

HIGHLIGHTS OF CABINET MEETING – FRIDAY 25 MARCH 2022

1. Cabinet has agreed to the introduction of the National Flag, Arms of Mauritius, National Anthem and Other National Symbols of Mauritius Bill into the National Assembly. The main object of the Bill is to consolidate and update the laws with regard to the national symbols of Mauritius, such as the Arms of Mauritius, the National Flag of Mauritius and the Seal of Mauritius.

The opportunity is being taken to give legal effect to the National Anthem of Mauritius (Motherland) and to the National Flower of Mauritius (*Trochetia boutoniana*) and to declare the Mauritius Kestrel (*Falco punctatus*) as the National Bird of Mauritius. The Bill provides for better protection and use of the national symbols of Mauritius. The Bill also provides that whenever Government intends to declare a new national symbol of Mauritius, a resolution to that effect shall be made by the National Assembly, following which the President, may, by Order, designate the national symbol. Thereafter, the Prime Minister may make such regulations with regard to the new national symbol so designated.

2. Cabinet has agreed to the introduction of the Landlord and Tenant (Amendment) Bill into the National Assembly. The object of the Bill is to amend the Landlord and Tenant Act so as to extend to 30 June 2022 the period up to which the Act shall continue to apply to business premises let on or before 01 July 2005.

3. Cabinet has agreed to the implementation of the recommendations of the final consultancy report on the “Audit of Rivers and Watercourses”. The implementation of the recommendations of the report would enable concerned stakeholders to address issues of riverine flooding in their respective jurisdictions in a timely manner for better protection of inhabitants and assets located in vulnerable areas.

4. Cabinet has taken note that the Civil Status (Fees for Marriages) (Amendment) Regulations 2022, would be promulgated to introduce new fees for the celebration of civil marriages by the Civil Status Division. The Civil Status (Fees for Marriages) (Amendment) Regulations 2022 would include fees for the celebration of civil marriages -

- (a) in the newly set up Marriage Hall located at the Emmanuel Anquetil Building, Port Louis;
- (b) in any private residence where both intending spouses are non-citizens;
- (c) in any private residence where only one intending spouse is a non-citizen; and
- (d) at premises other than a private residence or the Marriage Hall where one intending spouse is a non-citizen.

The Regulations would be effective as from 01 May 2022.

5. Cabinet has taken note that the Road Traffic (Amendment) Regulations 2022 would be made to provide for the extension of the deadline for the renewal of provisional driving licences from 01 March 2022 to 31 March 2022, to enable their holders to renew such licence so that it would be valid up to 31 March 2026. These amendments are applicable to the holders of a learner's licence for autocycles/motorcycles obtained prior to March 2018. No further extension would be considered after 31 March 2022.

6. Cabinet has taken note of the promulgation of the Customs Tariff (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2022 which provide for the implementation of a second round of tariff cuts under the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement between the Republic of Mauritius and the Republic of India. The Trade in Goods component includes a Preferential Trade Agreement with tariff elimination schedules agreed by both countries.

Implementation of respective market access commitments started on 01 April 2021 and a first round of tariff cuts was effected by Mauritius. The second round of tariff cuts is due on 01 April 2022.

7. Cabinet has taken note that, on 21 March 2022, the Minister of Health and Wellness made the Consolidated COVID-19 (Amendment No. 6) Regulations 2022 to align the sanitary protocols in Rodrigues with that of Mauritius.

Cabinet has also taken note that the Minister of Health and Wellness made the Consolidated COVID-19 (Amendment No. 7) Regulations 2022 to amend the definition of fully vaccinated and to include requirement for a health insurance for incoming foreign passengers and Novavax vaccine (Nuvaxoid and Covovax) as a recognised vaccine.

8. Cabinet has agreed to the ratification of the "*Accord entre le Gouvernement de la République Française et le Gouvernement de la République de Maurice relatif à la Coopération en matière de défense et au statut des forces*", which was signed on 12 March 2018. The *Accord* provides an appropriate framework for cooperation between the two countries in the fields of defence and security matters, organisation and functioning of armed forces, peacekeeping and humanitarian operations and military training.

