

## **CABINET DECISIONS – 3 JULY 2015**

1. Cabinet has taken note that the delegation led by the Minister of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms to India has successfully finalized the pending issues on the Double Taxation Avoidance Convention, as well as a protocol amending the Convention between India and Mauritius for the avoidance of double taxation and the prevention of fiscal evasion with respect to taxes on income and capital gains.

Cabinet has further taken note that, for the past nine years since 2006, the former Government could not resolve those issues in spite of the 10 meetings held by the Joint Working Group set up with a view to addressing issues relating to the misuse of the Double Taxation Agreement and the strengthening of the mechanism of the Exchange of Information.

Cabinet has agreed to the signing of the protocol following the completion of internal procedures by both sides.

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2. Cabinet has agreed to the setting up of a Poverty Observatory under the aegis of the Ministry of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment in line with Government Programme 2015-2019. The Observatory would, among others, –

- (a) act as a repository for information on poverty;
- (b) commission research and studies on poverty and social development;
- (c) coordinate the process of monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the Marshall Plan on the eradication of poverty; and
- (d) advise the Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment on policies that reflect the changing parameters of poverty and its impact on vulnerable groups.

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3. Cabinet has taken note of measures taken to reinforce safety and security at sea with a view to enhancing the attractiveness of the core tourism product offer, and enabling tourists and the public to enjoy a wide range of nautical activities in the best conditions. These measures include –

- (a) demarcation of a snorkelling zone at Trou Corne, Belle Mare, and a speed limit zone on the stretch from Ambre Hotel to Long Beach Hotel;
- (b) obligation on owners of commercial pleasure crafts to ensure that their skippers attend the refresher courses dispensed by the Tourism Authority;

- (c) suspension of Skipper's Licence and seizure of pleasure craft in case contraventions are established;
- (d) wearing of a life jacket or other personal flotation device for all nautical activities carried out outside the lagoon;
- (e) introduction of guidelines for towing activities; and
- (f) ban on jet ski activities.

In the light of the recommendations of the Master Plan for the zoning of lagoon for the sustainable use of our limited coastal and marine resources, an Action Plan has been elaborated for the implementation of priority projects, *inter alia*, speed limit zones at Mon Choisy and Trou aux Biches, navigable passages at Grand Baie and Black River, buffer and mooring zones at Ile aux Benitiers.

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4. Cabinet has taken note that, on the occasion of the World Population Day 2015 that is commemorated on 11 July, the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life will organize the following activities –

- (a) a workshop to disseminate the findings of the 2014 Contraceptive Prevalence Survey;
- (b) training programmes for peer educators in sexual and reproductive health; and
- (c) sensitization campaigns, talks, training programmes and workshops to raise awareness on sexual reproductive health issues and emergencies.

The theme chosen by the United Nations Population Fund is **Vulnerable Populations in Emergencies**.

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5. Cabinet has taken note of the status report of the seepage in the water retaining structures of the new Pailles Water Treatment Plant. The Central Water Authority has appointed Aurecon, a South African firm, to give an independent opinion on the leakages.

Cabinet has also taken note that, in the light of the recommendations of the independent Consultants, appropriate action will be taken against those responsible.

Cabinet has further taken note that all repairs to the Water Treatment Plant would be conducted by the Contractor at no cost to Government.

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6. Cabinet has taken note that the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities participated in the Vienna Energy Forum, a joint initiative by the Austrian Government, the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis and UNIDO to explore how energy can contribute to meeting the challenges of the 21st century. The theme of this year's Forum was **Sustainable Energy for Inclusive Development**. During the Forum, discussions centred, among others, on financing of renewable energy, public-private partnerships, new business models for investing in renewable energy projects, technology, capacity building and knowledge management, South-South cooperation, and nexus issues linking energy to water, food and health.

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7. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the 5th Meeting of Ministers of Health of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) of the WHO African Region held in Mauritius in June 2015. During the Meeting, discussions centred, among others, on –

- (a) emerging challenges of non-communicable diseases;
- (b) health security and information sharing among SIDS;
- (c) introduction of Human Papilloma Virus Vaccine; and
- (d) universal health coverage and social determinants of health.

