

## **HIGHLIGHTS OF CABINET MEETING – MONDAY 30 JANUARY 2023**

1. Cabinet has taken note of the recommendations made by Mr Jason Meyer, International Consultant, in his Report entitled “Beyond the Bars” regarding the re-engineering of the Mauritius Prison Service and the Probation and Aftercare Service.

Cabinet has agreed to the setting up of a Strategic Leadership Team to look into the implications and advise on the implementation of the recommendations contained therein.

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2. Cabinet has taken note of developments regarding the project for the construction of a new state-of-the-art Forensic Science Laboratory at La Vigie.

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3. Cabinet has taken note of the findings and recommendations of a report submitted by the Industrial Finance Corporation of Mauritius Ltd to the Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development on ‘Establishing Mauritius as a Regional Sustainable Textile Hub’.

The Consultant has recommended four transformative projects to –

- (a) increase the spinning mill capacity including through new facility focusing on cotton yarn;
- (b) set-up new textile cotton mechanical recycling facility mutualised across local players’ efforts;
- (c) create new knitted-cotton fabrics production lines and promote sustainable cotton fabrics; and
- (d) create new blended fabrics production lines and promote sustainable blended fabrics.

A Steering Committee would be set up under the chair of the Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development to implement the recommendations contained in the report.

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4. Cabinet has taken note of the launching, by the Central Electricity Board, of the Carbon Neutral Industrial Sector (CNIS) Renewable Energy (RE) Scheme with the objective of allowing industrial customers to install on-site and/or off-site Renewable Energy facilities that can generate up to 150 percent of their annual electricity requirements. The CNIS RE Scheme is in line with measures announced in the 2022/2023 Budget Speech for the implementation of a renewable energy transition framework to enable the industrial sector to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030.

The industrial customers would benefit from a Carbon Neutral Loan Scheme by the Industrial Finance Corporation of Mauritius Ltd over seven years at a preferential rate of three percent.

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5. Cabinet has agreed to the Ministry of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation signing a Memorandum of Cooperation in the field of Information and Communication Technology with the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology of the Republic of India. The scope of cooperation would include the following potential areas –

- (a) setting up of communication channels for exchange of information;
- (b) collaborating on best practices in the use of IT in Government;
- (c) identifying applications to lead the e-Government agenda in each country; and
- (d) accelerating exchange in the area of e-Governance applications.

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6. Cabinet has agreed to Mauritius ratifying the following Agreements that would amend the Protocol on Trade of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), namely -

- (a) Agreement amending Annex VI to the Protocol on Trade concerning the Settlement of Disputes between the Member States of the SADC signed on 17 August 2007. The main objective of this Agreement was to include a provision to prevent forum shopping in relation to a dispute arising between SADC Member States;
- (b) Agreement amending Article 20 of the SADC Protocol on Trade signed on 17 August 2008. Its objective is to provide for the imposition of provisional safeguard measures; and
- (c) Agreement amending Article 3 of the SADC Protocol on Trade signed on 31 August 2016. The objective of the amendment was to remove reference to Non-Tariff Barriers in Article 3(1)(c) of the Protocol which provided for Members who had been adversely affected by the removal of tariffs.

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7. Cabinet has taken note of the situational analysis of the tourism sector for the year 2022. Mauritius welcomed 997,290 tourists from 01 January to 31 December 2022.

Cabinet has agreed to the development of a tourism strategy for the period 2023-2024 to sustain tourism growth and to address the challenges facing the sector. The Public-Private Sectors Joint Working Group, which has proven its effectiveness for the successful relaunch of the tourism sector, would be reactivated under the chair of the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Land Use Planning, Minister of Tourism.

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8. Cabinet has agreed to the prescription of the light rail fares in respect of the Place d'Armes platform and to the Light Rail Fares and Light Rail Tickets Regulations 2019 being amended to give effect to these fares. The same fare stage points would be applicable to the Place d'Armes platform as they are for the Port Louis Victoria Station.

