

HIGHLIGHTS OF CABINET MEETING – FRIDAY 09 SEPTEMBER 2022

1. Cabinet has taken note of the passing away of Her Majesty The Queen Elizabeth II on 8 September 2022. A day of national mourning would be observed on the day of her funeral. The Mauritian flag would be flown at half-mast on all public buildings from sunrise to sunset on that day. An appeal would be made to the private sector to follow suit.

On behalf of Government and the people of the Republic of Mauritius, a message of condolence has been sent to the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom.

2. Cabinet has agreed to Mauritius ratifying two Protocols amending Articles 50(a) and 56 of the Convention on International Civil Aviation to increase the size of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Council and membership of the Air Navigation Commission.

3. Cabinet has agreed to the promulgation of -

- (i) the Fisheries and Marine Resources (Licence and Fees) Regulations which would review the licence fees payable by foreign owned Mauritian flagged longliners and purse seiners, and introduce licence fees for mid-water trawlers operating in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of Mauritius and international waters; and
- (ii) the Fisheries and Marine Resources (Licence and Fees) (Amendment) Regulations 2022, which would make an amendment with regard to the Footnote in the Second Schedule of the Fisheries and Marine Resources (Licence and Fees) Regulations 2013 to include the following –
 - (a) There exists a dispute between Mauritius and France concerning Tromelin and its surrounding waters, including its EEZ.
 - (b) While Mauritius unequivocally asserts its sovereignty over Tromelin and its waters, including its EEZ, the French authorities unilaterally purport to exercise jurisdiction, which is not recognised by the Government of Mauritius, over Tromelin and its waters.
 - (c) For the avoidance of doubt, the Chagos Archipelago and its waters are an integral part of the territory of Mauritius, over which Mauritius has sovereignty, as determined by the International Court of Justice in its Advisory Opinion of 25 February 2019 and affirmed by a Special Chamber of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea in its Judgment of 28 January 2021.

4. Cabinet has taken note that in line with the recommendations of the latest Actuarial Review carried out by the Sugar Insurance Fund Board (SIFB), the following Regulations would be promulgated and would be applicable as from Crop 2021 –

- (a) the Sugar Insurance Fund (Prescribed Area and Prescribed Percentage of Total Insurable Sugar) Regulations 2022 whereby the definition of prescribed area for the purpose of declaration of “event year” is being changed from “Enlarged Factory Area” to the whole island, thus allowing for a larger number of planters affected by crop loss or damage to be duly compensated; and
- (b) the Sugar Insurance Fund (Amendment of Schedules) Regulations 2022 which would essentially allow the SIFB to consolidate its General Insurance Fund and thus improve its solvency and viability as a going concern, especially in the light of the adverse effects of climate change.

5. Cabinet has agreed to the President of the Republic being advised to make the Civil Establishment Order No. 2 of 2022 and the Civil Establishment (Rodrigues Regional Assembly) Order (No. 2) 2022 that establish offices in the public service, determine the number of persons who may be appointed to such offices and determine the emoluments to be attached to such offices.

6. Cabinet has agreed to the signing a Memorandum of Understanding between the Economic Development Board, Mauritius and the Business Unity South Africa. The Memorandum of Understanding would enable both organisations to exchange information on trade opportunities and investment potential, organise prospective business missions, study trips, commercial events, trade fairs, exhibitions, seminars and training sessions for the mutual benefit of businesses.

The main objectives of the Memorandum of Understanding are to -

- (a) establish a framework for developing stronger business relations between the two countries and cooperation procedures to enhance the achievement of their respective economic objectives;
- (b) promote and strengthen trade ties between Mauritius and South Africa and create new channels of business exchange; and
- (c) strengthen institutional relations and capacity building through mutual cooperation.

7. Cabinet has agreed to the procurement of 14 Tablets/Braille Notes for Special Education Needs learners with severe visual impairment at the secondary and tertiary school levels.

8. Cabinet has agreed to the specifications of flour procured by the State Trading Corporation (STC) being amended to include additional enzymes in wheat flour Type A to enhance its quality to meet the needs of bakeries and expectations of consumers.

The STC enlisted the services of a French consultant in May 2022 to, inter alia, review the existing specifications of wheat flour and to make recommendations to guarantee an optimum quality and regularity of wheat flour, even in tropical conditions, for bread production. The main recommendation is to amend the flour specifications to include additional enzymes, which would allow for the modification of the composition of the wheat flour Type A procured by the STC, to cater for the bakeries' requirements in terms of tolerance and yield.

9. Cabinet has agreed to exempt the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Pooled Procurement Programme for Medical Products from the Public Procurement Act. In 2017, the SIDS Ministers of Health expressed strong commitment to implement a system for the Pooled Procurement for medical products. In 2020, the SIDS Ministers of Health signed the SIDS Pooled Procurement Agreement virtually in the presence of the Director General of the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Regional Director for Africa.

The primary advantage of Pooled Procurement is cost reduction through economies of scale and collective negotiation. To further advance in the operationalisation of the SIDS Pooled Procurement Programme, there is need for this programme to be exempted from the Public Procurement Act.

The Secretariat for the SIDS Pooled Procurement is currently hosted by WHO and would continue to be spearheaded by that organisation until around 2025 by which time, the SIDS Pooled Procurement would have its own Secretariat.

