

CABINET DECISIONS – 18 SEPTEMBER 2020

1. Cabinet has agreed to amendments being made to the Jewellery Act with a view to empowering the Assay Office to become a regulatory and supervisory body for Anti-Money Laundering and Combatting the Financing of Terrorism in the Jewellery Sector. The Assay Office ensures that dealers in precious metals, jewellery and precious stones are complying with the Jewellery Act, which regulates -

- (a) the import and sale of precious metals, namely gold, silver, platinum and palladium;
- (b) the import, sale and manufacture of jewellery made of the above mentioned precious metals and their alloys;
- (c) the import and sale of precious and semi-precious stones; and
- (d) the registration of dealers in jewellery, precious stones or precious metals.

2. Cabinet has taken note of actions being undertaken by the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change for the review of the Environment Protection Act. The consolidation of the existing legal framework to provide for better environmental management is among one of the key recommendations following the “*Assises de l’Environnement*” organised by the Ministry in December 2019 and from national consultations made thereafter. It is proposed that amendments be made to the current Environment Protection Act to, inter alia, include the following –

- (a) introducing provisions relating to sustainable development in various sectors to promote circular economy, nature-based solutions, sustainable production and consumption and resource efficiency, amongst others;
- (b) strengthening enforcement and compliance mechanisms as well as empowering enforcing agencies to prosecute environmental offences under the Environment Protection Act;
- (c) strengthening existing development control mechanisms through improved and more stringent provisions within Environmental Impact Assessments and consideration for development of a Strategic Environmental Assessment framework;
- (d) improving transparency amongst stakeholders through the setting up of an “*Observatoire de l’Environnement*”; and
- (e) the setting up of a Youth Environment Council which would act as a platform for the youth to engage with policy makers on environment-related policies, strategies and action plans.

The UNDP Country Office would assist in the review of the environmental legal framework by enlisting the services of experts.

3. Cabinet has agreed to Regulations being made under the Consumer Protection (Price and Supplies Control) Act to provide for the introduction of a Packers Licence for wheat flour and rice imported by the State Trading Corporation so as to avoid abuse by traders.

4. Cabinet has agreed to the Minister of Arts and Cultural Heritage promulgating the Copyright (Fees) Regulations 2020 under the Copyright Act. The aim of these regulations is to review the copyright fees charged by the Mauritius Society of Authors (MASA). Copyright fees have not been reviewed since 2008. The new structure of fees would be applicable as from 01 July 2021. Small businesses exempted from the payment of trade fees, would be exempted from payment of copyright fees.

5. Cabinet has taken note of the status of the projects being undertaken by the National Development Unit, the local authorities and the Road Development Authority to mitigate floods in regions that have been determined and certified as high risk and flood-prone by the Land Drainage Authority as at 11 September 2020. As at date, the Land Drainage Authority has certified and determined 39 regions as being high risk and flood-prone. A total of 70 drain projects have been identified for implementation across the island and Rodrigues.

6. Cabinet has taken note of the status of the coastal protection, landscaping and infrastructural works being undertaken at various sites by the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change. As at date, works have been completed at Case Noyale public beach, Grand Baie Sunset Boulevard, Residence La Chaux and Baie du Tombeau. Works are ongoing at St Martin and Pointe aux Feuilles and are expected to be completed by December 2020 and July 2021, respectively. The bidding process is at different stages for works to be undertaken at other sites.

7. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the preliminary technical feasibility study on the setting up, on a pilot basis, of a compost plant to treat green market wastes, as announced in Budget Speech 2020/2021. A Technical Committee had been set up to come up with a comprehensive report with relevant recommendations for the implementation of

the project at four preselected sites. The main findings and recommendations of the Technical Committee are as follows –

- (a) the market fairs managed by the Local Authorities generate yearly around 8,750 tons of vegetable wastes which mostly end up at the waste disposal site at Mare Chicose Landfill;
- (b) setting up of a composting plant using the Aerated Windrow Composting technique would be most appropriate;
- (c) three or four Local Authorities would have to cluster themselves to utilise the facilities of the composting plant for operational efficiency and effectiveness in terms of supply of sufficient quantities of green wastes; and
- (d) the pilot project for the setting of the first composting plant would be implemented at Henrietta and markets wastes collected from the Municipal Councils of Vacoas/Phoenix, Quatre Bornes, Curepipe and Beau Bassin/Rose Hill would thus be sent thereto.

