

CABINET DECISIONS – 23 NOVEMBER 2018

1. Cabinet has agreed to the introduction of the Ombudsperson for Financial Services Bill into the National Assembly. The object of the Bill is to provide for an Ombudsperson for Financial Services and his office, and for matters related thereto. The Ombudsperson for Financial Services shall, with a view to giving better protection to consumers of financial services, receive and deal with complaints from consumers of financial services against financial institutions and may make an award for compensation, where appropriate, and give such directives as he may determine to financial institutions. The Office of Ombudsperson for Financial Services shall, inter alia –

- (a) inform and educate the general public on investments in financial services offered by financial institutions; and
- (b) assist the Ombudsperson in dealing with complaints made by consumers of financial services against financial institutions.

2. Cabinet has taken note of the setting up of –

- (a) an Inter-Ministerial Committee under the chair of the Prime Minister to provide policy directives and oversee the implementation of the Doing Business Report and the Mo-Ibrahim Index of African Governance Report; and
- (b) two High-Level Technical Committees to ensure the expeditious implementation of policies and actions adopted by the Inter-Ministerial Committee on the Doing Business Report and Mo-Ibrahim Index of African Governance Report.

3. Cabinet has taken note that Ms Audrey Azoulay, Director-General of UNESCO would attend the Opening Ceremony of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of UNESCO which would be held in Mauritius from 26 November to 1 December 2018. Some 126 countries have already expressed interest to participate in the event.

4. Cabinet has taken note of the setting up of a Fact Finding Committee to, inter alia, examine the Report of the Operations Manager of the Sugar Insurance Fund Board regarding the non-declaration of Event Year in respect of sugar crop 2017. The Fact Finding Committee would be chaired by Mr L. Aujayeb, Assistant Solicitor General with Dr G. Rajpati, GOSK, as Assessor.

5. Cabinet has taken note that the Prime Minister proceeded on official visit to Rodrigues Island recently in the context of the official landing ceremony of the Mauritius and Rodrigues Submarine (MARS) Fibre Optic Cable. The Prime Minister also had discussions with the Chief Commissioner and the Commissioners on status of the major projects for Rodrigues, namely, the Airport project, the Port Development project, including procurement of a cargo ship as well as the construction of a Fishing Port at Pointe L'Herbe and the setting up of a Techno Park at Baladirou. The Rodrigues Regional Assembly was also informed of the proposal of the Chinese Government to grant a renewable powered micro-grid seawater desalination plant with a capacity to produce 1000m³ of water daily at Caverne Bouteille.

6. Cabinet has agreed to the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research signing a Memorandum of Understanding for cooperation in the fields of Scientific Research and International Student Matters with La Trobe University, Australia, with a view to further strengthening and consolidating our research agenda and opening up of Mauritius as an Education Hub. The objective of the Memorandum of Understanding is to establish a cooperative relationship between the parties in connection with the future development and advancement of Scientific Research and International Student Matters.

7. Cabinet has taken note that the Information and Communication Technologies Authority would host the Global Forum on Emergency Telecommunication (GET-19) from 4 to 8 March 2019. The Global Forum on Emergency Telecommunication is the International Telecommunication Union's key forum and international platform to discuss disaster management and emergency telecommunications, covers, among others, issues related to national emergency telecommunication policy, disaster preparedness, partnerships and financing, and new developments in technology and innovation. Some 250 international participants are expected to attend the Forum.

8. Cabinet has taken note that the second edition of the International Conference on Emerging Trends in Electrical, Electronic and Communications Engineering would be organised by the University of Mauritius from 28 to 30 November 2018. The Conference aims at –

- (a) promoting research, both regionally and internationally;
- (b) enabling local professionals to network with their peers from around the world; and
- (c) showcasing the latest researches and projects happening within the industry.

The Conference would bring together industry professionals, local and international academics, and individuals from Government agencies and other institutions engaged in the areas of Electrical Engineering, Electronic Engineering, Communications Engineering and Computing/IT.