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9. Cabinet has taken note of the re-structuring of the Pharmacovigilance Unit of the Ministry of Health and Wellness with a view to improving the capacity of the existing Unit. It would comprise the following six components –

- (a) a Pharmacovigilance Technical Committee which works on the collection, quality and validation of data;
- (b) a Causality Assessment Committee which is responsible for overseeing the data capturing mechanism for reporting of Adverse Drug Reactions and quality issues related to the use of all medicinal products;
- (c) a new Declaration Form has been published in accordance with the WHO format and distributed to all public hospitals and same would be made available in all private hospitals and pharmacies for implementation;
- (d) the new Technical Committee would collate and capture data on the VigiFlow® and the Vigibase® database of the Uppsala Monitoring Centre for analysis based on established standards;
- (e) in order to encourage reporting of Adverse Drug Reactions, the Ministry of Health and Wellness would carry out sensitisation campaigns in all public and private health establishments; and
- (f) a newsletter regarding local and international news on Pharmacovigilance would be published on the website of the Ministry of Health and Wellness and distributed to all healthcare institutions on a quarterly basis.

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10. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Health and Wellness has implemented a measure to extend the paediatric age limit in the Republic of Mauritius from 12 years to 16 years as from 01 January 2023. Paediatricians have been caring for paediatric cases from birth up to the age of 12 years in Mauritius.

During the past 50 years, there has been rapid demographic changes in the country which has brought a shift in the dynamics of patient flow which requires a readjustment of the health services for improved service delivery. Children aged 0 to 12 years represent 9 percent of total admissions in government general hospitals. Through the new measure, children from 12 to 16 years would continue to have the same medical treatment but under the care of paediatricians. In the future, it is envisaged to make provision for separate adolescent wards for children aged 12 to 16 years in the regional hospitals.

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11. Cabinet has taken note of the water situation of reservoirs in Mauritius following the generalised heavy rainfall events which occurred from 18 to 30 January 2023. As at 30 January 2023, the overall increase in the storage of reservoirs due to the rainfall was 27.11 million cubic meters, representing 29.4 percent of the total storage capacity.

Cabinet further took note that the groundwater levels in all aquifers had improved significantly. As at 24 January 2023, the Northern and Upper Plaine Wilhems aquifers were above the average levels. The remaining three aquifers (Eastern, Lower Southern and Lower Plaine Wilhems aquifers) registered a rising trend in levels but were still below average.

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12. Cabinet has taken note that following the issue of the Torrential Rain Warning by the Mauritius Meteorological Services on Thursday 26 January 2023 at 1930 hours and upon instructions received from the National Emergency Operations Command, arrangements were made for the opening of 33 Evacuee Centres across the island. 1,785 persons spent the night in 25 evacuee centres across the island.

Arrangements were also made for the evacuees who spent the night in the centres to be provided with the basic necessities. Breakfast, lunch and dinner were provided in accordance with the protocol for torrential rain.

Cabinet also noted that as at 30 January 2023, three Evacuee Centres, namely Cité La Cure Community Centre, Cité Vallijee Community Centre and Pointe aux Sables Community Centre were still open. Some 73 persons were currently at these Centres.

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13. Cabinet has agreed to the Ministry of Housing and Land Use Planning hosting the 19<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Southern African and Islands Hydrographic Commission to be held in September 2023. The aim of the Commission is to, inter alia, -

- (a) promote technical co-operation in the domain of hydrographic surveying, marine cartography and nautical information within the region;
- (b) encourage all countries within the region to widen hydrographic activity in the area and to seek technical advice and assistance from the International Hydrographic Organization Secretariat in establishing and strengthening their hydrographic capabilities; and
- (c) facilitate exchange of information concerning surveys, research or scientific and technical development to aid in the planning and organisation of hydrographic activities.

During the Conference, issues such as hydrographic surveys and charting status, chart production status, bilateral and regional cooperation agreements, and capacity building management plans would be discussed.

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14. Cabinet has taken note that the Information and Communication Technologies Authority (ICTA) would host the meetings of the Finance and Audit Committee and the Human Resource Development Committee of the Communication Regulators' Association of Southern Africa (CRASA) in February 2023, in Mauritius. CRASA is one of the leading ICT and Postal Regulatory associations in Africa and works for the improvement of the Postal and ICT business frameworks and investment climate in the SADC region.

The meetings of the CRASA in Mauritius would enable more local participation and would provide the opportunity to enhance networking with regional regulators and promote the visibility of Mauritius and the ICTA as well as facilitating access to information about other countries with different legal frameworks. Around 15 participants are expected to attend the meetings in Mauritius.

