

CABINET DECISIONS – 30 MARCH 2018

1. Cabinet has taken note that the Moody's Investors Service has affirmed the current Baa1 sovereign credit rating for Mauritius with a stable outlook in its credit opinion report on Mauritius released on 27 March 2018. The affirmation of the credit rating is supported by our strong growth and macroeconomic resiliency to shocks and expectations that Government debt would remain broadly stable over the next few years. Moody's has maintained a stable outlook for our credit rating on the basis of expectation that Government's economic policies would gradually address ongoing challenges to important sectors of the economy.

2. Cabinet has taken note of investments being made by the Cargo Handling Corporation in new equipment in order to cater for the increase in the weekly calling of super-sized vessel in the near future and to improve port productivity. The acquisition of new equipment would contribute in transforming the Port Louis Harbour into a real transshipment hub for the region.

3. Cabinet has agreed to the Road Traffic Regulations being amended to provide for prescription of a non-refundable application fee in respect of conversion of foreign driving licences. Any person, holder of an International Driving Permit and who intends to drive in Mauritius, would have to apply to the Commissioner of Police for a driving permit along with the prescription of a non-refundable fee of Rs1,500.

4. Cabinet has agreed to the Information and Communication Technologies Authority (ICTA) hosting a Workshop on Women and ICT: Bridging Gender Gap, and the Universal Service Committee Meeting, in May 2018, at the request of the Communications Regulators' Association of Southern Africa (CRASA). CRASA focuses on the harmonization of the Postal and Information Communications and Technologies regulatory environment in order to improve the Postal and ICT business environment and investment climate in SADC. It provides the ICTA and other ICT regulators in the region with a valuable platform to engage and exchange expertise and experiences with the broad aim of harmonization in the SADC region. Some 25 foreign delegates are expected to attend the two events.

5. Cabinet has taken note that Mauritius would host the following events in April 2018, namely –

- (a) a Ministerial Conference on Maritime Security where it is expected that a Declaration on Maritime Security, supported by an Action Plan would be adopted;
- (b) a closed session of the IOC Council of Ministers to discuss ways and means to fast-track the implementation of the recommendations of the Ministerial Conference; and

- (c) a meeting of the “Friends of the Chair” of the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia to discuss the activities to be undertaken during the next two years.

6. Cabinet has taken note that following consultation with the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security would submit a proposal to designate Caverne Patate in Rodrigues as a Wetland of International Importance (Ramsar Site), to the Ramsar Convention Secretariat. In the event of the acceptance of the designation of Caverne Patate as a Ramsar Site of International Importance, the site would gain international recognition which would contribute to further develop the site and attract more tourists to the island.

7. Cabinet has taken note that the Mauritius Post Ltd has won the EMS Cooperative Customer Care Award 2017 from the Universal Postal Union for providing excellent service to its worldwide partners within the EMS network.

8. Cabinet has taken note that the anti-influenza vaccination exercise for 2018 would start on 04 April 2018. Vaccines would be provided to elderly persons aged 60 and above, children with disabilities attending specialised schools and inmates of charitable institutions and private licensed Homes. The vaccination exercise would also be carried out in Rodrigues and Agalega.

9. Cabinet has taken note of the activities that would be organised by the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training to mark the International Labour Day 2018. The activities include, among others, –

- (a) distribution of posters based on the theme “*Generation Safe & Healthy*”, proposed by ILO to raise awareness on emerging trends in the field of occupational safety and health and on the magnitude of work-related injuries, diseases and fatalities worldwide;
- (b) a mobile exhibition around the island, depicting the history of the Labour Department and covering the pre-independence period to date; and
- (c) a wreath laying ceremony at the Stele of Anjalay Coopen at Cottage.

Arrangements have been made for workers and their families to benefit from concessionary rates at leisure parks, cinemas, hotels and restaurants, and shopping malls.

10. Cabinet has taken note of the 2017 Report on “Statistics in Mauritius: A Gender Approach”. The Report presents sex-disaggregated data for the year 2016 collected on, among others, the demographic characteristics, health, education, economic characteristics, persons receiving pensions and with disabilities, domestic violence and child abuse. The Report would be disseminated to all stakeholders including policy makers, researchers, academicians and students.

11. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade to Rwanda where he participated in the 10th Extraordinary Assembly of the African Union. Cabinet has also taken note of the decisions taken and endorsed by the Assembly with regard to the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). Out of 55 Member States of the African Union, 44 Member States signed the Agreement establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area, the Protocol on Trade in Goods, the Protocol on Trade in Services and the Protocol on Rules and Procedures on the Settlement of Disputes. The AfCFTA would remove barriers to trade, like tariffs and non-tariff barriers, thus allowing for the free flow of goods and services between Member States and would contribute to boost trade, employment and growth.

During his transit in Nairobi, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade had a meeting with HE Mr Uhuru Kenyatta, President of Kenya, with whom he discussed the establishment of a Joint Commission between the two countries.

12. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Technology, Communication and Innovation to Switzerland where he participated in the World Summit on Information System (WSIS) Forum 2018, organised by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). The WSIS Forum 2018 is an annual stocktaking event on the progress made by ITU Member States and other stakeholders in the implementation of the 15 action lines of WSIS. Following the review of 685 projects submitted by the WSIS Stakeholders’ community, the InfoHighway project of the Ministry of Technology, Communication and Innovation came out in the top five most voted in the category E-government and was recognized as a WSIS Champion 2018. The Minister also participated in a Ministerial Round Table along with 17 other Ministers to discuss about emerging issues in ICT.

13. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research to the Republic of Fiji where she attended the 20th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (20CCEM). The theme of the Conference was ‘Sustainability and Resilience: Can education deliver?’. The main objectives of the Conference were to –

- (a) outline the commitments and reforms needed to facilitate inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning in the Commonwealth and agree on key messages to be communicated to Heads of Government convening at the 2018 Commonwealth Summit; and

- (b) discuss progress against SDG 4 targets and agree on actions to address specific issues affecting education systems in strengthening sustainable development and building resilience across the Commonwealth.

During the Conference, the Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research also had bilateral discussions with Education Ministers from Belize, Mozambique and Vanuatu on collaborative ventures in the fields of Early Child Development and Technical and Vocational Education and Training.

14. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Arts and Culture to France where he chaired the first Bureau meeting for the preparation of the 13th Session of the UNESCO Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, at the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris. The objectives of the meeting were to –

- (a) prepare the draft agenda for the 13th Session of the Intergovernmental Committee;
- (b) examine and decide on a number of international assistance requests; and
- (c) reflect on how to deal with multiple submission of international assistance requests by a single country.

During his official visit to UNESCO, the Minister of Arts and Culture had meetings with –

- (a) Mr Edmond Moukala, Chief, World Heritage Centre and Miss Laura Frank, Associate Project Officer with whom he discussed development projects being considered in the UNESCO World Heritage Properties; and
- (b) HE Mr Lee Byong Hyun, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea in Paris to request his collaboration for the holding of the 13th Session of the UNESCO Intergovernmental Committee in Mauritius in December 2018.

15. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment to the Republic of Botswana where he participated in the International Conference “Leave No One Behind in the Fight Against Poverty, Exclusion and Inequality”. The issues discussed were, inter alia –

- (a) the characteristics and identification of the poor and the reasons why they are left behind;
- (b) targeting methods used by the private sector in the context of their corporate social responsibility programmes to reach out to the poor and vulnerable populations;
- (c) policies and strategies adopted by different countries to tackle poverty and the importance of setting a monitoring and evaluation framework; and

- (d) experience of countries in strengthening strategies and programmes to address poverty and inequality and the role of community-based organisations.

In the margins of the Conference, the Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment had discussions with various personalities to explore possibilities of collaboration in the field of poverty eradication, including the Vice-President of the Republic of Botswana, the Minister of Local Government and Rural Development of the Republic of Botswana, the Minister of Social Development and Inclusion of Honduras and the Vice-Minister of Social Development of the Republic of Panama.

16. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training to South Africa, where he participated in the SADC Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Employment and Labour and Social Partners. The theme of the SADC Meeting was “Horizon Decent Work: Advancing Connectivity, Coherence and Inclusivity. The main purpose of the Meeting was to explore ways and approaches for fostering collaboration to reduce unemployment, inequality and poverty through employment policies that will facilitate inclusive economic growth for all Member States. The Meeting agreed to advance labour rights, connectivity, policy coherence and inclusivity, as well as to promote employment opportunities for our societies and economies.

In the margins of the Meeting, the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training had discussions with the Minister of Employment, Immigration and Civil Status of the Republic of Seychelles on the recruitment of Mauritian professionals in the Seychelles and training of officers from the Seychelles in different areas of public administration.

17. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent official visit of the Minister of Financial Services and Good Governance in the Gulf region in the context of a financial services promotion and visibility mission, organised by his Ministry and the Economic Development Board. The prime focus of the mission was to attract investors in the key Gulf markets to use the Mauritius International Financial Centre. Meetings and Business Forums were held in Dubai and Abu Dhabi and a focused Round-table Session was organized in Qatar. During his visit, the Minister of Financial Services and Good Governance met the Vice Chairman of the Qatar Chamber of Commerce who expressed his interest for a prospective mission to explore investment opportunities in Mauritius. Negotiations with Nasdaq Dubai, a key Dubai-based international stock exchange, have also been re-initiated for partnership with the Stock Exchange of Mauritius in developing its markets.

18. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the 12-Hour National Relay for Health and Fun held on 24 March 2018 at Maryse Justin Stadium. Some 1,036 participants from Ministries/ Departments, Municipal Councils, District Councils and private companies took part in the Relay. The Police Department came out first with a total number of 319 rounds of 400 metres each, followed by the Prime Minister’s Office with 268 rounds and the Ministry of Youth and Sports with 240 rounds.
