

HIGHLIGHTS OF CABINET MEETING – FRIDAY 10 FEBRUARY 2023

1. Cabinet has agreed to the implementation of some 11 new projects totalling Rs1.04 billion by the Central Water Authority, namely –

- (a) renewal of pipeline in the regions of Quatre-Cocos, St Julien D’Hotman, Mahébourg (Phase 1) and Ste Croix;
- (b) pipelaying works along Coastal Road at Poste Lafayette;
- (c) design and build of a Glass Fused to Steel Reservoir and associated works at Nouvelle France;
- (d) implementation of urgent projects for Dry Season 2022/2023;
- (e) milling and resurfacing of roads and related works in Laventure and Bon Accueil (Phase 1);
- (f) renewal of 2 km of service main from St Martin to New Bosquet Reservoir and associated works at Pierrefonds (Leg 1A); and
- (g) upgrading of Poudre D’Or Balancing Tank and Associated Pumping Stations.

2. Cabinet has agreed to amendments being brought to the Environment Protection (Banning of Plastic Bags) Regulations 2020 to -

- (a) require importers and manufacturers of exempt plastic bags meant for the disposal of waste, including quarantine and clinical wastes, to conspicuously display only the “purpose” of those bags thereon;
- (b) allow, where appropriate, the release of a consignment of exempt plastic bags designed for the disposal of waste or for a medical purpose or for the purpose of sampling/analysis, but not displaying any label;
- (c) allow, where necessary, the import, manufacture, sale or supply of any exempt plastic bag without the obligation to comply with the registration and labelling requirements; and
- (d) make provision for any misuse of exempt plastic bags, pursuant to the above, to be considered as an offence.

3. Cabinet has taken note of the promulgation of the Dental Council (Additional Qualifications) Regulations 2023. The Regulations would enable the inclusion of only appropriate additional qualifications obtained by a registered dental practitioner, in the Register. The inclusion of additional qualifications in the Register would be an incentive for dental practitioners to increase their knowledge, skills and aptitude in a particular field of dentistry and would provide useful information for employers.

4. Cabinet has taken note that an amendment would be made to the Food Regulations 1999 to provide for additional enzymatic additives for wheat flour. The modification of the composition of the wheat flour procured by the State Trading Corporation would cater for the bakeries' requirements in terms of tolerance and yield.

5. Cabinet has taken note that the Prime Minister would lead a delegation to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia to participate in the 36th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union which would be held from 18 to 19 February 2023.

6. Cabinet has taken note that drafting instructions would be conveyed to the Attorney General's Office for amendments to be made to the Declaration of Assets Act.

7. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the King Saud University of Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Ministry of Health and Wellness for cooperation in the fields of scientific research, education and professional training in the health sector. The scope of collaboration encompasses –

- (a) conduct of research projects, in particular, collaboration in research programs in the context of the clinical applications of the Quantum Optics/Raman Spectroscopy/Artificial Intelligence program;
- (b) exchange of researchers, teaching staff and students;
- (c) establishment and organisation of coordinated medical training in identified areas of interests such as establishing Medical Practice Guidelines for Cancer Medicines; and
- (d) organisation of international colloquia and regular exchange of teaching materials.

8. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation and the Ministry of Artificial Intelligence, Digital Economy and Remote Work Applications, UAE, in the field of Information, Communication and Emerging Technologies.

The main objectives of the Memorandum of Understanding would be to, inter alia, –

- (a) encourage a closer working relationship between organisations in the ICT sector, especially in the field of emerging technologies;
- (b) formulate policies and framework of common interest;
- (c) share expertise and know-how in emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence, blockchain, metaverse and cloud computing, amongst others; and
- (d) cooperate for capacity building, transfer of knowledge and research and development in fields of common areas.

9. Cabinet agreed to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with Fresh Inc., a US based multinational company, for the conservation management of critically endangered endemic species. Fresh Inc. would assist in the propagation of some critically endangered species of high genetic fitness so as to enable their introduction in the wild and ultimately their removal from the International Union for Conservation of Nature red list.

Fresh Inc. would acknowledge its collaboration with the Republic of Mauritius in its marketing campaigns and press announcements which would further enhance the visibility of Mauritius not only as a biodiversity hotspot in the southern hemisphere but also as a sustainable tourist destination.

