

CABINET DECISIONS – 3 APRIL 2015

1. Cabinet has agreed to the introduction of the Local Government (Amendment) Bill in the National Assembly. The object of the Bill is to amend the Local Government Act 2011 to provide, among others, –

- (a) for the holding of the Municipal City Council and Municipal Town Council elections in 2015 and, thereafter, every six years or in such other year as the President shall, on the advice of the Prime Minister, appoint;
- (b) for an increase in the number of Municipal City Councillors and Municipal Town Councillors to be returned per Ward from three to four, thus the total number of Councillors would be increased from 90 to 120;
- (c) that every group or alliance presenting more than 2 candidates at an election of a Municipal City Council or a Municipal Town Council should ensure that not more than two-thirds of its candidates for election to that Council are of the same sex;
- (d) that the chairperson or a member of the governing body of a statutory corporation or an organisation wholly funded by the State may stand as a candidate at a local government election;
- (e) that a Councillor shall not lose his seat where he ceases to belong to a group otherwise than by resignation; and
- (f) that a local authority shall be required to meet at least once a month.

2. Cabinet has taken note that its decision taken on Friday 27 February 2015 has not been accurately reproduced in the Communiqué issued by the Government Information Service on that same day.

Cabinet, in fact, agreed to the following –

- (a) the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (ODPP) to function as a distinct department of the Attorney-General's Office (AGO), as was the case until 2009, but with the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) as responsible officer;
- (b) the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel (OPC) to function as a distinct department within the AGO, as recommended by Lord Mackay in his Report and in 2006, with the Parliamentary Counsel as responsible officer;
- (c) the Solicitor General to be the Supervising Officer, and the Chief Legal Secretary to be the accounting officer, of the whole of the AGO, comprising 3 departments (ODPP, OPC and Civil Advisory and Litigation Department); and

- (d) the Enforcement Authority under the Asset Recovery Act to be the Financial Intelligence Unit pending the setting up of the Financial Crime Commission, in order to allow officers of the ODPP to focus on their prosecutorial duties and other duties within the AGO.

3. Cabinet has agreed to the School Materials Scheme, which is implemented by the National Empowerment Foundation under the Child Welfare and Family Empowerment Programme, being reviewed. Cabinet has further agreed that, henceforth, only wards of households, registered under the Social Register of Mauritius, would be eligible to school materials under the Scheme. The Ministry of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment, in collaboration with other stakeholders working in pockets of poverty, would organize sensitization campaigns to encourage vulnerable households to register themselves in the Social Register of Mauritius. The exercise would ensure that deserving students benefit from the Scheme through a fair and transparent process.

4. Cabinet has taken note that the Central Electricity Board would conduct a fresh bidding exercise for the re-development of St Louis Power Station in order to meet short-term electricity generation requirements. Cabinet has further taken note that the Central Electricity Board has updated its generation plan taking into account the expected demand, and approved the extension of the Power Purchase Agreement for the 22MW coal plant with Consolidated Energy Ltd (Beau Champ) up to 2018. The electricity demand would be met until mid 2017 with the extension of the Agreement and the existing plants of the Central Electricity Board and the Independent Power Producers, as well as a well-planned maintenance programme. The Central Electricity Board is making appropriate arrangements to meet electricity demand beyond 2017. Moreover, the Central Electricity Board proposes to invite an Expression of Interest for grid-connected renewable energy systems using solar, wind, hydro, and biomass including municipal waste. The Central Electricity Board is also working on the upgrading of its grid for greater penetration of renewable energy technologies.

5. Cabinet has taken note of the various options offered by the Transaction Adviser for the new Road Decongestion Programme, taking into consideration that Government would not proceed with the MLRT Project, the upcoming developments, namely the setting up of the administrative city in Highlands and the implementation of techno poles, as well as the accrued traffic converging to Port Louis as a result of the implementation of the A1-M1 Link Road. A Special Meeting of Cabinet would be held by the end of April 2015 to assess the viability of the different options proposed before a final decision is taken.

6. Cabinet has taken note that Ms Laura Jayne Mee Lee Chan Wah Hak, holder of DPhil in Ion Channels in Health and Disease, and Ms Nowsheen Goonoo, holder of PhD in Polymers and Biomaterials, have been selected by the Nobel Laureates Meeting Council to participate in the Lindau Nobel Laureates meeting in Physics, Chemistry and Physiology or Medicine to be held from 28 June to 03 July 2015 in Germany. The Lindau Nobel Laureates, which dates back to 1951, aims at bringing together young scientists from all over the world to meet and interact with Nobel Laureates. The meetings are inspired by the guiding principles of “Educate, Inspire, Connect” and focus alternately on a different discipline.

7. Cabinet has taken note of the main recommendations made by the Pay Research Bureau on the independent review of salaries and conditions of service of employees of the former Mauritius Sugar Industry Research Institute and the former Mauritius Sugar Authority. The effective date of the implementation of the recommendations is 01 January 2013.

8. Cabinet has taken note that the 2nd African Youth Championships in Athletics would be held at Maryse Justin Stadium, Réduit from 23 to 26 April 2015. Some 360 athletes from 31 African countries would participate in the competitions. The Championships would provide opportunities to our local athletes to interact with high calibre African athletes, and also serve as a spring board to athletes participating in the Indian Ocean Islands Games 2015.

9. Cabinet has taken note that a supplier has supplied Paracetamol solution for IV infusion to the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life from a non-Pharmaceutical Inspection Convention country manufacturer. Tests carried out have revealed that the product is counterfeit. The Ministry of Health and Quality of Life has already recalled the product from all health institutions. The case has been reported to the Police.

