

## **CABINET DECISIONS – 25 JANUARY 2013**

1. Cabinet has taken note that the Minister of Education and Human Resources would promulgate the Education (Amendment) Regulations to provide for the award of Government Scholarships, under the new Government Scholarship Schemes, to students sitting for the Cambridge Higher School Certificate (HSC) Examinations. As from 2013, the number of Government Scholarships awarded annually has been increased from 30 to 68 as follows -

- (a) 2 Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam (SSR) National Scholarships;
- (b) 16 State of Mauritius Scholarships; and
- (c) 50 Additional Scholarships.

All Laureates would have the option to study either overseas, in a recognised university, or locally, in an approved tertiary education institution.

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2. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Acting Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development to the Maldives. He had meetings with the President of the Maldives, the Minister of Finance and Economic Development, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Governor of the Maldives Monetary Authority and other Ministers. His discussions focussed mainly on tourism, air access policy and economic cooperation. As regards air access, it is proposed to sign a Bilateral Air Services Agreement to open the way for Mega Maldives, a private airline, to operate direct flights between Beijing and Mauritius, as well as providing direct air links to the Maldives. As regards economic cooperation, a Joint Economic Commission co-chaired by the Acting Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development and the Minister of Finance of the Maldives would be set up to discuss, amongst others, Double Taxation Agreement; Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement; Environmental Protection; Fish Farming/Aquaculture; Financial Services; and Medical Services. The first meeting of the Commission is scheduled to be held in Mauritius between May and July 2013.

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3. Cabinet has taken note that a new legislation on radiation protection is being prepared to replace the Radiation Protection Act 2003 with a view to -

- (a) ensuring full compliance with the national radiation protection legal framework and the latest International Basic Safety Standards of the International Atomic Energy Agency;

- (b) addressing shortcomings and weaknesses noted during the implementation of the current legislation, such as security of radioactive sources; and
  - (c) implementing the Integrated Nuclear Security Support Plan which is being finalised.
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4. Cabinet has taken note that the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions would promulgate regulations under the National Savings Fund Act and the National Pensions Act to regulate the increase in the rates of pensions paid by the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions as from 1 January 2013 and in the ceiling, from Rs12,460 to Rs13,470 monthly, and the floor, from Rs1,905 to Rs2,060 monthly, for the calculations of contributions payable to the National Pensions Fund and the National Savings Fund as announced in Budget 2013. The increase in contribution is effected yearly to ensure that, at the time of retirement, an employee receives benefits in line with his/her salary level.

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5. Cabinet has taken note that, during the 20<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union being held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade would sign and ratify the General Convention on Privileges and Immunities of the OAU to secure our bid to host the African Institute of Remittances.

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6. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives and the Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India would sign a Memorandum of Understanding on the Promotion and Development of Small and Medium Enterprises and Cooperatives, which would provide, amongst others, for technical assistance, capacity building, fostering of entrepreneurship, transfer of technology, and exchange programmes.

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7. Cabinet has taken note that the Second Meeting of the Joint Committee on Cooperation on the Textile and Clothing Industry between the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection and the Ministry of Textiles of India would be held from 28 to 30 January 2013. The Committee would review progress made so far, finalize various Memoranda of Understanding on cooperation in the textile sector with Indian Institutions, and start discussions on a cotton purchase agreement.

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8. Cabinet has taken note of the performance of the Export-Oriented Enterprises Sector for the year 2012 as compared to the year 2011. The value of exports increased from Rs43.1 billion to Rs46.4 billion, i.e., by 7.6%. Increase had been registered in the following sub-sectors – Pullovers and Cardigans (+44.4%), Shirts (+9.5%), Trousers (+16.0%), Fish and Fish Preparations (+33.3%), Jewellery (+17.8%), Pearls, Precious and Semi-precious Stones (+14.5%), Optical Goods (+16.0%) and Watches and Clocks (+3.4%).

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9. Cabinet has taken note that the first direct flight of Air Mauritius from Shanghai is awaited on 26 January 2013. Air Mauritius would operate two weekly direct flights on that route. With the operation of the direct flights, the number of tourists from China is expected to double in 2013.

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10. Cabinet has taken note that, in the context of the World Cancer Day, commemorated on 4 February, the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life would launch the School Health Programme with focus on “*Cancer – Did you know?*” at the Keats College, Chemin Grenier, organize talks and sensitization campaigns on the risk factors associated with cancer, and operationalize the new Chemotherapy Unit at the J. Nehru Hospital. The theme of the World Cancer Day would be “*Cancer – Did you know?*” to focus on the fifth target of the World Cancer Declaration, i.e., to dispel damaging myths and misconceptions about cancer.

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11. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade to Seychelles where he participated in the 28<sup>th</sup> Session of the Council of Ministers of the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC). The Council reviewed, amongst others, Political and Diplomatic Cooperation, Economic and Commercial Cooperation, Sustainable Development, Consolidation of the Regional Identity and Strengthening and Restructuring of the IOC.

In the margins of the Meeting, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade had bilateral talks with Mr Jean Paul Adam, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Seychelles on the situation in Madagascar, on the joint exploitation of our Continental Shelf, and cooperation in Sanitary and Phytosanitary fields. He also raised the issue of recruitment of Mauritian teachers and medical practitioners by Seychelles.

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12. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Health and Quality of Life to India. The Minister attended the 11th Pravasi Bharatya Divas and had meetings with HE Mr Ghulam Nabi Azad, Minister of Health and Family Welfare of the Republic of India with whom he discussed capacity building and recruitment of medical personnel in scarcity areas, such as Vascular Surgery, Cardiac Surgery, Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery, Diabetology and Organ Transplantation Surgery. HE Mr Azad also agreed to provide the required technical assistance should Mauritius opt to conduct a National Examination for medical graduates prior to their registration with the Medical Council with a view to ensuring quality service. The Minister also reviewed collaboration with some private institutions in India for the care of Mauritian patients who cannot be treated in Mauritius and reinforced cooperation with the all India Institute of Medical Sciences, an internationally renowned Government institution, for the setting up of a National Organ Transplant Programme.

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13. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment to India where he participated in the 11th Pravasi Bharatya Divas and had, *inter alia*, meetings with Shri Pradeep Kumar Jain Aditya, Minister of State for Rural Development, and Shri Ajay Maken, Union Minister for Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, on matters pertaining to poverty reduction.

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14. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the Eighth Meeting of the Indo-Mauritian Joint Hydrographic Committee set up under the provisions of the Memorandum of Understanding on Hydrography signed in October 2005 between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the Republic of Mauritius. The Committee agreed, amongst others, to -

- (a) a survey of the Flinders Bank in the South South-West of Mauritius and some passes mainly in the Northern region of the country being carried out in 2013; and
  - (b) assistance being provided for the setting up of a Hydrographic Survey Unit in Mauritius.
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15. Cabinet has taken note that the Minister of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection proposes to promulgate the Legal Metrology Services (Assize Fees) (Amendment) Regulations to provide for an increase in the fees charged by the Legal Metrology Services for the verification of equipment and weighbridges, as well as the calibration of high capacity tanks, and the issue of certificate of suitability for weighing instruments, to keep up with the increases in the cost of goods and services.