10. Cabinet has taken note of the Report on the Lagoon Monitoring, in respect of quality of water and fish from Baie du Tombeau to Pointe aux Sables for period January 2019 to December 2020.

A Monitoring Committee had been set up to monitor the water and seafood quality and make recommendations regarding the consumption of the seafood and the lagoon water quality for swimming purposes. Based on the results of seawater quality analysis undertaken from January 2019 to December 2020, the Monitoring Committee has made various recommendations. The lagoon monitoring is ongoing.

11. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of a study which the National Housing Development Company (NHDC) Ltd has commissioned on the experience of syndics on NHDC housing estates. The recommendations proposed by the consultant were being examined by the NHDC Ltd.

12. Cabinet has taken note of the second progress report on the status of the implementation of the Health Sector Strategic Plan 2020-2024 by the Ministry of Health and Wellness for the period August 2021 to June 2022. Some 603 activities regrouped under 26 Strategic Goals had been assigned to 21 Thematic Working Groups. As at 30 June 2022, activities identified increased to 643, and some 35.3 percent were completed, 52.7 percent were either initiated or in-progress and 12.0 percent were planned for the coming years.

The Plan also caters for the Island of Rodrigues with 12 Strategic Goals.

13. Cabinet has taken note of the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic prevailing across the world. Some 612.1 million cases have been reported globally, of which 589.9 million persons have been successfully treated. With regard to Mauritius, as at 07 September 2022, there were 59 active cases of COVID-19, out of which 17 were admitted at the New ENT Hospital.

14. Cabinet has taken note of the activities being organised for World Patient Safety Day, celebrated on 17 September. The theme for this year is “Medication Safety”. The Ministry of Health and Wellness would organise the following activities –

- (a) on 16 September 2022, a Patient ID Wristband which includes the name, surname, date of birth and unit number of the patient would be introduced at SSR National Hospital; and
- (b) on 17 September 2022, Medical Activity Cards providing information on the different medical specialities being provided at the Mahebourg Hospital and New Souillac Hospital and days of consultation would be distributed to inform inhabitants of the new services being put in place. A SAMU Department would also be inaugurated at the New Souillac Hospital.

15. Cabinet has taken note that Experts and Ministerial meetings of the ‘*Commission de la Jeunesse et des Sports de l’Océan Indien*’ (CJSOI) would be held in Mauritius on 12, 13 and 15 September 2022, in view of the forthcoming 2022 CJSOI Games to be held in Mauritius from 04 to 11 December 2022.

During the Experts meeting, participants would, inter alia, review the issues taken up at the last meeting, discuss the financial contribution of member countries and the progress achieved with regard to the preparedness for the 2022 CJSOI Games.

16. Cabinet has taken note that the Sixth Meeting of the Joint Project Monitoring Committee (JPMC) for the Metro Express Project was held on 8 September 2022 in Port Louis. The purpose of the JPMC, in accordance with the Memorandum of Agreement with India on Implementation of Projects with the assistance of the Government of India, is to take stock of progress achieved and on the financing status of the Metro Express Project, namely as regards the mainline from Port Louis to Curepipe and Phase 3: Extension from Rose Hill to Réduit through Ebène.

A site visit was carried out whereby the Indian delegation led by the Joint Secretary, Development Partnership Administration, Ministry of External Affairs, India, took stock of progress achieved on the mainline from Rose Hill to Curepipe.

17. Cabinet has taken note of the participation of the Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change in the Third Edition of the Africa Climate Week 2022 held recently in Libreville, Gabon. The Minister participated, inter alia, in –

- (a) a Ministerial Meeting whereby all eminent Ministers of the African continent were encouraged to fully participate in COP27;
- (b) a Ministerial Round Table on Finance. As climate finance is one of the pillars to address climate change adaptation and mitigation, the focus was mainly on challenges in mobilising and accessing climate finance;
- (c) the African Pathways where it was highlighted that energy is at the heart of the response to the climate change emergency and at the heart of its solution;
- (d) the opening of the meeting of the African Group of Negotiators on Biodiversity; and
- (e) the Forum of the Climate Technology Centre & Network, which is the implementing arm of the Technology Mechanism under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

The Minister also acted as one of the panelists on Enhanced Transparency Framework, which is one of the key elements of the Paris Agreement.

18. Cabinet has taken note of the recent official visit of the Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change to Rodrigues. The aim of the visit was to –

- (a) raise awareness on topics related to ozone layer protection and climate change;
- (b) build capacity of technicians in the refrigeration and air conditioning sector and hand over domestic air conditioners running on natural refrigerants (R290) to MITD, Rodrigues;
- (c) train enforcement officers on the use of smoke meters and conduct awareness programmes on the health and environmental impacts associated with vehicular smoke emissions;
- (d) conduct consultations in relation to the forthcoming 27th Meeting of the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP27);
- (e) hold discussions on a sustainable Waste Management for Rodrigues; and
- (f) discuss issues relating to the development of public beaches in Rodrigues.

The Minister also had a meeting with the Chief Commissioner. Two portable smoke metres were handed over to the Deputy Chief Commissioner and Commissioner of Environment.

19. Cabinet has taken note of the renewal of the contract of Mr Ramesh Sunt as Ombudsperson for Sports, for a further period of one year.
