

**CABINET DECISIONS – 13 SEPTEMBER 2019**

1. Cabinet has agreed to the introduction of the Children’s Bill into the National Assembly. The main object of the Bill is to repeal the Child Protection Act and replace it with a more appropriate, comprehensive and modern legislative framework so as to better protect children and to give better effect to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. The Bill accordingly makes provisions –

- (a) for the better care, protection and assistance to children and their families;
- (b) for the respect and promotion of the rights and best interests of children;
- (c) for the setting up of structures, services and means for promoting and monitoring the sound, physical, psychological, intellectual, emotional and social development of children;
- (d) for children under the age of 12 not to be held criminally responsible for any act or omission;
- (e) for child witnesses and child victims under the age of 14 to be, subject to certain conditions, competent as witnesses without the need for them to take the oath or making solemn affirmation;
- (f) for the setting up of a Children’s Court, which shall consist of a Civil Division, a Protection Division and a Criminal Division; and
- (g) for addressing the shortcomings in the Child Protection Act.

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2. Cabinet has agreed to the introduction of the Road Traffic (Amendment No. 3) Bill into the National Assembly. The main object of the Bill is to amend the Road Traffic Act –

- (a) to provide for the introduction of digital driving licences;
- (b) so as to enable a person who is served with a Fixed Penalty Notice –
  - (i) to pay the appropriate fine at any District Court, in lieu of a specific District Court;
  - (ii) to authorise another person to pay the appropriate fine, on his behalf, at any District Court; or
  - (iii) to pay the appropriate fine electronically.

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3. Cabinet has taken note that the Plant (Importation and Exportation) (Amendment) Regulations 2019 and the Mauritius Agricultural Marketing (Cess) (Amendment) Regulations 2019 would be promulgated. The Regulations would provide for –

- (a) online application of Plant Import Permits, Phytosanitary Certificates and Permits for the Import and Export of controlled products;
- (b) online issue of these permits by the National Plant Protection Office of the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security and the Agricultural Marketing Board, as applicable;
- (c) the issue of these permits within two working days instead of five currently; and
- (d) all payments associated thereto to be made online to the Director General of the Mauritius Revenue Authority.

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4. Cabinet has taken note that, in line with the announcement made in Budget Speech 2019-2020 to pay a special price of Rs25,000 per ton of sugar to planters for the first 60 tons of sugar accrued to them, an advance of 80% on the special price would be paid to them.

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5. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent air services negotiations held between the Republic of Mauritius and the Republic of the Philippines in Manila and has agreed to the signing of the Bilateral Air Services Agreement with the Government of the Republic of the Philippines. A Memorandum of Understanding has already been signed. The salient points which have been agreed upon are the designation of airlines, the frequency/capacity and the codesharing rights. The conclusion of the Bilateral Air Services Agreement and the Memorandum of Understanding with the Republic of the Philippines would enable Air Mauritius to provide seamless connections and a smooth customer journey via Singapore through the implementation of a codeshare arrangement with any designated carriers of the Philippines.

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6. Cabinet has taken note of the progress achieved in the execution of Phase I of the Metro Express Project in terms of infrastructural works and the implementation of the regulatory framework.

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7. Cabinet has agreed to the Barkly-Richelieu Master Plan for the development of some 976 Arpents of land. An Action Area Plan would be prepared in consultation with the relevant stakeholders.

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8. Cabinet has taken note of the setting up of an Academy for Teachers that would be a platform to improve teachers' professional competence through continuous professional learning and development (CPLD) programmes. The Academy for Teachers is an institutional arrangement that aims at creating space for a culture of peer learning and at establishing a community of good practice across schools. The Academy will have, inter alia, the following functions -

- (a) ensure the professional learning and development of Educators and other educational practitioners through an enhanced professional networking;
- (b) develop the mentoring capacity of experienced Educators for induction purposes;
- (c) place emphasis upon the development of Educators' competences in the affective domain of learning;
- (d) carry out, commission and promote research and share the findings to maximize the quality of teaching; and
- (e) share and celebrate Educators' innovative pedagogies and action research, and disseminate same through a panoply of platforms, including e-newsletters, workshops and conferences.

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9. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Financial Services and Good Governance, in the Kingdom of Eswatini, where he attended the Eastern and Southern Africa Anti Money Laundering Group (ESAAMLG) 19<sup>th</sup> Council of Ministers' Meeting. The second Follow-up Report and the request for technical compliance re-ratings from Mauritius were considered by the Task Force of Senior Officials and the Council of Ministers and it was noted that Mauritius has in overall made significant progress in addressing the technical compliance deficiencies identified in the Mauritius Mutual Evaluation Report published in September 2018.