9. Cabinet has taken note of the status of implementation of the 390 recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry on Drug Trafficking as at March 2022, excluding those falling under the Task Force chaired by the Director, ICAC. Moreover, a Committee comprising concerned stakeholders has been set up to closely monitor the implementation of the recommendations requiring legislative amendments

10. Cabinet has taken note of a Scoping Mission by a team of two Consultants from the Climate Resilient Infrastructure Development Facility (CRIDF) to Mauritius from 28 to 31 March 2022, following a request for assistance in the water services sector. The CRIDF is a programme supported by the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office.

During the course of the Scoping Mission, the team would hold meetings with relevant stakeholders and effect site visits at Bagatelle Dam and Water Treatment Plant, La Nicolière Reservoir and at a Containerised Pressure Filtration Plant.

11. Cabinet has agreed to the Agricultural Marketing Board being designated anew as the sole importer of potatoes and onions and to no import permits being issued to other importers for the year 2022. The retail price of potatoes and onions would also be revised to Rs50/kg, in view of the increase of freight costs for shipments by sea. The Consumer Protection (Price and Supplies Control) Act and the Consumer Protection (Control of Price Taxable and Non-Taxable Goods) Regulations 1998 would be amended.

12. Cabinet has taken note of the findings and recommendations of a Consultancy Study on Aggregates and other Construction Materials in Mauritius, commissioned by the Construction Industry Development Board. In view of the looming depletion of rocks and the resulting impact on production of aggregates, the Consultant has made various recommendations.

A High Level Committee would be set up under the chair of the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of National Infrastructure and Community Development to prepare a draft Masterplan on rock reserves and chart a roadmap for the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Consultancy Report.

13. Cabinet has taken note of the decisions reached and actions taken by the Steering Committee set up to look into the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Report of the Technical Committee on Medicinal Cannabis. There is a need to train medical specialists prior to them prescribing Medicinal Cannabis. The Society of Cannabis Clinicians from the USA has been identified to train a first team of specialists of the Ministry of Health and Wellness. A request had also been made to the World Health Organization for appropriate technical expertise to train the specialists in Mauritius for them to acquire relevant knowledge on the use of Cannabis for medical purposes. The following decisions have also been taken -

- (a) a Therapeutic Committee on Medicinal Cannabis would be set up at regional level under the chair of the Regional Health Director;

- (b) all prescriptions containing Medicinal Cannabis from both public and private specialists would have to be endorsed by the Therapeutic Committee;
- (c) Medicinal Cannabis would be provided free of charge to all patients attending public hospitals and all private patients would be required to pay for their medication, as is currently applicable for other drugs dispensed at hospitals; and
- (d) the use of Medicinal Cannabis would be started on a pilot basis at Victoria Hospital.

14. Cabinet has taken note of the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic prevailing across the world. Some 476.6 million cases have been reported globally, of which 412 million persons have been successfully treated.

With regard to Mauritius, as at 23 March 2022, there were 1,647 active cases of COVID-19, out of which nine were admitted at the New ENT Hospital. Over the period 17 March to 23 March 2022, 10 deaths were attributed to COVID-19.

Cabinet has also taken note of progress in the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme, including the administration of the booster dose in the Republic of Mauritius. As at 24 March 2022, 1,003,785 persons had received a first dose of vaccine (representing 79.3 percent of the population). 968,875 persons were fully vaccinated (representing 76.5 percent of the population). 582,364 persons had received a booster dose (representing 46 percent of the population). 76 percent of adolescents aged 12 to 17 years had received a first dose of vaccine and 68.9 percent had received a second dose.

Cabinet has further taken note that the Ministry of Health and Wellness carried out vaccination in Agalega from 14 to 23 March 2022.

15. Cabinet has taken note of the COVID-19 situation prevailing in Rodrigues. As at 23 March 2022, there were 176 active cases. There was no COVID-19 patient admitted at Mont Lubin Treatment Centre.

16. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the Indian Ocean Muaythai Championships and the Super 4 World Games Qualifiers held recently at Côte d'Or National Sports Complex. Mauritius won three gold and two silver medals. The Mauritian representative for the Super 4 World Games, which would be held in Birmingham, USA from 12 to 18 July 2022 would be Veejaye James Agathe who competed in the -91 kg category. Based on the exceptional performance of the local athletes, the International Federation of Muaythai Associations has agreed on the spot to give a wild card entry to the World Games to Diksha Jeeloll in the 50 kg category.

