

CABINET DECISIONS – 21 FEBRUARY 2014

1. Cabinet has decided that a team of academics from the UK be invited to undertake a quality audit of all tertiary education institutions in Mauritius.

2. Cabinet has taken note of the Programme of the State Visit of HE the Hon Dato' Sri Mohd Najib Tun Abdul Razak, Prime Minister of Malaysia, from 11 to 13 March 2014. The Prime Minister would be the Chief Guest on the occasion of the National Day Celebrations 2014. He would lead a delegation of businessmen from Malaysia. The main features of the Programme of Visit are:

- (a) Courtesy call on the President of the Republic of Mauritius;
- (b) Courtesy call on and working session with the Prime Minister;
- (c) Courtesy call by the Leader of the Opposition;
- (d) Wreath Laying at the Samadhi of SSR;
- (e) Business Forum at Grand Baie International Conference Centre; and
- (f) Civic Reception at the Islamic Cultural Centre.

Several areas of interest have been identified for discussion with the Prime Minister of Malaysia.

3. Cabinet has taken note that, following the recent allegations made regarding clinical training of postgraduate students by two students of DYP Worldwide Ltd, the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life has set up a Committee to investigate into, amongst others, -

- (a) whether the provision of the Clinical Training Framework and the Supplemental Agreement between the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life and the DYP Worldwide Ltd are being complied with; and
- (b) whether or not the allegations made in the press reports are founded.

4. Cabinet has taken note of the budget outturn for fiscal year 2013 and the key findings and recommendations of the 2014 IMF Article IV Consultation Mission. The provisional budget deficit for fiscal year 2013 would be 3.5% of GDP, i.e., quite close to the revised estimates of 3.7% announced in the Budget Speech. Total Government investment for 2013 would amount to Rs20.6 billion, representing 5.6% of GDP, as compared to 4.2% in 2012. The key findings of the IMF Mission are, amongst others, -

- (a) the Mauritian economy expanded at a moderate pace in 2013 despite difficult external developments;
- (b) inflation stayed subdued, and unemployment should be controlled;

- (c) the Bank of Mauritius managed to accumulate additional net international reserves and increase the reserve cover of imports of goods and services;
- (d) the banking system was well capitalised and remained financially sound;
- (e) in view of the improving external environment, growth is projected at 3.7% in 2014; and
- (f) inflation is low and inflationary pressures appear to be contained.

The IMF has proposed a number of structural reforms required for raising medium to long term growth prospects.

5. Cabinet has taken note that the new Recreation Centre for the Elderly and the Disabled at Pointe aux Piments, named after Lady Sushil Ramgoolam, would be inaugurated on 5 March 2014. The Centre comprises, *inter alia*, 60 twin bedrooms, a dining hall with an industrial kitchen, an auditorium, an amphitheatre, a swimming pool, and a computer room.

The Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions already operates two recreation centres, viz. the Dr James Burty David Recreation Centre for Senior Citizens at Pointe aux Sables and the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam Recreation Centre for Senior Citizens at Belle Mare. Both centres provide residential recreational facilities for some 22,000 elderly and disabled persons yearly at a subsidized rate.

The Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions proposes to set up a similar recreation centre at Riambel.

6. Cabinet has taken note of arrangements being made to renovate the Supreme Court Buildings, a national heritage, and the construction of which dates back to the colonial occupation of the Island by France. The buildings were designed and built by Paul René Thoreau de la Martinière in 1784. The ground floor of the central part accommodated the *Palais de Justice*. In 1790, the *Assemblée Coloniale* together with its administrative staff, moved from the *Hotel de Ville* and held its sessions in the ground floor of the building. In 1793, the *Tribunal d'Appel*, which substituted itself for the *Conseil Supérieur*, moved therein. The buildings, which have all along been used as the Supreme Court, accommodate the Chambers of the Chief Justice and of the other Puisne Judges.

7. Cabinet has taken note of the setting up of a joint Public and Private Tourism Committee as enunciated in Budget Speech 2014. The Joint Committee that would be co-chaired by the Ministry of Tourism and Leisure and the *Association des Hôteliers et Restaurateurs de l'île Maurice* (AHRIM), aims at –

- (a) scanning the international environment for opportunities and challenges;

- (b) proposing marketing strategies to improve market share in existing, emerging and new markets;
- (c) proposing measures to consolidate, enhance and reinforce the image of the destination; and
- (d) advising on strategies relating to tourism promotion and investment, market diversification, tourism product enhancement and human resource development.

