

CABINET DECISIONS – 23 OCTOBER 2020

1. Cabinet has agreed to the introduction of the Veterinary Council Bill into the National Assembly. The object of the Bill is to repeal the Veterinary Council Act and replace it by a new Act in order to provide a better legal framework to regulate the veterinary profession. The Council would, inter alia –

- (a) regulate and control the profession of veterinary surgeons;
- (b) register veterinary surgeons;
- (c) exercise and maintain discipline in the profession of veterinary surgeons, with the assistance of such Professional Conduct Committee as may be set up; and
- (d) promote advancement in the field of veterinary medicine and surgery.

2. Cabinet has agreed to drafting instructions being conveyed to the Attorney General's Office regarding the Mauritius Emerging Technologies Council Bill. The main objectives of the Mauritius Emerging Technologies Council would be to –

- (a) facilitate and oversee the rapid implementation of emerging technology solutions in Mauritius to boost the national economy;
- (b) assess and quantify the socio-economic impact of emerging technologies in the country;
- (c) advise on the creation of a conducive environment to attract top emerging technologies' talents and companies (through enhanced regulatory framework, data protection mechanisms and incentives);
- (d) advise on the creation of a knowledge and skills-based ecosystem in emerging technologies; and
- (e) set up an emerging technologies ethics sub-committee to ensure that selected emerging technologies' solutions adhere to general ethical principles such as respect of fundamental rights.

3. Cabinet has agreed to drafting instructions being given to the Attorney General's Office to amend the Central Electricity Board Act and the Electricity Act with a view to harmonising the two pieces of legislation and accordingly enabling the Utility Regulatory Authority to start its licensing activity and to be fully operational with respect to the regulation of electricity services.

4. Cabinet has agreed to the introduction of a new Visa Scheme, to be called Premium Visa for a period of one year, renewable, to encourage eligible foreigners to come for a long stay in Mauritius, a COVID-safe destination. The Premium Visa would allow non-citizens

from countries listed in the Eighth Schedule of the Passport Regulations to come to Mauritius. The new visa would target, amongst others, the following categories of non-citizens -

- (a) repeat tourists who had planned to retire and migrate in Mauritius before the COVID-19 pandemic;
- (b) retirees in countries where COVID-19 is putting them at risk and who could be convinced to ride out in a safe destination;
- (c) investors/professionals willing to come with their family and carry out their businesses or work remotely from Mauritius or offer their staff this facility; and
- (d) those having their children studying in Mauritius.

In order to qualify for the Premium Visa, the visitors must have proof of their long stay plans and sufficient travel and health insurance for the initial period of stay. The following criteria should also be met:-

- (i) applicants should not enter the Mauritius Labour Market;
- (ii) the main place of business and source of income and profits should be outside Mauritius;
- (iii) documentary evidence to support application such as purpose of visit, accommodation etc.; and
- (iv) other basic immigration requirements.

5. Cabinet has agreed to the setting up of the National Youth Environment Council (NYEC) as announced in the Government Programme 2020-2024. The aim of NYEC is to give an opportunity to the youth to contribute in the decision making process in relation to the protection of the environment. The Council would advise the Prime Minister on matters relating to sustainability, policy agendas and climate resilience.

6. Cabinet has agreed to the implementation of an Economic Recovery Programme which comprises a package of measures aimed at boosting GDP growth, protecting jobs and creating new ones, reducing dependence on imports and improving the wellbeing of the population.

7. Cabinet has agreed to the National Land Transport Authority (NLTA) inviting applications for Public Service Licence (Taxi). New applications would be invited based on a survey to be conducted by the NLTA and on the basis of existing criteria, that is, the number of inhabitants in a region, the number of rooms in a hotel and a clean Certificate of

Character as certain localities, hotels or the Airport might not be adequately served at present.

8. Cabinet has taken note that the Information and Communication Technologies Authority (ICTA) has designated a service provider for the Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) online filtering system.

