

## **CABINET DECISIONS – 12 JULY 2013**

1. Cabinet has agreed to the introduction of the Criminal Appeal (Amendment) Bill in the National Assembly. The object of the Bill is to amend the Criminal Appeal Act to provide –

- (a) that the Director of Public Prosecutions may appeal to the Court of Criminal Appeal not only against a sentence by the Supreme Court but also against an acquittal or a conviction for a lesser offence by the Supreme Court; and
- (b) that the Director of Public Prosecutions or a convicted person may apply to the Court of Criminal Appeal for a review of the proceedings relating to a conviction or acquittal before the Supreme Court, and the Court of Criminal Appeal may, in the course of the review proceedings, quash the conviction or acquittal and order a retrial.

The proposed amendments would serve to improve the criminal justice system generally by ensuring that offenders are brought to trial and that convicted persons are retried when there is fresh and compelling evidence.

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2. Cabinet has agreed to the introduction of the Immigration (Amendment) Bill in the National Assembly in order to make better provision for cases in which non-citizens marry citizens of Mauritius.

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3. Cabinet has agreed to an Agreement on Mutual Visa Exemption and an Agreement on Streamlining the Visa Application Formalities for Airline Staffs being signed with the People's Republic of China to facilitate travel of citizens of both countries. The Agreement on Mutual Visa Exemption provides for the exemption from visa requirement for a maximum of 30 days to citizens of Mauritius visiting China. However, citizens of either Party, who intend to study, work, reside or engage in media activities in the territory of the other contracting party, should apply for visa before travelling. Airline staffs on regular airline service of both parties would also enjoy visa-free entry and exit.

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4. Cabinet has taken note that a Ministerial Committee, under the chairmanship of the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping, has been set up to look into arrangements to be made so that Ganesh Chaturthi festival is celebrated in the best conditions. The Committee would comprise the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions, the Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development, the Minister of Arts and Culture and the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands.

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5. Cabinet has taken note that a Ministerial Committee, under the Chairmanship of the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, has been set up to look into arrangements to be made so that the Père Laval pilgrimage this year is performed in the best conditions. The Committee would comprise, amongst others, the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping, the Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development, the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands, the Minister of Arts and Culture, the Minister of Tourism and Leisure and the Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare.

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6. Cabinet has agreed to the Minister of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection promulgating regulations under the Consumer Protection (Price and Supplies Control) Act to fix the wholesale and retail prices of packed plain white flour and plain whole wheat flour as follows –

	<b>½ kg</b>	<b>1 kg</b>	<b>2.5 kg</b>	<b>5 kg</b>
Wholesale Price (Rs)	6.50	12.50	30.25	59.65
Retail Price (Rs)	6.75	13.00	31.50	62.15

The same prices would be applicable in Rodrigues. The prices would be effective as from 1 August 2013.

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7. Cabinet has taken note of the highlights of the Report of Statistics of Mauritius on the Economic and Social Indicators for the ICT Sector, 2012, viz., -

- (a) the contribution of the sector to GDP was 6.4%, and the growth rate 9.1%;
- (b) the International Internet Bandwidth increased from 5,806 Mbps in 2011 to 8,274 Mbps in 2012, i.e., by 42%;
- (c) the number of fixed telephone lines decreased from 374,600 in 2011 to 349,100 in 2012, i.e., by 6.8%;
- (d) the mobile phone subscriptions per 100 inhabitants reached 114.9% in 2012 as compared to 100.4% in 2011. An increase of 36.7% had been observed on mobile phone subscriptions between 2009 and 2012;
- (e) total internet subscriptions increased from 370,000 in 2011 to 568,900 in 2012, i.e., by 53.8%. Broadband Internet Subscriptions stood at 423,400; and
- (f) Internet access tariff for 20 hours per month as a percentage of GNI per capita decreased to 2.5% as compared to 2.7% in 2011.

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8. Cabinet has agreed to the draft Consumer Protection Bill being circulated for public consultation. The main objective of the Bill is to consolidate and widen the scope of legislation on the promotion and protection of rights and welfare of consumers. It also provides, amongst others, for -

- (a) the setting up of a National Consumer Council to promote consumer rights;
- (b) the protection of consumer from discriminatory practices;
- (c) a system of fixed penalty with respect to contraventions of specified offences under consumer protection laws;
- (d) the setting up of a Consumer Dispute Resolution Commission to provide for mediation and conciliation service to consumers and traders; and
- (e) the Minister to issue recall notices where goods do not comply with safety standards.

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9. Cabinet has taken note of the findings of the Mauritius Nutrition Survey 2012 carried out by the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life, in collaboration with the Baker IDI Heart and Diabetes Institute of Melbourne, Australia and the National Public Health Institute of Helsinki, Finland. The objective of the Survey was to study food consumption patterns and assess the nutrition status of the population. The main findings of the Survey are as follows:

- (a) 31.6% of persons in the age group 20 to 49 years were overweight and 17.6% obese;
- (b) 37.8% of persons in the age group 50 to 64 years were overweight and 18.6% obese;
- (c) 81% of adolescents, 40% of young adults and 22% of ageing adults stated to be doing moderate or heavy leisure physical activities; and
- (d) the highest prevalence of anaemia was in females in the age group 20 to 49 years, that is, 33.6%, followed by those aged between 12 to 19 years, representing 28.5% of the respondents.

