

CABINET DECISIONS – 10 NOVEMBER 2017

1. Cabinet has taken note of the representations made for the review of the eligibility criteria and conditions for the payment of the Negative Income Tax, and agreed to the following new criteria

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- (a) An employee earning a monthly basic salary of up to Rs9,900 will be eligible to the payment of the Negative Income Tax, provided his total monthly earnings, excluding travelling and end-of-year bonus, do not exceed Rs20,000.
- (b) The net income, excluding dividend and interest, of an employee's spouse should not exceed Rs390,000 in the current year.
- (c) An employee should work for a minimum of 24 hours over at least 3 days in a week.
- (d) An employee will benefit from the Negative Income Tax once he starts contributing to the National Pensions Fund and the National Savings Fund in respect of the month in which the Negative Income Tax is being claimed.

The conditions that an employee should be in full-time employment, and be in continuous employment for the preceding 6 months, are being removed. The new conditions will take effect as from 1 July 2017.

2. Cabinet has taken note that the Tripartite Committee for the determination of 2018 Salary Compensation would meet as follows –

- (a) the First Tripartite Committee Meeting, chaired by the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training, on 15 November 2017; and
- (b) the Second Tripartite Committee Meeting, chaired by the Prime Minister, on 22 November 2017.

3. Cabinet has agreed to the introduction of the Equal Opportunities (Amendment) Bill into the National Assembly in line with Government Programme 2015-2019 to increase employability of people convicted of minor offences and misdemeanours. The object of the Bill is to amend the Equal Opportunities Act to provide for the prohibition of discrimination in employment, on grounds of a person's criminal record, both at the recruitment and the promotion levels, where a person's criminal record is not relevant to the nature of his employment.

4. Cabinet has agreed to the setting up of a Ministerial Committee under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister to lead a Task Force with a view to making necessary arrangements so that Thaipooam Cavadee and Maha Shivaratee festivals in 2018 are celebrated in the best possible conditions.

5. Cabinet has agreed to the sale of plots of land at Calebasses, Khoyratty to the planters of the former Terre Rouge Land Settlement (ex-JIN FEI planters) at a nominal price in accordance with the agreement signed between Government and the planters following the relinquishment of their rights in the agricultural lease owing to the implementation of the Jin Fei Project.

6. Cabinet has taken note that for the period 21 April to 31 October 2017, the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands has, in accordance with the provisions of the State Lands Act, approved the grant of lease of plots of State land to 165 applicants, including 140 for residential purposes, and renewed 12 leases.

7. Cabinet has taken note of the Strategic Action Plan 2018-2020: Propelling Cooperatives towards Excellence for the Cooperative Sector. The Plan aims at facilitating the promotion of diversified, emerging and innovative cooperatives, and the involvement of more young persons and women in the development, consolidation and advancement of the cooperative movement.

8. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the First Call for Projects launched by the National Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Foundation in April 2017. Out of 297 applications received, 231 have been approved for funding by the Foundation. As at date, an amount of Rs82.04 million has already been disbursed. The Report on the Outcome of the First Call for Projects would be launched shortly.

9. Cabinet has taken note of the status in the implementation of measures in the Restructuring Plan by the Mauritius Post Ltd, including -

- (a) introduction of money transfer services, and acting as a Foreign Exchange Dealer;
- (b) closure of loss-making post offices; and
- (c) review of the Free Franking Privilege.

10. Cabinet has taken note that Infotech 2017 would be held at the Swami Vivekananda International Convention Centre from 30 November to 03 December 2017. Infotech aims at creating awareness on emerging technologies to bridge the digital divide, and provide a platform for local ICT operators to develop business opportunities with potential technology partners and customers. On the occasion, InnovTech Conferences would be organised to demonstrate the latest innovative projects.

11. Cabinet has agreed to the 21st Annual Meeting of the Civil Aviation Committee of the Southern Africa Transport and Communications Commission being held in Mauritius in May 2018. The main objective of the Civil Aviation Committee is to ensure that the objectives specified in the SADC Protocol on Transport, Communications and Meteorology are achieved, the policies implemented, and actions taken.

12. Cabinet has taken note that the “6èmes Rencontres de l’Agroalimentaire en Océan Indien” (QualiREG 2017) would be held in Mauritius from 20 to 24 November 2017. The objectives of the Conference are to -

- (a) share information regarding recent progress achieved in research in the agriculture and food domains;
- (b) facilitate collaboration among partner institutions from different countries; and
- (c) offer participants the opportunity to acquire knowledge in specific areas.

13. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade to Zambia where he attended the 37th Council of Ministers of the Common Market for the Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA). The issues discussed included air transport liberalization, establishment of a COMESA regional shipping line, the hosting of a Regional Cybercrime Capacity Building Centre by Mauritius, and the flexible rules of origin for specific products. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade also had discussions, among others, with -

- (a) Hon F. Mutati, Minister of Finance of Zambia on economic diplomacy; and
- (b) HE Mr Chabani Nouridine, Minister of Trade of Madagascar and Chairperson of the COMESA Council of Ministers, on the conclusion of a full Economic Partnership Agreement.