10. Cabinet has taken note of cases of dengue fever in a region of Port Louis. The Ministry of Health and Quality of Life has taken appropriate measures against the proliferation of mosquito borne diseases, and to stop the propagation of the disease. The Ministry has also distributed mosquito repellent cream to some 1,800 households in the affected region and its neighbourhood. Surveillance at port and airport has been strengthened. The Ministry of Health and Quality of Life is carrying out a campaign to sensitize the public on the disease.

11. Cabinet has agreed to Mauritius signing the Food and Agriculture Organisation Port State Measures Agreement. The objective of the Agreement is to prevent, deter and eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing through the implementation of effective port state measures, and thereby ensuring the long-term conservation and sustainable use of living marine resources and marine ecosystems.

12. Cabinet has taken note of development in the implementation of the Square Kilometre Array (SKA) project, a major radio telescope much more sensitive and bigger than any existing one. South Africa is the lead partner and is hosting the SKA. The other partner countries, i.e., Botswana, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, and Zambia, would be connected by fibre optics at the identified SKA radio telescope stations. Bras d'Eau, where the Mauritius Radio Telescope is based, would be used as the site to host the remote station in Mauritius. The project would be beneficial mainly in terms of foreign direct investment, jobs creation, enhanced broadband connectivity and enhanced research.

13. Cabinet has agreed to the first State of Conservation Report of Le Morne Cultural Landscape World Heritage Property being submitted to UNESCO World Heritage Centre for presentation and discussion at the 39th Session of the World Heritage Committee scheduled for June/July 2015. The Report emphasises that Government reiterates its commitment to preserve and enhance Le Morne Cultural Landscape for the benefit of the nation and the world.

14. Cabinet has taken note of the activities that would be organized by the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life to mark the World Health Day 2015, observed on 7 April. The theme for this year is **Food Safety – From Farm to Plate, Make Food Safe**. The following activities would be organized –

- (a) a workshop on amendments to be brought to the existing Food Regulations;
- (b) campaigns to sensitize consumers on food safety; and
- (c) demonstrations in regional hospitals on rapid food testing.

15. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands to Saudi Arabia and Dubai. In Saudi Arabia, the Vice-Prime Minister had meetings with HE Dr Bandar Ibn Muhammad Hajjar, Minister of Hajj of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and Dr Osama, Member of the "Shurah Committee", among others, on the increase in quota from 1,050 to 1,500 pilgrims. In Dubai, the Vice-Prime Minister met His Highness Sheikh Ahmed Bin Saeed Al Maktoum, Chairperson of Emirates, who has confirmed that –

- (a) the cost of the return ticket for Hajj Pilgrimage 2015 would be Rs35,000, as compared to Rs41,000 in 2014;

- (b) a discount of 20% on all tickets purchased by Government for official travel in premium class for a trial period of one year; and
- (c) a discount of 20% on tickets, Premium and Economy Classes, purchased by participants in officially sponsored events by the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority, Enterprise Mauritius and the Board of Investment.

16. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Health and Quality of Life to Geneva where he participated in the First World Health Organisation Ministerial Conference on Global Action Against Dementia. Discussions centered around -

- (a) improving dementia awareness;
- (b) strengthening health and social care systems to deliver integrated and responsive care to improve quality of life of people living with dementia; and
- (c) strengthening global leadership to implement relevant policies and plan for care, risk reduction, research and monitoring of dementia.

17. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare to Kenya where she participated in the 1st Forum of Ministers of Social Development for Eastern African Countries. The objectives of the Forum were to facilitate and support social policy formulation and enhanced capacity for integrated development planning.

18. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare to New York where she participated in the Annual Consultation of National Women's Machineries 2015 and the 59th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women. The theme of the Annual Consultation of National Women's Machineries was "**Women Political Leadership within Beijing and the Post-2015 Development Agenda**". The Commonwealth Secretariat reiterated its commitment to assist member countries to reach gender equality within the prescribed time frame in accordance with the Millennium Development Goals and other international instruments, and to step up support for the advancement of women's effective leadership to enable Member Countries to reach the agreed minimum of 30 per cent. At the 59th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women, the following issues were discussed –

- (a) responsibility of Men and Boys in achieving Gender Equality;

- (b) realizing the Rights of Marginalised and Disadvantaged Women and Girls; and
- (c) changing Social Norms to achieve Gender Equality and Building the Evidence and Monitoring Results – Gender Statistics.

19. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the Second Meeting of the Parties of the Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA) held in Mauritius in March 2015. The issues discussed were, among others, deep sea fisheries management, and hosting of the SIOFA Secretariat.

20. Cabinet has taken note of the appointment of Dr Mahmad Aniff Kodabaccus, GOSK, as Chairperson of the Mauritius Housing Company Ltd in replacement to Dr Kheswar Jankee.

21. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of –

- (a) the Central Electricity Board with Mr Mootoosamy Naidoo as Chairperson;
- (b) the Central Water Authority Board with Mr Gaston François Desmarais as Chairperson;
- (c) the Wastewater Management Authority Board with Mr Sulaiman Hansrod as Chairperson;
- (d) the Committee of the President's Fund for Creative Writing with Dr Mrs Anita Aujayeb as Chairperson; and
- (e) the Mental Health Commission with Dr Vasantryo Gujadhur, Acting Regional Health Director, as Chairperson.
