

HIGHLIGHTS OF CABINET MEETING – FRIDAY 19 MAY 2023

1. Cabinet has agreed to the introduction of the Local Government (Amendment) Bill into the National Assembly. The object of the Bill is to amend the Local Government Act to empower the President, acting in accordance with the advice of the Prime Minister, to further extend the life of the entire Municipal City Council and Municipal Town Councils, or entire Village Councils for a period of two years.

2. Cabinet has agreed to the promulgation of the Public Health (Restrictions on Tobacco Products) (Amendment) Regulations 2023 which would provide for authorisation to importers to remove their stock of tobacco products lying in customs area, including duty-free shop, bonded warehouse and Freeport zone premises after 30 May 2023. The Regulations would come into effect on 31 May 2023.

3. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of an Agreement to amend the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Protocol on the Control of Firearms, Ammunition and other Related Materials in the SADC region. The SADC Protocol came into operation in 2001 to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit manufacturing of firearms, ammunition and other related materials and their excessive use because of the harmful effects those activities were having on the security of each State and the region.

The main amendments to the Protocol pertain to, inter alia, -

- (a) provision of a common regional framework for action on firearms and for the effective implementation of international and regional instruments, as well as a mechanism to coordinate, monitor and ensure enforcement of the Protocol;
- (b) strengthening of bilateral and multilateral cooperation and efforts in all areas of the fight against the illicit proliferation, circulation, transfer, manufacture and use of firearms; and
- (c) granting of authorisation to allow for the individual possession of firearms and ammunition in line with the legislation of each State Party.

4. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the Scoping Mission to Mauritius by a team of experts from the Infrastructure and Projects Authority (IPA) of the United Kingdom from 15 to 19 May 2023. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development and the IPA of UK. The Memorandum of Understanding is an emanation of the Strategic Trade Partnership Agreement signed between the Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development and the Department for Business and Trade of the Government of UK.

5. Cabinet has taken note of the holding of a beach and lagoon cleaning activity organised by the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change and the Beach Authority in collaboration with the High Commission of the Republic of India, on 21 May 2023 on the Flic-en-Flac public beach, in the context of India's G20 Presidency. The event, with the support of various stakeholders, will raise awareness about the growing problem of coastal and marine pollution and promote robust community engagement. In accordance with the "G20 Action Plan on Marine Litter" the G20 countries had committed to reduce, reuse, and recycle trash rather than dumping same in the ocean. The event would take place at the same time in all G20 countries and guest countries.

6. Cabinet has taken note of the extension of the radio programme "*Ansam avek CSU*" on the last Wednesday of each month in the following seven Citizen Advice Bureaux in the context of the 6th Anniversary of the Citizen Support Portal –

- (a) Bambous;
- (b) Flacq;
- (c) Quatre Bornes;
- (d) Mahebourg;
- (e) Pamplemousses;
- (f) Rose Belle; and
- (g) St Pierre;

7. Cabinet has taken note of the conduct of the fourth Nutrition Survey in Rodrigues in July/August 2023. The Rodrigues Nutrition Survey 2023 would be conducted by the Ministry of Health and Wellness, the Commission for Health, Social Security and Fire Services of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly in collaboration with Monash University, Australia; University of Helsinki, Finland; Umea University Hospital, Sweden; Imperial College, London, United Kingdom and University of South Florida, USA.

The overall objective of the Survey is to study the food consumption patterns and assess the nutritional status of the population with a view to addressing diet and nutrition related health problems and non-communicable diseases in Rodrigues.

8. Cabinet has taken note that at the 37th Council of Ministers of the Indian Ocean Commission held in Antananarivo on 17 May 2023, Madagascar handed over the Chairmanship of the Indian Ocean Commission to Mauritius for a period of one year.

9. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Commerce and Consumer Protection and Ministry of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation have launched the MOPRI Application on 18 May 2023 to empower consumers to have more visibility on the retail prices of commonly used products. The application which is a fundamental tool, would allow the public at large and stakeholders to compare prices of products and make an intelligent purchasing decision. Consumers would have access to the retail prices of a basket of 100 commodities of more than 450 brands being disseminated on MOPRI. The defined basket of commodities, would be reviewed on a regular basis. The mobile application is available on the website <https://mopri.govmu.org/>

10. Cabinet has taken note that the salary pay day of all Public Officers has been preponed to Friday 26 May 2023 instead of Monday 29 May 2023, in view of Mother's Day which would be celebrated on Sunday 28 May 2023.

