

HIGHLIGHTS OF CABINET MEETING – FRIDAY 16 FEBRUARY 2024

1. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a Technical Agreement on the Fight against Drugs and Psychotropic Substances between the Government of Mauritius and the French Government. The Agreement would aim at fostering technical and operational cooperation on combating drugs between the two parties through the exchange of information, the sharing of best practices and the provision of specialised training and technical assistance, amongst others. The cooperation would cover -

- (a) strengthening of professional competencies and operational expertise;
- (b) promoting the mutual support at regional level; and
- (c) enhancing the mutual knowledge of methodologies and procedures.

2. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of the Technical Cooperation Agreement on the Exchange of Information regarding Vessel Traffic Monitoring and staff training between the Government of Mauritius and the French Government.

The Agreement would aim at harmonising the practices of the Mauritian Maritime Search and Rescue Coordination Centre of the Mauritius National Coast Guard and the French Maritime Search and Rescue Coordination Centre of Reunion Island. It would define the practical modalities of the mutual support they could provide to one another and specify areas of collaboration in order to ensure continuous improvement of the services provided as well as the smooth and timely exchange of relevant information between the two operational centres.

3. Cabinet has agreed to the Economic Development Board (EDB) signing an Agreement with the International Trade Centre (ITC) for the implementation of the SheTrades Mauritius Project. The main objective of the Agreement would be to provide the revised framework for cooperation between the EDB and the ITC to advance their shared goal of increasing the international competitiveness of women-led businesses and women entrepreneurs from the Republic of Mauritius and supporting them to connect and export to new markets through the activities of the SheTrades Mauritius Hub. The main activities would include but not be limited to increasing the capacity and competitiveness of women-led businesses and women entrepreneurs from the Republic of Mauritius.

4. Cabinet has agreed to Mauritius endorsing a Joint Ministerial Declaration on the Agreement on Investment Facilitation for Development at the forthcoming 13th Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

The purpose of the Agreement would be to improve the investment climate and promote international cooperation in order to facilitate the flow of foreign direct investment between WTO Members, particularly to developing and least developed country Members, with the aim of fostering sustainable development. The Agreement would also include provisions on responsible business conduct as well as on measures against corruption.

5. Cabinet has agreed to Mauritius joining the International Seabed Area (ISA) 'Call for Action' for ensuring the stewardship of the ISA and its resources for the benefit of humanity through deep-sea science, technology and innovation. The Call was being spearheaded by the ISA under its mandate to regulate and control activities in the international seabed area in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. The Call would aim at enhancing collective action of Member States around four key priorities –

- (a) increasing investments in marine science and technology;
- (b) aligning relevant research agendas at various levels with the ISA's Action Plan in support of the United Nations Decade for Ocean Science for Sustainable Development;
- (c) promoting deep-sea literacy; and
- (d) leveraging the ISA's experiences in support of the implementation of the Biological Diversity in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction Agreement.

6. Cabinet has agreed to the implementation of the following projects by the National Development Unit –

- (a) construction of drain at SSR Road and Orchidée Lane, L'Escalier;
- (b) raising of Ford at Baie Topaze and Box Culvert Upstream in Rodrigues;
- (c) raising of Ford at Pistache in Rodrigues; and
- (d) drainworks at Quatre Vents - Dans Darisse in Rodrigues.

7. Cabinet has agreed to the implementation of urgent repairs of public infrastructure, namely repairs and resurfacing of roads, by the National Development Unit and the Road Development Authority following the passage of Cyclone Belal.

8. Cabinet has taken note that the new vessel, MV Peros Banhos reached the Port Louis Harbour on 14 February 2024 and the traditional water salute was performed as a welcoming gesture.

9. Cabinet has taken note of activities being organised by the Ministry of Commerce and Consumer Protection in the context of World Consumer Rights Day, celebrated every year on 15 March, to raise awareness about the protection and rights of consumers. The activities would comprise -

- (a) dissemination of short video clips on the rights and responsibilities of consumers, legal obligation of traders, unfair trade practices or misleading consumers, among others;
- (b) distribution of flyers/booklets to sensitise the public on the rights of consumers through the printed newspaper copies;
- (c) participation on radio/TV programme and publication of press articles on specific issues relating to consumer protection; and
- (d) targeted sensitisation and educational campaigns through talks in secondary schools, Women Centres and Citizens Advice Bureaus.

10. Cabinet has taken note that, as at 14 February 2024, there were 634 active cases of Dengue Fever in Mauritius, of which 83 had been hospitalised in both public and private hospitals. For Rodrigues, 222 active cases of Dengue Fever had been recorded as at 15 February 2024, of which 11 were hospitalised. The Ministry of Health and Wellness, in collaboration with various stakeholders, was pursuing fogging, larviciding and vector control activities across the island. In addition, a mass sensitisation campaign was being carried out.

11. Cabinet has agreed to the provision of financial assistance to the tune of USD25,000 to the United Republic of Tanzania, as a gesture of solidarity following the unprecedented heavy rainfall which occurred in December 2023 in the northern part of the country, causing devastating flooding and mudslides.

12. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the fourth Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Mauritius held during the 45th Session of the UPR Working Group of the Human Rights Council in Geneva. Some 303 recommendations were formulated by 121 countries during their interventions including those on gender-based violence and empowerment of women, education and upholding rights of children

13. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent participation of the Attorney General, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade in the 13th Meeting of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Council of Ministers responsible for trade, in South Africa. The meeting considered the outstanding rules of origin for the textiles and clothing, took note of progress made with respect to the ongoing negotiation on the draft Protocol on Digital Trade and adopted the Ministerial Directives on the terms and conditions of service of the members of the Appellate Body.

In the sidelines of the meeting of the AfCFTA Council of Ministers, the South Africa's inaugural shipment and preferential trading under the AfCFTA Guided Trade Initiative were launched.

14. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent participation of the Attorney General, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade in the 7th edition of the Indian Ocean Conference held in Australia. The theme of the Conference was "Towards a Stable and Sustainable Indian Ocean".

Panel discussions during the Conference covered four thematic areas, namely climate change and the energy transition, blue economy, managing global commons, and partnerships for a resilient region. The Conference highlighted the Indian Ocean Region's geopolitical significance and stood as a testament to the collective commitment towards enhancing stability and sustainability across the Indian Ocean Region.

In the margins of the Conference, the Attorney General had bilateral meetings with, inter alia, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Australia, the Minister of External Affairs of the Republic of India and the Minister of State in the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office.

15. Cabinet has taken note of the appointment of Dr Didier Samfat, as part-time Chairperson of the National Cybersecurity Committee.