9. Cabinet has taken note that SME Mauritius Ltd would implement the following three new Schemes for SMEs, in line with the Key Actions recommended in the 10-Year Master Plan for the SME Sector, namely –

- (a) the Certification Scheme which would provide technical assistance to SMEs and Cooperatives for accreditation to international standards and certifications. Eligible SMEs would be provided with a grant of 80% of the certification cost, up to a maximum of Rs200,000;
- (b) the SME Productivity Improvement Programme which would create the internal conditions in SMEs that continuously improve the processes and production, minimise delays and waste, reduce costs, and improve quality. Eligible SMEs would be provided with a grant of 20% of the cost of the Productivity Improvement Programme, up to a maximum of Rs50,000; and
- (c) the Foreign Expertise and Technical Assistance Scheme (Handicraft Sector) which is meant to boost up the handicraft sector. Foreign technical assistance would be tapped with a view to assisting Craftsmen and Artisans to acquire knowledge on innovative product design and development, product range, product quality and creativity.

10. Cabinet has taken note that the Rajiv Gandhi Science Centre would, in collaboration with the Australian National University and Curtin Mauritius, organise the “Young Persons’ Plan for the Planet” Conference from 29 November to 01 December 2018. The Conference would bring together Australian and Mauritian students to work out an International Plan for the SDGs through an integration of the Mauritian and Australian National Plans.

11. Cabinet has taken note of the progress made with regard to renovation and upgrading works that are being carried out to sports infrastructure in the context of Indian Ocean Islands Games which would be held from 19 to 28 July 2019.

12. Cabinet has taken note that in the context of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, commemorated on 03 December, the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity, and Environment and Sustainable Development would organise a national function at the Auditorium of the Mahatma Gandhi Institute. The programme would, inter alia, comprise a cultural programme and awards to disabled persons who have demonstrated outstanding performance in the field of education, sports, and life time achievement. The UN theme for the International Day of Persons with Disabilities 2018 is “**Empowering Persons with Disabilities and Ensuring Inclusiveness and Equality**”. The local authorities would also organise several activities, such as magic and talent shows, recreational *cum* fun day, song and dance competitions, and exhibition of crafts for the benefit of Persons with Disabilities.

13. Cabinet has taken note that in the context of the International Volunteer Day, commemorated on 5 December, the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity, and Environment and Sustainable Development would organise, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme and the Non-Governmental Organisation Trust Fund, an official function on 10 December 2018, at the Municipal City Council of Port Louis. The programme would include, inter alia, –

- (a) the award of certificates of appreciation to some 60 NGOs which are in receipt of grant-in-aid and ad-hoc financial assistance for social entrepreneurship projects;
- (b) the award of certificates of recognition to 20 Elderly Watch Committees and 10 Disability Watch Cells comprising volunteers; and
- (c) a presentation on the contribution of the NGO Trust Fund since its inception in 1999 to date.

The theme for this year is “**Volunteer build Resilient Communities**”.

14. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands and Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare to Geneva where she attended the 71st Session of the Committee on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Cabinet has also taken note of the Concluding Observations and Recommendations adopted by the Committee following the submission of the 8th Periodic Report of Mauritius. The Committee welcomed the efforts and initiatives taken by Mauritius and noted the positive aspects namely, the progress achieved in undertaking legislative reforms. The Concluding Observations of the CEDAW Committee would be disseminated to all stakeholders and posted on the website of the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare.

15. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Technology, Communication and Innovation to Dubai where he participated in the Plenipotentiary 2018 (PP-18) Conference of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). In the margins of the Conference, the Minister had meetings with the Secretary General of ITU and the Director General of the International Telecommunications Satellite Organization.

16. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Tourism to the United Kingdom where he attended the World Travel Market, a major event that brings together the most influential figures of the global travel and hospitality industry. The Minister had meetings with –

- (a) major tour operators namely, TUI, Thomas Cook, Kuoni, Dnata, BA Holidays and Virgin Holidays; and
- (b) representatives of Emirates Airlines and British Airways.

Mauritius received two prestigious awards during the World Travel Market namely, –

- (a) the Gold Award for the Best Beach Destination by the Selling Travel Magazine based on the votes of UK travel agents; and
- (b) the World Travel Market Award for Best in Luxury following the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority campaign with Taylor Morris.

17. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping to Indonesia where he attended the Fifth Our Ocean Conference. The aim of the Conference was to take stock of the development in Ocean Economy and obtain new commitments from different States, international organisations, research institutions and civil societies. Mauritius made three commitments, namely –

- (a) the restoration of the degraded coral reefs through coral farming;
- (b) the exploitation of untapped resources; and
- (c) the monitoring and restoration of sea grass.

18. Cabinet has taken note of the appointment of Mr Tejnarin Chumroo as Chairperson of the Trust Fund for Specialised Medical Care.