11. Cabinet has taken note of that an Audit Committee Handbook prepared by the Office of the Public Sector Governance would be circulated to all Ministries and Departments for guidance on the setting up an effective operation of the Audit Committees. Audit Committees had been set up in all Ministries/Departments with a view to providing support to Accounting Officers in the monitoring and reviewing of both risk control and governance processes. The Audit Committees play a pivotal role in enhancing governance in the public sector by providing an independent oversight over Ministries'/Departments' system of internal controls and risk management in order to improve efficiency, transparency and accountability.

12. Cabinet has taken note of the organisation of the Team Mauritius Sports Award 2022 by the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation on 31 May 2023 at the Côte d'Or National Sports Complex. Awards would be presented to the different categories of Sportsmen/Sportswomen as well as Para Athletes.

13. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation in collaboration with the Mauritius Recreation Council would organise the Street Dance Battle Competition 2023 in the month of June 2023, for young people aged between 14 to 35 years old. The Street Dance Battle Competition would provide a platform for young people to demonstrate their dance talents and artistic pursuits.

14. Cabinet has taken note of the activities organised by the Ministry of Health and Wellness in the month of June to mark World Blood Donor Day 2023, which would be observed

throughout the world on 14 June 2023. The theme for World Blood Donor Day 2023 campaign is “Give blood, give plasma, share life, share often.”

The Ministry of Health and Wellness would organise a workshop on 15 June 2023 to discuss on strategies to make blood services sustainable. The following activities would also be held in collaboration with the Blood Donors Association –

- (a) awareness campaigns through radio and television programmes;
- (b) blood donations drives on Saturday 10 June 2023 in various localities and on Wednesday 14 June 2023 at the Municipal City Council of Port Louis;
- (c) offer of commemorative shields to colleges organising blood donation; and
- (d) certificates would be offered to young blood donors of the “Pledge 15” club who have donated blood at least five times from the time of taking the pledge.

15. Cabinet has taken note of the activities being organised by the Ministry of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping to commemorate World Ocean Day 2023. The 8th of June is celebrated as World Ocean Day every year to raise awareness on the vital importance of oceans and their role in sustaining a healthy planet. The theme for this year is “Planet Ocean: tides are changing.” To commemorate this event, that Ministry would release 215,000 juvenile fish known as fingerlings in the lagoons of Balaclava, Poste Lafayette, Albion and Le Morne with the aim of enhancing the fish stock in the lagoon. The launching ceremony would be carried out in Balaclava on 08 June 2023 whereby 15,000 fingerlings of ‘Cordonier’ and ‘Guele Pavé’ fish would be released in the lagoon.

16. Cabinet has taken note that the following activities would be organised by the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security in the context of the International Day for Biological Diversity on 24 May 2023 at the Black River Gorges National Park, namely –

- (a) opening of a trail of 4.5 km from the Black River Gorges View Point leading to the Black River peak;
- (b) Open Day at the Petrin and Lower Gorges Visitors' Centres;
- (c) planting of endemic trees in the national park; and
- (d) distribution of awareness materials.

The International Day for Biological Diversity is celebrated every year on 22 May to raise awareness on the importance of respecting, protecting and repairing biological resources and the global biodiversity that shapes our environment. The theme for this year's celebration is “From agreement to action: Build back Biodiversity” which is line of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

17. Cabinet has taken note of the activities being organised by the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security on Saturday 20 May 2023, at the SSR Botanic Garden, Pamplemousses to celebrate World Bee Day, namely –

- (a) a mini exhibition on beekeeping and honey products;
- (b) remittance of grant approval letters to beneficiaries of schemes to promote beekeeping; and
- (c) a distribution of melliferous plants to beekeepers.

World Bee Day is celebrated every year on 20th May to acknowledge the role of bees and other pollinators for the ecosystem and their contribution in agriculture. The theme for this year is “Bee Engaged in Pollinator-Friendly Agricultural Production”.

18. Cabinet has taken note of the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic prevailing in Mauritius. As at 17 May 2023, there were 84 active cases of COVID-19, out of which 10 were admitted at the New ENT Hospital. Over the period 11 to 17 May 2023, there was no death attributed to COVID-19.

19. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the Conference on Substance Abuse for Countries of the Western Indian Ocean Region organised by the Prime Minister’s Office in collaboration with the Indian Ocean Commission from 26 to 28 April 2023. The main recommendations made during the Conference were as follows –

- (a) establishment of a Regional Cooperation Framework to address illicit drugs trafficking and substance abuse in order to synergise efforts, seek a common approach and exchange best practices;
- (b) all countries in the region were encouraged to develop and implement their national drug strategy and/or action plans with clear monitoring and evaluation framework; and
- (c) setting-up of a Regional Drug Observatory which would collect drug related data from Member countries and publish regular reports on the changing drug situation and other drug related issues.

A committee would be set up at the level of Prime Minister’s Office with relevant stakeholders to ensure the implementation of these recommendations.