8. Cabinet has taken note that, in the context of the implementation of the Mauritius/UNDP/UNEP Partnership Initiative for the Strategic Approach to International Chemical Management Implementation Programme, the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development and the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life have prepared the following Plans –

- (a) the National Inventory of Mercury Releases (Level 1) that outlines the main sources of mercury releases in Mauritius, viz., mercury added products, fossil fuel and biomass combustion, and waste incineration;
- (b) the National Action Plan on Mercury that paves the way to further reduce releases and emissions of mercury;
- (c) the National Chemical Profile that provides an overall view of the chemicals management including legislative framework; and
- (d) the National Priorities for the Sound Management of Chemicals which sets out the main activities to be undertaken over the years 2014 to 2020 to meet national objectives pertaining to the management of chemicals.

9. Cabinet has taken note that, as at December 2013, 5,768 cases of HIV and AIDS, (4,526 males and 1,242 females) were detected among Mauritians in the country. The estimated HIV prevalence among adults aged 15 to 49 years in the Mauritian population is 1%. Since the implementation of several measures, namely the introduction of Methadone Substitution Therapy and the Needle Exchange Programmes as harm reduction strategies, the number of newly detected cases has shown a downward trend, i.e., from 401 in 2011 to 260 in 2013.

Cabinet has further taken note that, in 2014, the following activities contained in the Operational Plan 2014 would be implemented -

- (a) scaling up of voluntary counselling and testing at health centres, commercial sites and public beaches;

- (b) strengthening the sensitization campaign;
- (c) developing targeted intervention programmes for women at community level on Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission, as well as primary and secondary prevention;
- (d) setting up of a Day Care Centre in the region of Flacq; and
- (e) improving the Methadone Substitution Therapy Programme through enhanced rehabilitation activities and a review of the methadone dispensing system.

10. Cabinet has taken note that the Third Meeting of the COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite Technical Committee on Movement of Business Persons would be held in Mauritius in March 2014. The first COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite Summit, held in October 2008, took major decisions in terms of moving towards a single market, as well as an enlarged Free Trade Area encompassing the 26 Member States of COMESA, SADC and EAC. The Summit also agreed that negotiations to facilitate the movement of business persons should run in parallel with the negotiations on the Tripartite Free Trade Area. In that connection, a Tripartite Technical Committee on Movement of Business Persons was established to discuss on a draft negotiating text on the Movement of Business Persons. According to the Roadmap set out by the Tripartite Summit, the negotiations on the Tripartite Free Trade Area, as well as on the movement of Business Persons, are expected to be concluded in June 2014. Some 80 delegates from the 26 Tripartite Member States are expected to participate in the Meeting.

11. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Housing and Lands would issue new planning guidelines aiming at preserving the pristine landscape of the region along the Terre Rouge-Verdun Link Road, particularly relating to the external appearance of building development within the sight lines of the Link Road; clearing of land, removal of vegetation cover and greening of landscape; and screening of eyesores and other mitigating measures to upgrade the environment.

Cabinet has also taken note that the Road Development Authority would not entertain applications for billboards along the Road.

12. Cabinet has taken note of the activities that would be organized by the Rajiv Gandhi Science Centre in 2014, namely the National Science Weeks, the Caravane de la Science in schools, Sky Observation Programmes, Science Fun Days, Science Competitions, and Science Talks around the country. The aim of the activities is to create awareness on the importance of science, technology and innovation, and encourage creativity among students.

13. Cabinet has taken note that the Bagatelle-Valentina Link Road would be operational as from 22 February 2014.

14. Cabinet has taken note of the activities that the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment would organise in the context of the International Labour Day 2014, namely –

- (a) Tripartite Workshops on “Safety and Health at Work”, and on “Social Dialogue”;
- (b) launching up of a Professional Information Desk at the seat of the Ministry to provide a prompt and efficient service to customers;
- (c) arrangements for concessionary rates at hypermarkets, leisure parks, shopping malls, cinemas, hotels and restaurants; and
- (d) launching of a worker-friendly guide on essential features of the Employment Rights Act, the Employment Relations Act and the OSH Management system.

15. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment to Qatar. The main object of the mission was to finalise discussions on an Agreement that would provide the legal framework to regulate the employment of technical and professional manpower from Mauritius, and the Model Contract of Employment. The Agreement was signed by the Minister and Dr Abdullah Bin Saleh Al-khulaifi, Minister of Labour and Social Affairs of Qatar.

16. Cabinet has taken note that the appointment, on contract, of Mr Kaviraj Sharma Sukon, as Director General of the Open University of Mauritius has been renewed for a period of 5 years.

Cabinet has also taken note of the appointment of Mr Vimalen Reddi, Barrister-at-Law, as Chairperson of the Information and Communication Technologies Board. The Board of the Authority is also being reconstituted.