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8. Cabinet has taken note that the Minister of Health and Quality of Life participated in the Second Edition of the Congress on Nephrology – Renal Disease and Diabetes held in Reunion Island in June 2015. The objectives of the Congress were to take stock of the problem of Nephrology in our sub-region, and chart a road map to lessen the impact of non-communicable diseases on individuals and the society.

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9. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade to Brussels where he participated in the 18th Meeting of the ACP Ministerial Trade Committee and the 13th Meeting of the Joint ACP-EU Ministerial Trade Committee. Discussions centred, among others, on –

- (a) Economic Partnership Agreement Negotiations;
- (b) Administrative Cooperation Agreements;
- (c) EU Negotiations with Third Countries;
- (d) WTO Issues; and
- (e) Intra-ACP Activities.

The ACP Ministerial Trade Committee Fiscal Jurisdiction in ACP countries strongly condemned the approach of the EU to arbitrarily blacklist some of the ACP countries based on erroneous perception of some of the EU Member States. It has urged the EU to immediately withdraw the list and refrain from such publication in the future.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade also participated in the Eastern and Southern Africa Extraordinary Consultative Meeting on the Economic Partnership Agreement that took stock of the status of the preparation of market access offers by Member States in the context of the Economic Partnership Agreement being negotiated with the European Union.

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10. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions to Western Australia. The main objective of the visit was to take stock of the juvenile justice and rehabilitation system in Western Australia with a view to developing appropriate strategies for the Youth Rehabilitation Sector in Mauritius. Following meetings the Minister had with various personalities, –

- (a) Mr William Cullen, Correctional Consultant, has agreed to work on a Strategic Plan for the Rehabilitation Youth Centre;
- (b) the Australian authorities would provide assistance in the setting up of a Juvenile Court, and in respect of amendments to be made to existing legislations, viz., Juvenile Offenders Act (1935) and Reforms Institutions Act (1988);
- (c) Australian experts would provide training to the staff of the Rehabilitation Youth Centre; and
- (d) bilateral assistance and cooperation with relevant departments and agencies of Western Australia would be consolidated.

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11. Cabinet has taken note that the Minister of Environment, Sustainable Development, Disaster and Beach Management participated in the Eighth Conference of the Parties (COP8) to the Nairobi Convention for the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Western Indian Ocean (Nairobi Convention) held in the Seychelles in June 2015. The theme of the Conference was “*Conserving the Marine and Coastal Environment for the Western Indian Ocean for the next 30 Years*”. The main objectives of COP8 were to provide a platform to Contracting Parties to reflect and showcase their achievements in the conservation of the marine and coastal environment over the last 30 years, and take stock of emerging challenges and future opportunities with a view to elaborating the way forward.

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12. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training to Geneva, and Italy.

In Geneva, the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training participated in the 104th Session of the International Labour Conference. Discussions centred, among others, on –

- (a) small and medium-sized enterprises and decent and productive employment creation;
- (b) facilitating transactions from the informal to the formal economy; and
- (c) the strategic objective of social protection (labour protection).

In Italy, the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training participated in the Third Meeting of the Steering Committee of the Project “*Faciliter une gestion responsable et efficace de la migration circulaire de travailleurs mauriciens vers l’Italie*”. The objective of the Meeting was to discuss ways and means to ensure the smooth implementation of activities under the Labour Migration Project. He also discussed employment opportunities for Mauritians in the agro-industry, tourism and fishing sectors.

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13. Cabinet has agreed to the setting up of an Inter-Ministerial Committee comprising the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries, Shipping and Outer Islands, and the Minister of Environment, Sustainable Development, and Disaster and Beach Management to finalize the stand of Mauritius for the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference of Parties (COP 21) to be held in Paris in December 2015.

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14. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of –

- (a) the Board of the Mauritius Qualifications Authority with Mrs Sharmila Kowlessur as Chairperson; and
- (b) the Labour Advisory Council with the Director, Labour and Industrial Relations, Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training, as Chairperson.

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