10. Cabinet has taken note that Mauritius would submit an updated State Action Plan on Carbon Dioxide Emissions Reduction for international aviation operations to the International Civil Aviation Organization. The State Action Plans enable Member States to establish a medium to long-term strategy to address international aviation carbon dioxide emissions in full cooperation with their national stakeholders.

The review of the Action Plan was carried out by the Department of Civil Aviation in consultation with all concerned stakeholders in accordance with the guidelines of the International Civil Aviation Organization. The updated State Action Plan contains key international measures to mitigate carbon dioxide emissions and would reaffirm the position of Mauritius in its support to the global effort to minimise aviation's carbon footprint and safeguard the environment from global climate change

11. Cabinet has taken note of the creation of a healing forest at Grand Bassin by the Forestry Service of the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security.

With a view to protecting the forests and surrounding areas of Grand Bassin especially around Ganga Talao, the area needs to be revamped and beautified from mono-cultured forest to culturally significant trees, medicinal plants and flowering trees that would further enhance tranquillity and sanctity of the area. The first phase of the project was expected to be completed by the second week of March 2023.

12. Cabinet has taken note that a delegation from the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) Secretariat and Task Force would field a country visit to Mauritius from 20 to 24 February 2023 to gather information and identify key challenges faced by Member States that were delaying the signing and ratification of the COMESA Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons, Labour, Services, Right of Establishment and Residence and the COMESA Visa Protocol on the Gradual Relaxation and Eventual Elimination of Visas.

13. Cabinet has taken note of the earthquake which hit Türkiye and the Northern region of Syria on 06 February 2023 causing heavy casualties with loss of lives and extensive damages.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade has set up a cell to assist Mauritian nationals currently in those countries requiring assistance. A hotline (405 2576) for emergency cases is operational since 08 February 2023. The assistance of the Honorary Consul of Mauritius in Istanbul, Türkiye could also be sought.

A Committee under the chairmanship of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade which would include relevant Ministries/institutions would be set up to look urgently into possible assistance that may be extended to Türkiye and other affected countries.

14. Cabinet has taken note of the proclamation of the results of the Cambridge Higher School Certificate (HSC) Examinations for the year 2022. Out of 5,640 school candidates in the Republic of Mauritius, 5,203 were successful, representing a pass rate of 92.25 percent as compared to 90.03 percent in 2021. The HSC pass rate for 2022 for Rodrigues is 90.64 percent as compared to 81.82 percent in 2021. The pass rate for girls stands at 94.63 percent whereas for boys the said percentage is 89.14. 11 schools with a cohort greater than 50 students have obtained a pass rate over 95 percent. In 26 out of 37 subjects at 'A' level, performance has exceeded 90 percent.

15. Cabinet has taken note that the Visitor Trail of Le Morne Brabant Mountain has been temporarily closed following a landslide caused as a result of the recent heavy rainfall in that region. Appropriate action was being taken by the National Emergency Operations Command and other appropriate authorities to remove the debris and consolidate the trail where required for the safety and security of the visitors.

16. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation would organise the second edition of the 'A Cappella' competition to be known as 'Sa Nou Lavwa' with the collaboration of the Mauritius Recreation Council, from mid-February 2023 to May 2023, across Mauritius and Rodrigues.

The competition would be open to participants aged between 14 and 35 years. Participants would perform songs without the use of any instrumental accompaniment.

17. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family Welfare would mark the International Women's Day by a national event at the Swami Vivekananda International Convention Centre, Pailles, on Sunday 5 March 2023. The theme retained by the United Nations for the celebration of International Women's Day this year is "*DigitALL: Innovation and technology for gender equality*" and the national theme which revolves around the United Nations theme for this year would be "*Madam dan enn lemond dizital: inklizion, egalite, oportinite*".

Cabinet has also taken note that the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family Welfare would launch the National Strategy and Costed Action Plan for Women Entrepreneurship Development which has been prepared by the National Consultant of the United Nations Development Programme.

18. Cabinet has taken note of the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic prevailing in Mauritius. As at 08 February 2023, there were 14 active cases of COVID-19, out of which six were admitted at the New ENT Hospital. Over the period of 02 to 08 February 2023, no death had been directly attributed to COVID-19.

19. Cabinet has taken note that the Board of the Mauritius Shipping Corporation Ltd has appointed Mr Dinesh Rao Babajee as Managing Director of the Corporation.