17. Cabinet has taken note of the official visit of the President of the Republic of Mauritius, to the United Arab Emirates in the context of the participation of Mauritius in the Expo 2020 Dubai including the celebration of the National Day of Mauritius. The Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, visited the Mauritius Pavilion at the Dubai Expo, and he was welcomed by the President of the Republic. The National Day of Mauritius was celebrated at the Dubai Expo site on 15 March 2022. The Minister of Tolerance and Coexistence and Commissioner-General of the Expo 2020 Dubai, hosted the President for that event. A flag raising ceremony was held followed by statements on both sides.

Two Memoranda of Understanding were signed, namely –

- (a) Joint Committee for Cooperation between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade of the Republic of Mauritius and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the United Arab Emirates; and
- (b) a Memorandum of Understanding on Care for the Elderly Welfare and Protection of People of Determination “Persons with Disabilities” between Ministry of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity of the Republic of Mauritius and the Ministry of Community Development of the United Arab Emirates.

The Economic Development Board Office in Dubai was also inaugurated by the President of the Republic.

18. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the participation of the Minister of Land Transport and Light Rail, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade in the SADC Council of Ministers held recently in a hybrid mode in Malawi. The intervention of the Minister at the SADC Council of Ministers focused, inter alia, on the following main issues –

- (a) the Maritime Security Conference to be held in Mauritius;
- (b) the Food and Nutrition Security Update;
- (c) an update on the COVID-19 pandemic; and
- (d) the status on disasters in the Region.

The Council of Ministers also discussed, inter alia, the construction of the SADC Regional Logistics Depot and the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP 2020-30) Costed Implementation Plan.

19. Cabinet has agreed to Mauritius hosting the annual meeting of FRATEL (*Réseau francophone de la régulation des télécommunications*) in November/December 2022. FRATEL is an informal network set up in October 2003 and regrouping institutions, from French speaking countries, responsible for regulating and controlling the telecommunications sector. The organisation comprises institutions from 50 countries around the world. The main objectives of the network are the promotion of information exchange among telecommunications regulators, supporting members' capacity-building through trainings and technical co-operation, and carrying out studies on issues related to the legal framework of the telecommunication sector. The theme of the meeting for this year is "Challenges and ways to improve the resilience of telecommunication networks".

20. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the participation of the Minister of Industrial Development, SMEs and Cooperatives in activities held in the margins of Expo 2020 Dubai in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. The Minister attended –

- (a) the Retail Summit which is a global annual event aimed at bringing together key leaders in the retail community to share ideas, insights and debate on opportunities, challenges and the future of the global retail industry;
- (b) the National Day Celebration of Mauritius;
- (c) a Business Conference on "Mauritius: Our Journey towards Sustainable Transformation", followed by a Fashion Show; and
- (d) the International Conference on Sustainable and Innovative Design.

The Minister visited the Dubai Industrial City, one of the largest manufacturing and logistics hubs in Dubai, established in 2004 with the objective to accelerate the growth of the industrial sector in the UAE. He also visited an enterprise in the fish processing sector located in the Dubai Industrial City.

21. Cabinet has taken note of the activities being organised by the Ministry of Public Service, Administrative and Institutional Reforms to mark World Day for Safety and Health at Work 2022. The theme for this year is "Act together to build a positive safety and health culture". The following activities would be organised to mark the event –

- (a) Safety and Health Week - Each Ministry and Department would be called upon to organise at least one safety and health-related activity at their level from 21 to 28 April 2022 to sensitise public officers on the importance of instilling an Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) culture;

- (b) focused activities by key players in Safety and Health, namely the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security, the Ministry of Health and Wellness, the Mauritius Police Force, the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Centre and the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit; and
- (c) a workshop on Occupational Safety and Health on 28 April 2022 to sensitise all Chairpersons of Safety and Health Committees/OSH Management Steering Committees on the importance of acting together in building a positive safety and health culture and effective OSH Management System.

22. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Board of the Financial Intelligence Unit with Mr Dinay Reetoo, Assistant Parliamentary Counsel, as Chairperson.
