

CABINET DECISIONS – 10 AUGUST 2018

1. Cabinet has taken note of the arrangements being made for the holding of 11th World Hindi Conference in Mauritius from 18 to 20 August 2018. The main theme would be “Hindi Vishwa Aur Bharateey Sanskriti” (World of Hindi and Indian Culture). Some 2,083 delegates and officials from 17 countries including Mauritius have been registered for the Conference. The official delegation from India would be headed by Hon Smt Sushma Swaraj, Minister of External Affairs and comprise various Governors and Ministers of State.

2. Cabinet has agreed to Mauritius signing the Agreement Amending the Protocol on Politics Defence and Security Cooperation of the Southern African Development Community (SADC). The Southern African Regional Police Chiefs Cooperation Organisation (SARPCCO) Constitution which was incorporated in the Protocol on Politics Defence and Security Cooperation in 2009 has been amended to smoothen operationalisation of the Organisation. The objectives of the SARPCCO are, inter alia, to –

- (a) promote, strengthen and perpetuate co-operation and foster joint strategies for the management of all forms of transnational organised and cross-border crimes;
- (b) prepare and disseminate relevant information on criminal activities to benefit Member States to contain crime in the region; and
- (c) carry out regular reviews of joint crime management strategies in view of changing national and regional needs and priorities.

3. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of Memoranda of Understanding between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade and -

- (a) the China Foreign Affairs University and China Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China; and
- (b) the Estonian School of Diplomacy of the Republic of Estonia.

The areas of cooperation include, among others, –

- (a) exchange of information on the structure and content of the training programmes;
- (b) working or study visits to share experiences and ideas;

- (c) the carrying out of coordinated research on subjects in mutually agreed areas;
- (d) mutual assistance in designing IT-based course content for distance learning; and
- (e) the organisation of workshops, forums and seminars in areas of interest to both Parties.

Cooperation under the two Memoranda of Understanding would be implemented by the Institute of Diplomacy and Foreign Trade which has been set up under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade in collaboration with the Ministry of External Affairs of the Republic of India.

4. Cabinet has taken note that the responsibility for the implementation and management of the SME Employment Scheme would be entrusted to SME Mauritius. The objective of the SME Employment Scheme, as announced in the Budget Speech 2018-2019, is to instill in unemployed graduates the entrepreneurial spirit while supporting the development of the SMEs. The SME Employment Scheme would target some 1,000 unemployed graduates

5. Cabinet has agreed to the setting up of a cost sharing mechanism for the implementation of new road infrastructure works that are warranted for Smart City projects. With a view to providing a level playing field to all promoters of Smart City projects, a common policy has been worked out based on objective and transparent criteria, to determine the respective contribution of the promoters of Smart Cities and Government towards the cost of construction of associated road infrastructure facilities.

6. Cabinet has taken note of a programme which has been worked to boost the Reunion Island market through a "Maurice sans Passport" over weekend packages during the period 16 August to 10 October 2018. The visitors would travel on the strength of an Identity Card. The pre-requisites of the programme are as follows -

- (a) visitors should be residents of Reunion Island and travel from there only;
- (b) they must spend a minimum of two nights in Mauritius;

- (c) they should meet the usual immigration requirements in terms of return air ticket and insurance cover, sufficient financial means as well as confirmed accommodation arrangements;
- (d) on arrival, they should produce to the Immigration Officer their valid Identity Cards as well as the accommodation voucher issued by the travel agency; and
- (e) they should not engage in any gainful occupation during their stay.

7. Cabinet has taken note that, according to the last monthly report published by the Statistics Unit of the Ministry of Tourism, 115,881 tourists visited Mauritius in the month of July 2018 as compared to 112,347 in July 2017, i.e., an increase of 3.1%. During the period January to July 2018, 762,746 tourists visited Mauritius as compared to 738,206 for the same period in 2017, i.e., an increase of 3.3%. Growth has been registered in arrivals from Germany (+24.0%), India (+13.0%), Saudi Arabia (+473.6%), the Netherlands (+37.8%), Czech Republic (+23.2%), Austria (+10.9%), Australia (+8.2%) and United Arab Emirates (+1.1%). Tourist earnings for the period January to May 2018 attained Rs29.3 billion, i.e., an increase of 15.0% over the same period in 2017.

