

HIGHLIGHTS OF CABINET MEETING – THURSDAY 28 MARCH 2024

1. Cabinet has agreed to the introduction of the Environment Bill into the National Assembly. The main object of the Bill is to repeal the Environment Protection Act and replace it with a modern legislative framework with a view to ensuring better environmental protection, management and conservation. The Bill, inter alia, provides for -

- (a) the integration and mainstreaming of environmental sustainability in planning and development with a view to achieving sustainable development and the transition to a green and circular economy;
- (b) the establishment of an *Observatoire de L'Environnement* that would act as an interface with stakeholders for the purpose of environmental protection, management and conservation, and evaluation of environmental policies;
- (c) the introduction of a mechanism to ensure better management and protection of Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs) which would facilitate the coordination amongst different institutions, as well as the establishment and updating of an ESA inventory and ESA maps;
- (d) the enhancement of transparency of the Preliminary Environmental Report (PER) and the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) mechanisms, as well as the introduction of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) framework;
- (e) the requirement of a completion certificate prior to operating an undertaking, so as to ensure that projects have been effectively implemented in accordance with its PER, EIA or SEA licence or approval;
- (f) the establishment of a National Oil Spill Coordination Committee which would ensure a prompt, planned and coordinated response to any current or potential oil spill;
- (g) the introduction of a framework for plastic management to achieve the Government's vision for a plastic-free Mauritius; and
- (h) the strengthening of the existing enforcement and compliance mechanisms for a more effective and efficient application of environmental laws, and to provide for tougher penalties.

2. Cabinet has taken note of the promulgation of the Central Water Authority (Dry Season) (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2024 to extend its application until 30 April 2024. The Regulations provide, inter alia, for a person entitled to carry out irrigation of sugarcane to abstract water from a watercourse provided that such watercourse did not feed impounding reservoirs and where the Central Water Authority did not abstract water for domestic water supply. In addition, such abstraction should not cause prejudice to any interest that a person might hold in the concerned watercourse.

3. Cabinet has agreed to the Central Water Authority implementing the renewal of pipelines in the lateral roads in the region of Mahebourg (Phase 3) project. Works would consist of laying of around 6.2km of pipelines and shifting of around 950 household connections as well as resurfacing works.

4. Cabinet has agreed to the implementation of the project relating to “Consultancy Services for the Feasibility Study, Design, Preparation of Bid Document and assistance during Bid Evaluation for Downstream Works of Rivière des Anguilles Water Treatment Plant” by the Central Water Authority. The Integrated Project for the Rivière des Anguilles Dam would consist of the following –

- (a) construction of a rockfill dam;
- (b) construction of a water treatment plant;
- (c) construction of a mini-hydropower station; and
- (d) downstream works (pipe laying, service reservoirs, etc.)

5. Cabinet has agreed to the promulgation of the Motorways and Main Roads (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2024 with a view to classifying the newly constructed La Vigie – La Marie Link Road under “MAIN ROADS A”.

6. Cabinet has agreed to the implementation of the following projects by the National Development Unit and the Drains Infrastructure Construction Ltd, estimated at around Rs670 million -

- (a) drainworks at Belle Vue Maurel;
- (b) consultancy services for the construction of retention basins at Morcellement Happy Valley, Sainte Croix;
- (c) upgrading of main road from Terminus to Lallman, Crève Coeur;
- (d) construction of cut-off drain at St Hubert, including St Hilaire; and
- (e) flood mitigating measures at Debarcadère, Poste de Flacq – Phase 1.

7. Cabinet has agreed to the following support being extended to Export-Oriented Textile and Apparel Enterprises that were being negatively impacted by a significant increase in their cost of production -

- (a) an additional monthly financial assistance of Rs1,500 in respect of each of the full-time employees of these enterprises drawing the National Minimum Wage for the period April to June 2024; and
- (b) a monthly financial assistance of Rs1,000 for payment of the 2023 Salary Compensation for the period April to June 2024 in respect of each of the full-time employees of these enterprises drawing the National Minimum Wage.

8. Cabinet has taken note that the French authorities had completed the ratification process for *La Convention d'extradition entre la République de Maurice et la République Française* and *La Convention d'entraide Judiciaire en matière pénale entre la République de Maurice et la République Française*. These two Conventions would come into effect on 01 May 2024.

The Conventions aim at establishing a more effective cooperation between the two countries with a view to combatting cross-border organised crime, economic and financial offences. The Conventions also provide that Mauritius and France undertake to grant each other mutual legal assistance and to reciprocally hand over persons who are being either prosecuted for criminal offence or sought for the purpose of executing a custodial sentence imposed by the judicial authorities of either Party, while guaranteeing respect for fundamental rights.