9. Cabinet has taken note that the quarantine period in Mauritius would be extended from 31 October 2020 to 30 November 2020 and in this regard, the Minister of Health and Wellness would issue a Notice under the Quarantine Act 2020 and make the Quarantine (COVID-19) (Amendment No. 4) Regulations 2020.

10. Cabinet has taken note of the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic prevailing worldwide and in the region. As at 23 October 2020, 426 cases of COVID-19 had been registered in Mauritius. The last local case was registered on 26 April 2020.

As at 23 October 2020, there were 30 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.

11. Cabinet has taken note of the status of implementation of the programme, "*Accroissement de la résilience des écosystèmes côtiers des pays du Sud-ouest de l'océan Indien*" (RECOS) by the Indian Ocean Commission. The programme, which is of a duration of five years, is expected to contribute towards –

- (a) strengthening the national and regional governance of coastal and marine ecosystems;
- (b) developing a cooperation framework and promoting exchange of scientific knowledge of these ecosystems; and
- (c) implementing innovative projects for the preservation and sustainable management of coastal and marine ecosystems.

In Mauritius, the RECOS programme would cover the following activities -

- (i) restoration works at the Flic-en-Flac beach;
- (ii) a call for projects where funding has been earmarked for the restoration of other critical degraded coastal areas;
- (iii) preparation of the Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) plan for five districts of Mauritius namely Pamplemousses, Rivière du Rempart, Flacq, Grand Port and Savanne;
- (iv) support to the ICZM Committee of Mauritius; and
- (v) capacity building through regional exchange programmes and support to the scientific community.

12. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent participation of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade in the virtual Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Ministerial Meeting. The theme of the meeting, held under the Chair of Azerbaijan, was “Bandung+65: NAM stay united to fight against global challenges, including COVID-19”.

In his opening address, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan stated that Azerbaijan has identified the promotion of Bandung Principles as one of the priorities of its chairmanship. He stressed that maintaining and further strengthening the spirit of Bandung will enable the Movement to further consolidate its unity and increase its effectiveness. Several delegations intervened to stress that NAM should strengthen unity and uphold the Bandung principles.

The meeting took stock of NAM’s achievements in promoting strict adherence to the norms and principles of international law. It adopted a Political Declaration re-affirming the principle of the NAM and the UN Charter, and a Special Declaration extending support for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

13. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent participation of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade in the 37th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council of the African Union (AU), through video conference. In her opening statement, the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation of the Republic of South Africa and representative of the Chair of the Bureau of the AU highlighted that the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic to the socio-economic landscape of Africa had forced Member States to derive new ways of addressing peace and security, socio-economic under-development, and poverty challenges.

The meeting covered various agenda items, namely the Scale of Assessment for Member States, Contribution to the Peace Fund, the AU Theme for the Year 2021 and the COVID-19 pandemic in Africa, amongst others. The theme for the year 2021 would be “*Arts, Culture and Heritage: Levers for Building the Africa we Want*”.

The Executive Council Meeting endorsed the candidature of Mauritius for election as Representative of the African Regional Group to the Board of the United Nations Environment Programme’s 10-Year Framework Programme on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns for the period 2020-2021.

14. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent participation of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade in the 20th Commonwealth Foreign Affairs Ministers Meeting, in the margins of the UN General Assembly (UNGA), through video conference. The main issue addressed was the Commonwealth Response to Global Challenges. Discussions focussed on “Approaches to the Global COVID-19 Recovery Plan” and “Climate Change and Small and Vulnerable States”. The Secretary General of the Commonwealth highlighted the health, social, environmental and financial

fragility in the unfolding Coronavirus pandemic and indicated that the Commonwealth had an opportunity to tackle the ongoing linked crises of climate change and biodiversity loss, and to ensure that global economic recovery was environmentally sustainable across the Commonwealth. The meeting endorsed the Commonwealth COVID-19 Statement and approved the Statement on anti-racism.

