

CABINET DECISIONS – 14 FEBRUARY 2014

1. Cabinet has taken note that Dato' Sri Mohd Najib Bin Tun Abdul Razak, Prime Minister of Malaysia, would be the Chief Guest on the occasion of the celebrations of National Day 2014.

Cabinet has also taken note of the programme of activities of the celebrations of National Day 2014, that would be held at Anjalay Stadium, viz., –

- (a) flag hoisting ceremony at 18 00 hours;
- (b) flypast by Dornier and Police Helicopters; and
- (c) march past by Disciplined Forces and uniformed organisations, followed by défilé of vehicles.

The official programme would be followed by a cultural show. The theme for the celebrations is **Enn Pei, Enn Nasion, Enn Destin**.

Cabinet has further taken note that arrangements have been made for reduced bus fares to those travelling by bus to Anjalay Stadium two hours before, and from the Stadium two hours after the official celebrations as follows –

- (a) all fare-paying passengers to pay half the normal rate; and
- (b) all beneficiaries of the Free Travel Scheme, i.e., old-aged persons, disabled persons, and children aged less than 13 years to travel free of charge, as usual.

Cabinet has also taken note that a number of activities would be organized in Rodrigues and Agalega.

2. Cabinet has taken note of the recommendations of the Committee set up to look into the representations arising out of the Errors, Omissions and Anomalies Committee (EOAC) Report 2013. The main recommendations of the Committee are –

- (a) the reinstatement, on a personal basis, of the conditions of service, such as eligibility for a travel grant, duty remission on a car, car loan facilities, and other similar benefits, to incumbents who were eligible while signing their option forms for acceptance of the recommendations made in the 2013 PRB Report, but same lapsed with the EOAC Report;
- (b) alignment of salaries, wherever deemed appropriate;
- (c) harmonization of salaries of grades in the Rodrigues Regional Assembly with corresponding grades in Mauritius, wherever deemed appropriate;

- (d) review of salaries of some part-time employees, mainly in the local authorities, who did not benefit from any revision in their salary with the EOAC Report; and
- (e) harmonization of certain conditions of service, such as the eligibility criteria for the Special Retention Allowance for professionals, e.g., engineers and architects.

The Committee has also recommended that officers who have already proceeded on pre-retirement leave or have retired from the service on or after 01 January 2014, and who would have qualified for the reinstatement of benefits at (a) above would, exceptionally, be allowed to take advantage of the benefits. The implementation of the recommendations would be effective as from 01 January 2013.

3. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the Committee of Enquiry, under the chair of Mrs Hamuth-Laulloo, President, Intermediate Court, set up to investigate into the deaths that had occurred in September and October 2013 at Le Waterpark & Leisure Village, Belle Mare. The Committee has concluded that the contributory negligence of the Waterpark, if any, leading to the death of Britney Jhummun and D. Dennemont is minimal, being given that the children were supposed to be first and foremost under the constant supervision of the adults accompanying them and/or responsible for them. The Committee has, amongst others, recommended a series of measures to strengthen security and surveillance at the Waterpark, and that the Waterpark be registered with the World Waterpark Association.

4. Cabinet has taken note that, under the scholarships scheme for African Students, 20 scholarships were awarded in 2013 to students from various African countries, namely Botswana, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, the Seychelles, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda and Namibia. The aim of the scheme is to support capacity building in Africa and encourage more African students to study in Mauritius. Government has decided to extend the scheme in 2014 and 50 scholarships for full time undergraduate studies in any public tertiary education institution, would be awarded to candidates from the African continent.

5. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions is reviewing the policy paper and plan of action on disability in the context of the Post-2015 Disability Inclusive Development Agenda of the United Nations. The plan of action charts out a road map for the empowerment and integration of persons with disabilities in the mainstream of society in conformity with Government Programme 2005-2010. Since the launching of the policy paper and plan of action on disability in December 2007, much progress have been achieved, in terms of new social benefits and allowances, review of legislation on training and employment of persons with disabilities, new policy measures relating to duty-free facilities for the purchase of adapted cars, refund of taxi fares for university students with severe disabilities, new administrative measures to make voting procedures disabled-friendly, new legislation to improve accessibility for persons with disabilities and provision of facilities for the promotion of recreation, sports, culture and leisure. Moreover, a series of initiatives have been taken in the field of education to create parity between disabled and non-disabled children.

6. Cabinet has taken note of the report prepared by the Food and Agriculture Organisation on the Reorganisation and Strengthening of the Governance Framework of the Agricultural Services of the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security. The reform of the agricultural services forms part of a road map to rationalize the different institutions providing services to the agricultural community in line with the Government Programme 2012-2015 and aims at attaining higher operational efficiency, better service delivery, reduced operational costs and higher cost effectiveness. The Report has proposed major institutional changes and the revisiting of the Agricultural Services to focus, *inter alia*, on policies, planning and programme development; monitoring and evaluation; analytical services; surveillance and enforcement; follow-up on international and regional obligations; and sustainability of food and agricultural sector.