8. Cabinet has taken note of development in the implementation of the Civil Service College, Mauritius project. The project would be implemented in a phased manner. The first phase would be made up of an appropriate physical infrastructure to constitute a high class functional Civil Service College. The second phase would provide for the Civil Service College, Mauritius to assume the role of a regional and even international Public Sector Institute to accommodate foreign participants.

9. Cabinet has agreed to the SADC Regional Cybersecurity Drill and Capacity Building Workshop on Cybersecurity being held in Mauritius from 10 to 13 September 2018. The main objectives of the event are to build capacity and awareness on cybersecurity, conduct the first SADC Regional Cyber Drill and develop the framework to establish the SADC Regional Computer Incident Response Team. The Workshop would provide an opportunity to discuss areas of cooperation in respect of capacity building programmes for the forthcoming opening of the cybersecurity Centre of Excellence in Mauritius. Some 50 delegates are expected to attend the Workshop.

10. Cabinet has agreed to the holding of the 2nd edition of the '*Mauritius Cinema Week*' from 17 to 20 October 2018.

11. Cabinet has agreed to the implementation of the recommendations made by a Consultancy Team on the Review of the Pay and Grading Structures and Conditions of Employment at the National Empowerment Foundation in the context of the restructure of the Foundation. The main recommendations in the Report include the new organisation structure of the Foundation and a review of the conditions of service of its employees.

12. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection to UK in the context of the Trade and Investment Promotion organised by the Economic Development Board (EDB) Mauritius, including participation at the Pure London International Fair in London and prospecting Manchester for Trade and Investment. The main objective of the event was to, inter-alia, strengthen trade relations with leading retailers and other stakeholders based in London and to seek for new buyers and partners located in Manchester. Mauritius participated for the first time in the Pure Origin International Fair and was granted the status of Focus Country Partner and given visibility in all communications of the Fair Organiser.

In Manchester, the Minister of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection gave an address during the 'Doing Business Seminar', organised by the EDB Mauritius with the support of the Greater Chamber of Commerce, Manchester. Participants commented on the progress made by Mauritius and the incentives that the Government has put in place to promote business and attract partnership. The Minister also had a meeting with the Pro-Vice Chancellor, Head International Partnership and Senior Researchers of Fashion & Technology of Manchester Metropolitan University to discuss partnership with the Fashion and Design Institute of Mauritius.

13. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the Senior Officials Meeting of the Inaugural Session of the Mauritius-Kenya Joint Commission for Cooperation held recently in Kenya. The main issues discussed related to air connectivity, development of strategic alliances to make regional ports competitive, increase in market access for sugar, sanitary and phytosanitary issues and non- tariff barriers, the Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement and Investment Protection and Promotion Agreement, the Special Economic Zone in Kenya and Ocean Economy. A business forum and trade exhibition on the theme '*Mauritius-Kenya: An Economic Corridor promoting Intra African Trade and Investment*' was also organised by the Economic Development Board in collaboration with KenInvest.

14. Cabinet has taken note of the performance of the Export-Oriented Enterprises (EOE) Sector over the first semester of 2018, compared to the corresponding period in 2017. The value of exports of the EOE Sector for the period January to June 2018 increased compared to the corresponding period in 2017. Increase has been recorded in the value of exports of textiles and clothing, fish and fish preparations, jewellery, pearls, precious and semi-precious stones, medical devices and watches and clocks. Growth has been recorded in exports to the United Kingdom, Italy, Spain, Germany, the Netherlands, the United States and South Africa.

15. Cabinet has taken note of the visit of the Minister of Tourism to Rodrigues in the context of the re-structuring of the Tourist Enterprise Licencing Unit of the Department of Tourism of Rodrigues Regional Assembly. In that connection, a Validation Workshop was held with relevant stakeholders in Rodrigues. During his visit, the Minister of Tourism had a meeting with the Chief Commissioner and Commissioner for Tourism with whom he discussed possible areas of cooperation between the Tourism Authority and Rodrigues Regional Assembly in the field of training of staff, strengthening of the Monitoring and Compliance Unit, elaboration of standards, norms and guidelines for tourism activities in Rodrigues and sharing of best practices.

16. Cabinet has taken note that the Annual Report of the National Housing Development Company Ltd for the year ended 31 December 2016 would be laid before the National Assembly shortly.
