission were to gain an understanding of the SME sector of Singapore and Malaysia and learn from the best practices with regards to SME development. The schemes and policies would be replicated in Mauritius with a view to improving processes, raising productivity and thus enhancing the global competitiveness of our enterprises, boosting up the creation of new SMEs and increasing their contribution to jobs creation and GDP.

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20. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Chinese Speaking Union under the Chairmanship of Mr Louis Christian Hung Wai Wing, OSK, MSK.

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