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10. Cabinet has taken note of development in the Intelligent Mauritius Partnership Programme which is being implemented by the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology, in collaboration with the private sector, to democratise Broadband Internet access, converge efforts to bridge the digital gap, and facilitate the uptake of ICT adoption by a larger number of citizens. The Intelligent Mauritius Partnership Programme would be implemented in a phased manner. In the first instance, WiFi network would be installed at Victoria Bus Station and Vacoas Bus Station. WiFi coverage would subsequently be extended to 30 private secondary schools in Mauritius and Rodrigues, two town centres and the SSR International Airport.

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11. Cabinet has taken note that Mauritius has been pre-qualified in Athletics, Judo, Table Tennis, Wrestling and the cultural disciplines to participate in the *Seventh Jeux de La Francophonie* which would be held in Nice, France from 7 to 15 September 2013. The Games, which are held every four years, aim at strengthening the solidarity among the 77 member countries and encouraging the spirit of North/South cooperation.

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12. Cabinet has taken note that the Regional Workshop for Training of Trainers on hydrocarbon technology would be held in Mauritius from 29 July to 01 August 2013. The objectives of the Regional Workshop are to understand the basic principles and the technical aspects of refrigeration and air conditioning, learn from the best practices on advanced hydrocarbon technologies and share experiences on fault findings. The Workshop would focus on hands-on training and demonstration on installation, servicing and repair of appliances using hydrocarbon as refrigerant. Participants from Lesotho, Namibia, Kenya, Zimbabwe and Mauritius would participate in the Workshop.

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13. Cabinet has taken note of the implementation of the Global Fuel Economy Initiative in Mauritius. The objectives of the Initiative, launched by the United Nations Environment Programme, are to assist countries to develop policies that encourage fuel economy improvement and efficiency for vehicles, review existing policies on fuel economy, and help the country to draft a cleaner, more efficient vehicles policy and adopt best practices on fuel economy improvement so as to reduce transport-related carbon dioxide emissions. The implementation of the project started in March 2013 and is scheduled to be completed in December 2014. Mauritius forms part of the three countries from the Africa region along with Morocco and Kenya to undertake the pilot project.

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14. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development to China where, amongst others, an investment promotion mission was organised by the Board of Investment. The main objective of the mission was to attract Chinese investment both into Mauritius and into Africa through Mauritius, explain the strategic importance of Mauritius as the gateway into Africa and request the support of Chinese authorities in the development of sea and air connectivity between Mauritius and Africa. The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development had a meeting with Mr Gao Hucheng, Minister of Commerce, responsible for the formulation of China's strategies, policies and guidelines in the areas of trade, services export, outward investment, economic cooperation and foreign aid. They also reviewed areas of cooperation identified at the 9<sup>th</sup> Sino Mauritian Joint Commission, including the Culture House project, technical assistance and capacity-building and trade.

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15. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC) Economic and Business Conference held in Mauritius on 4 and 5 July 2013. The Conference which centered on the theme *Deepening Economic Linkages for Balanced, Inclusive and Sustainable Growth* agreed that trade should be an integral factor in promoting economic cooperation and development, ocean economy constitutes an important pillar to sustain development, and maritime security should be addressed for the economic security of the region. Member States were urged to foster agri-business linkages and use both land-based resources and ocean resources, such as fisheries, with a view to addressing the food security situation. The Conference also agreed to the setting up of the IOR-ARC Science, Technology and Innovation Chapter and the establishment of an Ocean Economy Observatory.

In the margins of the Conference, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade had bilateral meetings, amongst others, with –

- (a) the Hon K. Thomson, Parliamentary Secretary for Schools of Australia, with whom he discussed, amongst others, increase in the number of scholarships awarded to Mauritius, the development of circular migration projects and the establishment of Trade and Economic Agreement;
- (b) the Hon A. Sharma, Minister of Commerce and Industry of India with whom he discussed the setting up of a Joint Working Group on Trade and Investment and visa free regime on a reciprocal basis; and
- (c) the Hon R. Bathiutheen, Minister of Industry and Commerce of Sri Lanka on our participation in the next CHOGM in 2013.

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16. Cabinet has agreed to remove customs duties on baby diapers, soap, detergents and paints imported from Egypt, and the setting up of a control mechanism to ensure that the paints do not contain dangerous, hazardous and prohibited chemicals.

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17. Cabinet has taken note of the appointment of –

- (a) Mr Ariranga Govindasamy Pillay, GOSK, former Chief Justice, as Chairperson of the Competition Commission; and
- (b) Mr Rohit Ramnawaz as Chairperson of the Airports of Mauritius Ltd. Group of Companies.

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18. Cabinet has taken note that Mrs Nandinee Kiran Meetarbhan, Deputy Director/Director Legal, has been appointed Executive Director of the Competition Commission.

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