

**CABINET DECISIONS – 6 FEBRUARY 2015**

1. Cabinet has agreed to the National Development Unit adopting a Framework prepared by the Public Procurement Office, in collaboration with the Central Procurement Board, for the construction and upgrading of roads and associated civil works. The Framework would allow a better management and a speedy implementation of projects, as well as ensure judicious expenditure of public funds, and strict adherence to established procedures. The Framework would help achieve better transparency, fairness, and a healthy competition among bidders, and act as a deterrent against monopoly of contracts. Contractors would be selected on the basis of technical, financial and commercial requirements, and price in accordance with the schedule of rates for each zone for which they intend to enter into an agreement with the National Development Unit.

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2. Cabinet has taken note that, in line with Government's decision, the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions would make regulations under the Unemployment Hardship Relief Act and the Social Aid Act to provide for the increase of 6% in the rates of benefits payable as from 1 January 2015. In order to promptly alleviate the hardship of the beneficiaries, benefits calculated on the new rates have already been paid.

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3. Cabinet has taken note of the activities that would be organized by the Ministry of Arts and Culture in the context of the celebration of Spring Festival 2015 at national level, namely -

- (a) cultural shows with the participation of the Chengdu Art Troupe from the People's Republic of China and other artists from the Chinese Cultural Centre; and
- (b) a defilé, comprising Chinese Dragon and Lion Dance Groups, Martial Arts Demonstration and other artistic groups.

Cabinet has further taken note that, on the occasion of the Lantern Festival, the Spring Festival Celebration Association would organize a cultural show on 07 March 2015 at the Auditorium of the Mahatma Gandhi Institute, Moka.

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4. Cabinet has taken note that financial resources to the tune of Rs2,380m would be made available to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly for its Recurrent and Capital Estimates for the financial period 1 January to 31 December 2015. Other Ministries/Departments/statutory bodies are expected to implement projects and activities in Rodrigues to the tune of Rs1,159m.

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5. Cabinet has agreed to the appointment of Mr Joyeraj Ramjada, former Deputy Executive Director of the former Mauritius Sugar Authority, and Mr Goinda Padayachy, freelance Consultant in Human Resource matters, as Assessors to assist Mrs Premila Balgobin, former Puisne Judge, who has been appointed Independent Arbitrator to look into the unresolved issues in relation to the disputes referred to the Commission for Conciliation and Mediation by the Joint Negotiating Panel.

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6. Cabinet has agreed to the draft Allied Health Professions Bill and supporting draft Regulations being circulated for comments and observations. The objects of the proposed Bill are, amongst others, to establish a Council and various specific Boards that would oversee the registration and licensing of members of the allied health professions, regulate their professional training, development and conduct, and ensure that the institutions where such professionals operate meet the prescribed criteria and norms. An Appeals Tribunal to hear and decide appeals against the decisions of the Council and the Boards, is also being proposed.

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7. Cabinet has agreed to the period of service of redundant employees of the former Tea Board and the former Tobacco Board, in the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security being reckoned for the calculation of their pension in the event that they have not yet been placed on the permanent and pensionable establishment at the time of their retirement.

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8. Cabinet has taken note of developments in the setting up of the Inter Country Quality Node for Early Childhood Development in Mauritius. In line with the Strategic Plan of the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (2013-2017), Inter Country Quality Nodes are being set up to encourage African States to assume ownership for greater effectiveness in the sharing of promising practices and capacity building. The Inter Country Quality Nodes bring together countries facing similar challenges and strategic partners having expertise in a specific field to promote dialogue, collective learning and space for collaborative action.

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9. Cabinet has taken note that the signature ceremony of the United Nations Convention on Transparency in Treaty-based Investor-State Arbitration (UN Convention on Transparency) would be held in Mauritius in March 2015. The UN Convention on Transparency is an instrument by which Parties to investment treaties express their consent to applying the UNCITRAL Rules on Transparency in Treaty-based Investor-State Arbitration to their existing investment promotion and protection agreements. On the occasion, a one-day Conference would be organised to address, amongst others, investor-State arbitration and human rights, and arbitration and access to justice.