8. Cabinet has agreed to the implementation of Phase I of the Wastewater Project at Route Bassin, Quatre Bornes and to its inclusion in the Public Sector Investment Programme. The Wastewater Management Authority conducted, in July 2019, a fresh survey in the region of La Louise/Route Bassin and Western Boundary to detect where sewers were live and it was found that the following needed to be undertaken for the project of Route Bassin, Quatre Bornes (Phase I) -

- (a) excavation works to extend the sewer line by some 1.5km;
- (b) around 150 house connections;
- (c) construction of manholes/inspection chambers;
- (d) CWA water pipe replacement; and
- (e) asphalt reinstatement.

The project would directly contribute to adding flows to the existing network and protect the groundwater. In view of the population density of the region, it is considered that with time, there would be saturation of cesspits, if not connected to a sewerage network, hence leading to odour and overflow problems which represent health hazards.

9. Cabinet has agreed to the submission of the Combined Second and Third Periodic Report of the State of Mauritius on the implementation of the United Nations Convention for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to the United Nations Committee for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The views of all relevant Ministries, Departments and stakeholders were sought during the preparation of the Report.

10. Cabinet has taken note of the signature and ratification of the Protocol Amending the Convention for the Protection of Individuals with regard to Automatic Processing of Personal Data (CETS no.223), also called the Modernised Convention 108, on 04 September 2020 at the Council of Europe in Strasbourg by the Mauritian Ambassador in France. Convention 108 is the only international legally binding instrument that deals with data protection and it aims at protecting the rights to privacy of individuals whilst providing a framework for the increasing flow of personal data across frontiers. This Convention, which came into force in October 2016, was further modernised. The aim of the Modernised Convention 108 is to ensure consistency and compatibility with other data protection legal frameworks, in particular the European Union General Data Protection Regulations.

11. Cabinet has taken note of training being provided to Entrepreneurs by SME Mauritius Ltd, in line with the recommendations made in the 10-Year Master Plan for the SME sector. SME Mauritius Ltd has recently launched 10 free (9 minutes) tutorial videos in creole targeting existing and aspiring entrepreneurs who want to learn at their own pace based on their personal timetable. This series of videos known as “*Anou Aprann Roul Nou Biznes*” can be partly accessed by logging on to the SMEMU portal and cover subjects such as Entrepreneurial Spirit, 4 P’s of Marketing, Basic Accounting and Strategic Management.

At the level of SME Mauritius Ltd, trainees who graduate are taken over in incubation and accompanied all throughout until they reach the market with their products or services. Since April 2020, weekly online courses on topics relating to marketing, human resource, leadership, taxation and other related management functions have been dispensed to entrepreneurs. Some 300 SMEs have benefitted from such online training. Webinars were also organised by SME Mauritius Ltd.

12. Cabinet has taken note of the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic prevailing worldwide and in the region. As at 18 September 2020, 367 cases of COVID-19 had been registered in Mauritius. The last local case was registered on 26 April 2020.

As at 18 September 2020, there were 19 imported active cases of COVID-19 in Mauritius. The public should continue to observe strict sanitary precautions in order to avoid any importation or resurgence of COVID-19 in the country.

13. Cabinet has taken note that, in the context of World Heart Day, observed on 29 September, the Ministry of Health and Wellness would organise, among others, the following activities -

- (a) an official launching ceremony on 29 September 2020 at the Cardiac Centre, SSRN Hospital, Pamplémousses, that would include screening exercises, talks, counselling, sensitisation as well as exhibitions;
- (b) sensitisation programmes on TV and Radio and talks on cardiovascular diseases, their risk factors and the importance of diet and exercise in Community Centres, Social Welfare Centres and Government Schools;
- (c) empowerment sessions for Non-Communicable Disease (NCD) patients on cardiovascular diseases and healthy lifestyle at regional level;
- (d) NCD screening at worksites and in the community for persons aged 18 years and above, and in Secondary Schools for students of Grade 7, 9 and 12; and
- (e) Continuous Medical Education for medical and para-medical staff.

The theme chosen for this year is “*Use Heart to beat cardiovascular disease*”.

14. Cabinet has taken note of the activities being organised by the Ministry of Health and Wellness to mark World Mental Health Day, observed on 10 October, namely –

- (a) an official function at Brown Sequad Mental Health Care Centre on 08 October 2020 to launch the activities followed by a cultural programme with the participation of patients and staff of the Centre;
- (b) an exhibition of the products made by patients of the Centre to highlight the creative talents of patients of Occupational Therapy and Welfare Department; and
- (c) Radio/TV programmes to sensitise the population at large on the theme chosen and related psychological issues.

The theme chosen this year by the World Health Organization is ‘*Mental Health for All: Greater Investment – Greater Access*’.