7. Cabinet has taken note that 96,332 tourists visited Mauritius in January 2014 as compared to 92,894 in January 2013, i.e., an increase of 3.7%. Increase had been recorded in arrivals from the UK, Switzerland, People's Republic of China, Russia and South Africa.

8. Cabinet has taken note that, as announced in Budget Speech 2014, the Mauritius – Africa Fund would be launched next week. The main objectives of the Fund would be to encourage local enterprises to invest in Africa, leveraging on the Mauritian expertise and experience, and also explore new investment opportunities for Mauritian companies in Africa.

9. Cabinet has taken note that a delegation from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) is currently visiting Mauritius to discuss on the modalities of technical assistance for the development of a competitive national Seed Sector in accordance with the Seeds Act 2013. The Act provides for the setting up of the National Plant Varieties and Seeds Office within the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security to regulate the cultivation, production, trade, exportation and importation of any seeds of any variety of any kind of plant. The objective of the scoping mission is to meet stakeholders and identify the main axis of IFAD technical assistance to Mauritius in the development of the Seed Sector.

10. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development is developing a Climate Change Information, Education and Communication Strategy and Action Plan to inform, educate, empower and engage all citizens in combating and adapting to climate change. The strategic objectives of the Plan are to –

- (a) increase public access to information on climate change;
- (b) raise public awareness and knowledge on climate change; and
- (c) engage the public in addressing and responding to climate change.

A Training Manual and a Toolkit for youth are also being prepared. The Toolkit aims at providing the youth with a coherent understanding on the issue of climate change and inspiring them to take very basic and practical actions for building resilience against climate change.

11. Cabinet has taken note that the Food and Agricultural Research Council and the National Bureau of Agriculturally Important Insects of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research, Bangalore, India, would sign a Memorandum of Understanding for the transfer and/or exchange of live and/or preserved beneficial insect specimen for research purposes. Following a request made to the Government of India to assist Mauritius in the control and eradication of the papaya mealy bug through the introduction of the parasitoid *Acerophagus Papaya*, the National Bureau of Agriculturally Important Insects has agreed to transfer 500 laboratory-reared specimen of the parasitoid for the purpose of classical biological control of the mealy bug, an invasive pest of several crops.

12. Cabinet has taken note that the Open University of Mauritius and the Charles Sturt University of Australia have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to, amongst others, facilitate the development of collaborative research projects and programs, the promotion of artistic and cultural activities, the exchange of research and students, and the recognition of advance standing for entry to the respective programmes.

13. Cabinet has taken note of the setting up of an Online Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Steering Committee, under the aegis of the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology, to re-engineer the Online Child Sexual Abuse Filtering Mechanism, constantly monitor the reports, and foster collaboration amongst stakeholders. The Online Child Sexual Abuse Reporting Portal enables Mauritian citizens to be proactive and to themselves report Child Sexual Abuse sites which they may inadvertently come across whilst they are legitimately using the internet, either by giving their contact details or anonymously.

14. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade and the University of Mauritius would organize a national workshop on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights. The main objectives of the workshop are to promote a better understanding of the various components of the Intellectual Property Rights and share experiences on best practices on Intellectual Property Management. The workshop would be conducted by a team of experts from the WTO, the World Intellectual Property Office and the Union for the Protection of Plant Varieties.

15. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent missions of the Minister of Tourism and Leisure to South Africa, Turkey and the Middle East. As South Africa is being targeted as the main regional market to tackle the upcoming low season, the Minister led a delegation of the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority to engage consultations with stakeholders with a view to formulating a result-oriented action plan for the months of May to September 2014.

In Turkey, the Minister participated in the East Mediterranean International Tourism & Travel Exhibition (EMITT) 2014. The Mauritius Stand won the first and best appearance prize by the EMITT Organising Committee. In the wake of EMITT 2014, a roadshow was organized for some 100 Turkish tour operators, travel agencies and representatives of the press and media for a presentation on destination Mauritius. In the Middle East, roadshows were organized with a view to reinforcing the visibility of the destination and showcasing our product offer.

16. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, where she participated in the SADC Commission on the Status of Women. The main objective of the meeting was to agree on the SADC Region position on the UN Resolution 55/2 on women, the girl child, HIV and AIDS, as well as to advocate for a 6th pillar to be introduced for the Post-2015 Development Agenda, which would put forward the need for gender equality and women's empowerment as a stand-alone goal.

17. Cabinet has taken note that the Food and Agricultural Research and Extension Institute Act would be proclaimed to come into operation on 14 February 2014.

Cabinet has also taken note of the appointment of Mr Joseph Claude Alain Noël, currently Chairperson of the Food and Agricultural Research Council, as Chairperson of the Food and Agricultural Research and Extension Institute.

18. Cabinet has taken note of the appointment of –

- (a) Mr François de Grivel as Chairperson of the Board of the *Institut de la Francophonie pour L'Entrepreneuriat*; and
- (b) Professor Pierre Guillon as Chairperson and Dr Mrs Brigitte Marie Françoise Driver as Director General of the Board of Governors of the *Université des Mascareignes*.