The Minister also participated in a virtual High-Level Forum on COVID-19, Vulnerability and the Urgent Need for Access to Finance in Small States, organised jointly by the Commonwealth and the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), in the margins of the UNGA. Speakers at the Forum laid emphasis on the need for urgent action and called for broadening of the income-only criteria for access to concessional resources so that reference to the vulnerability of SIDS and small states is also included. They stressed the importance of advocating for an urgent reform of the global financing architecture to help countries restart their economies.

15. Cabinet has taken note of the different schemes being implemented since 2015 by the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security aiming at better supporting the farming community in food crop and livestock production and ensuring food security for the country. Farmers/breeders have benefitted from schemes such as Sheltered Farming, Rainwater Harvesting, Purchase of Agricultural/Processing Equipment, Fruit Protection, Upgrading of Livestock Farm, Pasture Development, Cattle Breeding and Acquisition of CCTV Camera. As from September 2020, farmers/planters are benefitting from the Beekeeping Promotion Scheme which is being implemented with a view to increasing local honey production and improve pollination of food crops. A scheme to encourage goat and sheep breeding would also be introduced this year. The schemes being implemented by the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security are in line with the theme chosen by the Food and Agriculture Organization for the celebration of the World Food Day this year which is "Grow, Nourish, Sustain. Together. Our Actions Are Our Future".

16. Cabinet has taken note of the activities that the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security would organise, in collaboration with the Food and Agricultural Research and Extension Institute (FAREI), to mark the centenary anniversary of the Curepipe Livestock Research Station namely -

- (a) the official opening on 28 October 2020 and launching of three publications;
- (b) Open Days on 28 and 29 October 2020 to showcase good animal husbandry practices and would be an interactive platform where farmers, entrepreneurs and other stakeholders can share information, experience and ideas on best practices in the sector and further promote livestock activities as a means to enhance food security; and

- (c) an exhibition, guided tours, demonstrations, film shows and sale of produce at promotional prices during the open days.

17. Cabinet has taken note that the Land Drainage Authority would carry out a sensitisation campaign across the island. The objective of the campaign is to sensitise members of the public on –

- (a) illegal dumping especially in drainage networks;
- (b) poorly designed houses with low ground floor level that increases the risk of flooding; and
- (c) actions to be taken to reduce flood hazards, which are critical prior to conducting enforcement measures according to the Land Drainage Authority Act.

Cabinet has also taken note of the registered logo of the Land Drainage Authority which would give a visual identity to the Authority.

18. Cabinet has taken note of the status of implementation of the National Authentication Framework (NAF) project. The NAF provides for a single window for authentication to users of e-government services and also provides a convenient and secured access to such services. The NAF system would become the Government's Main Digital Identity Provider that would provide a unique platform for online consumers to access various governmental and other e-services.

19. Cabinet has taken note of the implementation of the Enhancement of Work Environment Programme (EWEP) and the Improvement of Counter/Customer Service Schemes across the Public Service. The EWEP Scheme aims at uplifting the safety and health standards at workplaces across the public service by financing safety and health projects. Since the inception of the EWEP scheme, 419 projects have been funded by the Ministry of Public Service, Administrative and Institutional Reforms. The Improvement of Counter/Customer Service Scheme, on the other hand, purports to assist Ministries and Departments with proper facilities for welcoming the public. Since the operationalisation of this scheme, 378 projects have been funded.

20. Cabinet has taken note that former Justice Dr Satyabhoosun Gupt Domah had been re-elected for a second term as Member of the Sub-Committee on the Prevention of Torture for the term 2021-2024 at elections held in Geneva on 22 October 2020 during the 8th meeting of the States Parties to the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment (OPCAT).

21. Cabinet has taken note of the appointment of Mr Premlall Mahadeo as Chairperson of the Council of the Mahatma Gandhi Institute and the Rabindranath Tagore Institute.

22. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Energy Efficiency Committee with Mr Liladhur G. Sewtohul as Chairperson.
