

CABINET DECISIONS – 31 JANUARY 2013

1. Cabinet has taken note of the recent mission of Dr the Hon Navinchandra Ramgoolam, Prime Minister, GCSK, FRCP, to France, Davos and the United Kingdom.

In France, the Prime Minister had a fruitful working session with Mr François Hollande, President of the Republic of France, with whom he discussed a number of issues, including –

- (a) economic relationship between France and Mauritius;
- (b) the co-management of Tromelin Island and its waters pending the resolution of the sovereignty issue;
- (c) piracy; and
- (d) the situation in Madagascar.

The Prime Minister invited the President of the Republic of France to attend the next Summit of the Indian Ocean Commission scheduled for the second semester of 2013.

In the United Kingdom, the Prime Minister had a meeting with Mr Philippe Sands, our main external lawyer on the Chagos Archipelago. Discussions centred on the strategy of Mauritius in the light of the decision of the Arbitral Tribunal. After having heard the arguments of both Mauritius and the UK, the Tribunal had rejected the UK's request for a separate hearing on its preliminary objections to the jurisdiction of the Tribunal and agreed that UK's preliminary objections and the merits of the case be heard together, as requested by Mauritius. For the first time since the events of 1965, the UK would, therefore, have to explain and justify the excision of the Chagos Archipelago and other measures that it had unlawfully taken with regard to the Chagos Archipelago, in total disregard of the UN General Assembly Resolution 1514 of 1960 on the granting of Independence to colonial countries and peoples.

In Davos, the Prime Minister attended the World Economic Forum, which brings together its members and constituents to shape the global, regional and industrial agenda. The Focus of the Forum this year was on "Resilient Dynamism".

During the Forum, the Prime Minister –

- (a) exchanged views with Mrs Christine Lagarde, Managing Director of the IMF on the Euro crisis and challenges faced by Small Islands Developing States in the context of the current economic landscape;
- (b) met Mr Kamal Nath, Minister of Urban Development of India with whom he had discussion on the issue of transport, including improvement in road safety and traffic flow; and
- (c) shared ideas with Dr Henry Kissinger, former US Secretary of State, on the world situation and on issues of relevance to Mauritius.

The Prime Minister also had the opportunity to discuss issues of mutual interest with eminent personalities, amongst others, Prince Al Faisal al Saud of Saudi Arabia; Princess Mary of Denmark; the President of Nigeria; the President of South Africa; the Prime Minister of Zimbabwe; Professor Klaus Schwab, founder and Executive Chairperson of World Economic Forum, as well as Mr John Chipman, CEO of the International Institute for Strategic Studies, London.

2. Cabinet has agreed to the payment of grants to established and registered fee-paying private secondary schools subject to compliance with the criteria set by the Ministry of Education and Human Resources. The criteria, amongst others, are that the student population in the mainstream and the pre-vocational stream should be thrice the approved threshold; the school should have been in operation for more than seven years, have a stable school population level and should cater for students from low and middle income families.

3. Cabinet has agreed to the setting up of a National Energy Commission under the Chairmanship of Mr Dharam Dev Manraj, Senior Adviser, Project Management and Delivery Unit, Prime Minister's Office, to:

- (a) review national energy requirements;
- (b) advise Government and other authorities concerned in the planning and execution of major projects in the Energy Sector to fully meet medium and long terms needs; and
- (c) oversee the operation of the MID Fund.

4. Cabinet has agreed to Mauritius making a contribution of US\$ 100,000 to the Republic of Seychelles for reconstruction works at Mahé following widespread structural damages to roads, bridges and houses caused by severe flooding on 27 January 2013.

5. Cabinet has taken note that Mr Tsang Fan Hin Tsang Mang Kin, GOSK, (also known as Joseph Tsang Mang Kin) has been elected Member of the African Peer Review (APR) Panel of Eminent Persons. The objectives of the African Peer Review Panel are, amongst others, to –

- (a) recommend appropriate African institutions or individuals to conduct technical assessment;
- (b) consider recommendations contained in the country review reports and make recommendations to the APR Forum; and

- (c) submit to the APR Forum all country review reports with recommendations on measures that could be taken to assist the country in the improvement of its government and socio-economic development performance.

6. Cabinet has taken note of the report of the Study on Sustainable Buildings and Constructions carried out under the National Programme on Sustainable Consumption and Production which is being implemented by the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development. The main objective of the Study was to develop a comprehensive framework for an integrated design and architectural coherence for the built environment in Mauritius. The Study has, amongst others, recommended the establishment of an institution, under the aegis of the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping, which would, inter alia, be responsible for –

- (a) strengthening the existing planning guidelines, building codes and other legislation that promote sustainability of buildings; and
- (b) developing enabling policies, as well as financial incentives, more particularly at the construction stage, aimed at promoting sustainability in buildings.

7. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Financial Services Consultative Council for the year 2013-2014 under the chairmanship of the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development. The Financial Services Consultative Council acts as a think-tank and serves as a platform to discuss latest concepts and international trends in the field of financial services and global business. The Council also formulates suggestions and ideas for the development of the Financial Sector.

8. Cabinet has taken note that the University of Mauritius has bid for the hosting of the Pan African University Institute on Space Sciences at the Mauritius Radio Telescope at Bras d'Eau. The hosting of the Institute would encourage research in application of space technology in flora and fauna conservation, forestry, tourism, emergency management, land use and planning, and water resources management, among others. It would also promote Mauritius as a Centre of Research and Knowledge, in line with the policy of Government to build a knowledge-based economy.

9. Cabinet has taken note that the re-designed Government Portal and websites of Ministries and Departments would go live on the internet on 22 February 2013. The main Portal would include information related to the Government of Mauritius and be considered the entry point to the portals of Ministries. The new portal has been designed with value-added features, such as registration of citizen and personalised content through the 'my Gov' concept, facilities to view PDF files in a more user-friendly way, and other features, such as Newsletters, Events Calendar, Weather, Currency Converters, Alerts & Notifications, Media Gallery.

10. Cabinet has taken note that, as from January 2013, the revised format of the Performance Appraisal Forms, instead of the Annual Confidential Reporting System, is being used to appraise the performance of civil servants with a view, amongst others, to -

- (a) focus on a few core generic competencies that are directly linked with individual performance;
- (b) streamline the mid-term appraisal to focus on feedback and to provide support and assistance where needed;
- (c) review the rating mechanism and link overall performance with increment and promotion; and
- (d) introduce the concept of Performance Improvement Plan to facilitate management of poor performance in the Civil Service.

The Performance Appraisal Forms have been designed in consultation with Trade Unions.

11. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions to India. The Minister had meetings and discussions with the Hon Ms Kumari Selja, Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment and the Confederation of Senior Citizens Association of Delhi, and had working sessions with the Entrepreneurship Development Institute of Ahmedabad and the TATA Institute of Social Science. During her mission, Memoranda of Understanding providing for bilateral cooperation in the social field, were signed with –

- (a) the Amar Jyoti Charitable Trust, Delhi;
- (b) the Blind People's Association, Ahmedabad;
- (c) the Development, Education and Empowerment of the Disadvantaged in Society, Mumbai; and
- (d) the Jyestha Nagric Sangh, Thane, Maharashtra.

12. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the following Boards/Committees:

- (a) the Board of the Mauritius Educational Development Co. Ltd with Dr Narainduth Dabeedass as Chairperson;
- (b) the Board of Trustees of the Mauritius Telugu Cultural Centre Trust with Mr Ramdass Ellayah as Chairperson; and
- (c) the Cooperative Development Advisory Board with Dr Hemant Chittoo as Chairperson.