The Council of Ministers approved the recommendation of the Task Force for the upgrading of 20 technical compliance ratings from the 21 applied for. The Financial Action Task Force (FATF), the UK, the USA and the ESAAMLG Secretariat have unanimously recognised and congratulated Mauritius for its commitment to resolve its shortcomings and the significant progress made in a short period of time. The application for the technical compliance re-rating and the recommendation of the ESAAMLG Council of Ministers for the upgrading of the 20 FATF Recommendations would now be submitted to the FATF Global Network for Quality and Consistency Review.

In the margins of the Meetings, the Mauritian delegation also had consultations with the Vice-President of the FATF and other representatives from the FATF Secretariat, the UK, the GIZ, the SADC and the COMESA. A bilateral meeting was also held with the Executive Secretary of the ESAAMLG on the way forward regarding the Post Observation Period Report which Mauritius would have to submit to the Africa Middle East Joint Group of FATF and to the FATF. The Executive Secretary has agreed to depute two experts to Mauritius in October/November 2019 to assist in the preparation of the Report.

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10. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms would, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme and the Civil Service College Mauritius, organise from 18 to 20 September 2019, a Capacity Building and Capability Development Programme for the Top Management of Ministries and Departments in the context of the implementation of the Public Sector Business Transformation Strategy. The Programme aims at imparting the right skills and knowledge to the chairperson/members of the Transformation Implementation Committees in supporting them in their mission to become agents of change for the transformation of the Public Service.

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11. Cabinet has taken note of the school calendar for the Primary and Secondary Education Sectors for the academic year 2020 which is as follows –

	<b><u>Primary</u></b>	<b><u>Secondary</u></b>
1 <sup>st</sup> Term	Friday 10 January to Friday 03 April	Friday 10 January to Friday 03 April
2 <sup>nd</sup> Term	Monday 20 April to Friday 17 July	Monday 20 April to Friday 17 July
3 <sup>rd</sup> Term	Monday 17 August to Friday 06 November	Monday 10 August to Friday 30 October

Admission to Grades 1 and 7 would be held on 10 January 2020.

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12. Cabinet has taken note that the University of Mauritius would hold an International Conference on the Next Generation Computing Applications (NextComp) 2019 from 19 to 21 September 2019. The main aim of the Conference is to address new developments, both in theory and in practice, in the area of Communication and Computer Networks, Security and Forensics, Intelligent Systems, Data Analytics, Information Management, Bioinformatics, and ICT Practices and Applications. NextComp provides opportunities to researchers all over the world to present their cutting edge researches and novelties in their fields. Some 80 participants from various countries would attend the Conference.

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13. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade to Maldives where he attended the 4<sup>th</sup> Indian Ocean Conference organised by the India Foundation. The theme of this year's conference was '**Securing the Indian Ocean Region: Traditional and non-traditional challenges**'. The Conference comprised different sessions during which the Ministers and members of the India Foundation intervened on maritime safety and security, marine ecology and terrorism. In the margins of the Conference, the Minister had meetings, among others, with –

- (a) HE Mr Ibrahim Mohamed Solih, President of the Republic of Maldives and HE Mr Abdulla Shahid, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Maldives to discuss, inter alia, the organisation of the 2023 Indian Ocean Games;
- (b) HE Mr S. Jaishankar, Minister of External Affairs, India with whom he discussed, inter alia, progress on the Metro Express project, the conclusion of the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement and the launching of the Coalition of Disaster Resilient Infrastructure by India; and
- (c) HE Mr V. Balakrishnan, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Singapore and discussed investment possibilities in infrastructure projects on the African continent.

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14. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Tourism to Turkey. The Minister had meetings with major tour operators in the Turkish Market, namely, ETS TUR, Tara Turizm, Pronto Travel, Jolly Tur, Travel Club and Siam Tour to discuss issues such as increasing the visibility of Mauritius in the Market. The Minister also had a meeting with the Deputy Chairman and CEO and Senior Vice President (Sales) of Turkish Airlines and it was agreed that more joint marketing campaigns would be conducted with Turkish Airlines and the latter would also consider making its request for ad-hoc flights. A press meeting was also conducted whereby several members of the Turkish press, tour operators and travel agents were convened and during which the different aspects of Mauritius as a tourism destination were highlighted.

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15. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping to Bangladesh where he participated in the 3<sup>rd</sup> IORA Blue Economy Ministerial Conference 2019. The theme of the Conference was **“Promoting Sustainable Blue Economy- making the best use of opportunities from the Indian Ocean”**. The main objectives of the Conference were to promote smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, governance, exploration of hydrocarbons and employment opportunities in the Blue Economy activities along the Indian Ocean belt. The Minister made a statement highlighting, among others, sustainable exploitation of ocean resources, protection and conservation of the coastal and marine ecosystems, over-exploitation, Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing and fisheries crimes.

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16. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Traditional Medicine Board with the Senior Chief Executive of the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life as Chairperson.

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