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15. Cabinet has taken note that the existing Outdoor Centre at Pointe Jérôme would be renamed as a National Outdoor Education and Recreation Centre and three other existing Outdoor Centres at Anse La Raie, Belle Mare and Flic en Flac as Regional Outdoor Education and Recreation Centres in the context of the implementation of the outdoor education programme.

In order to give a boost to the new roles which the Outdoor Centres are called upon to play in the near future, outdoor education programmes have been developed by the Mauritius Sports Council for the youth. These programmes allow the youth to discover activities such as water-based and land-based activities, leadership/team building exercises, interactive environment hubs and cultural programmes, thereby exposing them to experimental learning outside the classroom experiences.

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16. Cabinet has taken note of the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic prevailing in Mauritius. As at 25 January 2023, there were 24 active cases of COVID-19, out of which six were admitted at the New ENT Hospital. Over the period 19 to 25 January 2023, one death was attributed to COVID-19.

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17. Cabinet has taken note that there was no suspected case of mpox in Mauritius during the period 19 to 25 January 2023.

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18. Cabinet has taken note that the traffic diversion scheme initially planned to be implemented in connection with excavation and drain works across Motorway M1 at about 100 metres to the North of the Nouvelle France Roundabout from 31 January to 21 February 2023, has been postponed to a later date. The public would be informed accordingly.

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19. Cabinet has taken note that in the context of the construction of the Verdun Bypass being undertaken, the following traffic schemes would be operational as from Thursday 09 February 2023 at Saint Pierre and Alma along the Moka-Camp de Masque Flacq A7 Road –

- (a) at Saint Pierre - traffic on Moka-Camp de Masque-Flacq A7 Road would use the two new roundabouts at the junction with Saint Pierre Bypass A17 and at Verdun. Right turning movements at the Grade Separated Junction of Moka-Camp de Masque-Flacq A7 Road and Terre Rouge-Verdun Motorway M3 would not be allowed and traffic would be diverted onto the two new roundabouts; and
- (b) at Alma - part of the Moka-Camp de Masque-Flacq A7 Road would be closed to traffic. Traffic would be diverted on part of the new Verdun Bypass Road.

Traffic signs would be set up to inform and guide road users. Police assistance would also be provided.

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20. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the review made by the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the combined sixth and seventh report of Mauritius. The Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare led a delegation to Geneva to participate in the interactive session with the members of the Committee on the Rights of the Child to review the combined periodic report of Mauritius.

The Minister reaffirmed the commitment and continuous efforts being put in by Government to ensure the best interests of the child through legislative and policy measures adopted over the past years. Mrs Faith Marshall-Harris, Committee Vice Chair and Coordinator of the Taskforce for Mauritius, warmly commended Mauritius on the new legislation, particularly the recent ban on corporal punishment which was a great achievement. She also commended the Government of Mauritius on the significant progress made on children's rights, including the emphasis on education.

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21. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Arts and Cultural Heritage in Indore, India where he, along with five other Ministers, participated in the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) Convention which was inaugurated by the Prime Minister of the Republic of India. The theme of the Convention was "*Diaspora: Reliable partners for India's progress in Amrit Kaal*", whereby over 3,500 diaspora members from nearly 70 different countries participated. The Minister led a delegation of 500 Mauritian participants to the Convention. During the Convention, several theme-based plenary sessions were organised and the Minister of Arts and Cultural Heritage participated in a session on the theme "Leveraging the soft power of India – Goodwill through crafts, cuisine and creativity".

The Ministerial delegation also met Dr the Hon S. Jaishankar, Minister of External Affairs of India. In the wake of the PBD Convention, Mauritius was also invited as Partner Country to the Madhya Pradesh Global Investors Summit. The Summit was attended by the Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development and the Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity. The Summit focused on bilateral trade and foreign investments. It was also an occasion to showcase Madhya Pradesh as an investment destination that provides potential investors with opportunities in various sectors. Bilateral meetings were also organised for the Ministers forming part of the Mauritian delegation.

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22. Cabinet has taken note of the constitution of the Board of the Mauritius Food Standards Agency with Mr Hemchun Beeharry as part-time Chairperson.

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