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10. Cabinet has agreed to the endorsement of the Strategic Action Programme for the Western Indian Ocean Large Marine Ecosystems to enable its implementation under the United Nations Development Programme - Global Environment Facility Strategic Action Programme Policy Harmonization and Institutional Reforms project. The Programme is a road map that sets out the policy, legal and institutional reforms and investments, including capacity building, that are required to address problems identified in a marine ecosystem by a Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis. It also makes provision to support the promotion of sustainable development of economic sectors, such as fisheries, aquaculture, sea transport, and tourism, within the concept of a sustainable ecosystem approach so as to provide enhanced benefits that are derived from large marine ecosystems.

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11. Cabinet has taken note that Mauritius Telecom Ltd would host the 15<sup>th</sup> Southern African Development Community (SADC) Telecommunications Operators Bilateral Meeting in Mauritius from 24 to 27 February 2015. The Southern Africa Telecommunications Association (SATA) is the implementing agency of SADC for telecommunications and information and communication technologies, and coordinates the development of ICT networks and services of a regional nature which are responsive to the diverse needs of commerce and industry in support of the SADC Regional socio-economic development programmes. The focus of the Southern Africa Telecommunications Association is on technology, business, policy and regulatory advocacy and human capital development. Some 100 participants, including influential senior experts in the ICT industry from various organisations within and outside the SADC Region, members of SATA, as well as Executives and Senior Managers from Ministries, Regulators, Telecom Operators and the telecommunication industry, are expected to participate in the Meeting.

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12. Cabinet has taken note that the University of Mauritius, in collaboration with the Society of Digital Information and Wireless Communications, Hong Kong would host the third International Conference on Digital Information Processing, e-Business and Cloud Computing from 29 June to 1 July 2015. The Conference serves as a forum for scientists and engineers to present latest research findings, ideas, and papers in diverse areas of computer science, cloud computing, e-business, biometrics technologies, wireless communications, computational intelligence, information content security, e-technology, and other information technology related areas. Some 26 researchers from Australia, Austria, Bulgaria, China, Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Ireland, Japan, Jordan, Lebanon, Malaysia, Morocco, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Poland, Portugal, South Korea, Tunisia, Turkey, the UK and the USA, are expected to participate in the Conference.

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13. Cabinet has taken note that fish carrier Kha Yang, registered in Malaysia, grounded off St Brandon island on 31 January 2015. The vessel has got aground on the coral reef. In accordance with the provision of the Merchant Shipping Act, the Director of Shipping has instructed the owner to remove pollutants and the vessel from St Brandon. Arrangements are being made for the towing of the vessel. The National Coast Guard is closely monitoring the situation.

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14. Cabinet has taken note of the performance of the Export-Oriented Enterprises Sector for the year 2014 as compared to the year 2013. The value of exports increased from Rs46.77 billion to Rs47.2 billion, i.e., by 0.9%. Increase had been registered in the export of Textile and Clothing (+5.0%), Yarns and Fabrics (+5.9%), t-shirts (+8.9%), trousers (+23.6%) and Jewellery, Precious and Semi-Precious Stones (+18.5%). In order to boost export and enhance competitiveness, the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection is reviewing its Export Development Plan with focus on a more aggressive export promotion, country-driven strategies and enhancing the competitiveness of local enterprises by ensuring institutional synergy on operational and financial restructuring, productivity improvement and quality enhancement.

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15. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade to the US as member of the delegation of the AU Ministerial mission to lobby for the urgent reauthorisation of the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA). The delegation had several meetings with key stakeholders in Washington, including two special assistants to President Obama, members of the US Congress and Senate, the United States Trade Representative (USTR), Ambassador Michael Froman, the foreign policy adviser of former President Clinton, representatives of the US Chamber of Commerce, the US Corporate Council on Africa and the US Civil Society. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade also had bilateral meetings, amongst others, with Mrs Judith Garber, Acting Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Oceans and International Environment and Scientific Affairs at the US Department of State and Mr Amitabh Desai, Foreign Policy Advisor to former President Clinton on the latter's Climate Change Initiative.

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16. Cabinet has taken note of –

- (a) the reconstitution of the Board of the Islamic Cultural Centre Trust Fund with Mr Samiullah Lauthan, MSK, as Chairperson; and
- (b) the reconstitution of the Dangerous Chemicals Control Board with Dr I. Boodhoo, Head Occupational Health Unit as Chairperson.

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17. Cabinet has taken note of the appointment of Mr Jean François Gilles L'Entêté as Managing Director of the National Housing Development Company Ltd.

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