9. Cabinet has taken note of the status of drain projects being implemented by the different implementing agencies and spearheaded by the Land Drainage Authority, under the National Flood Management Programme. As at end of January 2024, some 526 drain projects had been completed and 114 projects were being implemented.

10. Cabinet has taken note of the actions taken by the Ministry of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping for the establishment of "Areas To Be Avoided" around Mauritius and Rodrigues, which are defined limits in which either navigation is particularly hazardous or it is exceptionally important to be avoided by all ships, or by certain classes of ships, to prevent casualties.

11. Cabinet has taken note that a special leave of two hours would be granted on Friday 29 March 2024 as from 1400 hours to public officers of Christian faith, subject to exigencies of service, in the context of the Easter Celebrations 2024. This measure would apply to officers of Parastatal Organisations, Local Authorities as well as Government-Owned Enterprises.

12. Cabinet has taken note that Mauritius has excelled in the 13th African Games, by winning 25 medals. Mauritian athletes secured nine gold medals, five silver medals and 11 bronze medals. This remarkable performance at continental level placed the Republic of Mauritius in the ninth position on the medal table among 54 countries.

13. Cabinet has taken note that Mr Mathias Cormann, Secretary-General of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) would be in Mauritius on 05 and 06 September 2024. An OECD mission led by the Head of Division in the OECD Global Relations and Corporation Directorate would be in Mauritius during the first week of April 2024 to hold discussions with members of the Steering Committee set up for the development of the Country Programme.

The OECD would launch the first Annual OECD African Roundtable on Banking and Financial Markets that would bring together regulatory high-level officials from Africa, including Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors in September 2024.

14. Cabinet has taken note of the implementation of the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), introduced to support the Public Sector Business Transformation Strategy, in Ministries and Departments for financial year 2022-2023. The five KPIs at the level of Ministries and Departments relate to filling of vacancies, implementation of Phase III of the e-HR project, utilisation of training budget, Good Governance and compliance of buildings housing Public Officers with fire safety requirements.

15. Cabinet has taken note that, as at 27 March 2024, there were 330 active cases of Dengue Fever in Mauritius of which 52 had been hospitalised in both public and private hospitals. For Rodrigues, 147 active cases of Dengue Fever had been recorded as at 27 March 2024, of which 22 were hospitalised. Vector control activities and sensitisation of the population were ongoing. Mosquito repellents were being distributed in highly affected areas.

16. Cabinet has taken note of the situation on Cholera at global level and preparedness actions initiated in Mauritius. In this connection, surveillance for Cholera of incoming passengers at the seaport and the airport had been reinforced by the health authorities. Some 31 countries with known active local transmission of Cholera were on the surveillance list.

17. Cabinet has taken note that, in the context of the first edition of Segá Day, celebrated on 06 April in memory of Late Serge Lebrasse, the following activities would be organised by the Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage –

- (a) a Roundtable Discussion on 06 April 2024, on the “History of Segga and its evolution” with the participation of the Nelson Mandela Centre for African Culture Trust Fund, the National Heritage Fund, the Creole Speaking Union and the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation;
- (b) performances by Segga artists on 06 April 2024, at the SSR International Airport to greet passengers/tourists at the international arrivals terminal; and
- (c) a musical segga concert on 13 April 2024, in the Plaza Hall yard with the performance of different styles of Segga by local artists.

18. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the 26th Meeting of the Mauritius-Seychelles Joint Commission of the Extended Continental Shelf held recently in Seychelles. The Joint Commission is responsible for establishing policies and regulations relating to the natural resources and related activities in the Joint Management Area. The main outcomes of the discussions held pertained to, inter alia,

- (a) the first phase of sea cucumber exploration fishing and the second phase of the sea cucumber exploratory fisheries;
- (b) the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2023-2027;
- (c) United Nations Development Programme Stand Alone Project on the website of the Joint Management Area and the Zoning Framework;
- (d) Monitoring, Control and Surveillance of the Joint Management Area;
- (e) Carbon Credit Project; and
- (f) Marine Scientific Research.

19. 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 Ministerial Conference of the Third Summit for Democracy held in Seoul, Republic of Korea. The Summit, on the theme of ‘Democracy for Future Generations’, aimed at addressing pressing challenges to democratic governance, particularly focusing on digital threats and youth engagement, and to advance democracy renewal and resilience through multiple avenues.

In the margins of the Conference, the Attorney General had meetings with the US Secretary of State, the Korean Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic.

20. Cabinet has taken note of the renewal of the contractual employment of Mr Hemprakash Dhotah as General Manager of the Rose Belle Sugar Estate Board for a period of two years.
