

HIGHLIGHTS OF CABINET MEETING – FRIDAY 04 NOVEMBER 2022

1. Cabinet has agreed to the introduction of the Mauritius Standards Bureau (Amendment) Bill 2022 into the National Assembly. The main object of the Bill is to amend the Mauritius Standards Bureau Act with a view to aligning it with international norms. Over the years, the standardisation and conformity assessment environments have evolved, and there is a need for the Mauritius Standards Bureau to move forward with a new strategic orientation in consonance with the rapidly evolving socio-economic development of Mauritius. Accordingly, the Bill will, *inter alia*, -

- (a) provide for the Bureau to act, pursuant to Article 10 of the World Trade Organisation's Technical Barriers to Trade Agreement, as the Enquiry Point for Mauritius with the objective of answering reasonable enquiries from other Member States to the Agreement, including on any adopted or proposed technical regulations, standards and conformity assessment procedures;
- (b) provide for the formalisation of activities already undertaken by the Mauritius Standards Bureau, such as the formulation of Mauritian Standards, metrology and calibration; and
- (c) empower the Mauritius Standards Bureau to conduct other activities such as testing, certification and inspection.

2. Cabinet has taken note that following the meeting which the Prime Minister had with former British Prime Minister Elizabeth Truss on 21 September 2022 in New York in the margins of the 77th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, Mauritius and the United Kingdom have decided to begin negotiations on the exercise of sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago and taking into account relevant legal proceedings, intend to secure by early next year an agreement on the basis of international law to resolve all outstanding issues, including those relating to the former inhabitants of the Chagos Archipelago, and which will ensure the continued effective operation of the military base on Diego Garcia.

Cabinet has also taken note that the Prime Minister made a statement to that effect to the National Assembly on 03 November 2022 and that the UK Government made concurrently a written ministerial statement to the UK Parliament.

3. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Department for Continental Shelf, Maritime Zones Administration and Exploration and Société des Explorations de Monaco/Monaco Explorations. The mandate of Société des Explorations de Monaco/Monaco Explorations is also in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 14 which is to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

The objective of the Memorandum of Understanding is to enhance cooperation between the two organisations for the –

- (a) development of joint research projects in marine sciences, seabed mapping and geomorphology, ocean climate, and human impact and activity;
- (b) distribution and sharing of scientific information resulting from the marine research;
- (c) in-house training of scientists and opportunities to exposure to high-level qualified research in scientific and exploratory expeditions;
- (d) transfer of technology and equipment; and
- (e) access to infrastructure and research platforms through collaborative projects.

4. Cabinet has taken note that pursuant to the Memorandum of Understanding for cooperation in hydrography signed between Mauritius and India in 2005, the Mauritian Authorities have welcomed on 01 November 2022, the INS Darshak, which has been deployed by the Government of India to carry out hydrographic surveys in the waters of Mauritius for a period of 45 days.

INS Darshak would carry out surveys off Mauritius, identify potential fishing zones for placement of fish aggregator devices and also carry out hydrographic surveys of St Brandon and Agalega. Officers of the Ministry of Housing and Land Use Planning would form part of the survey team. INS Darshak has visited Mauritius thrice before in the years 2012, 2016 and 2019 and is the 15th deployment of Indian Naval Surveying Ship for joint surveys since its first visit in 2006. INS Darshak would be open to the public on Sunday 04 December 2022.

5. Cabinet has agreed to the renewal of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Republic of Mauritius and the Republic of Seychelles regarding the twinning between the island of Rodrigues and the island of La Digue. The objectives of the Memorandum of Understanding are –

- (a) to study, promote and strengthen cultural ties, broaden approaches and enrich the lives of citizens of the Parties;
- (b) to exchange experience and best practices in terms of strategy, policy and development in such areas as arts, marine, education, history, sports, agriculture, craft, tourism, business, technology and investment promotion;
- (c) capacity building according to an annual schedule based on mutual agreement and to develop a work ethic to fit into the global economy; and
- (d) to encourage the involvement of individual citizens and community groups to develop a spirit of co-operation and create strong bonds of friendship.

6. Cabinet has agreed to the renewal of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Social Integration Division of the Ministry of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity and the International Poverty Reduction Center of the People's Republic of China. The International Poverty Reduction Center was jointly initiated and established in 2005 by the Chinese Government, the United Nations Development Programme and other international organisations.

The Memorandum of Understanding, inter alia, makes provision for the consolidation of existing cooperation and exchanges between the two institutions in the following areas –

- (a) poverty reduction, development and cooperation research;
- (b) human resource development and capacity building;
- (c) sharing of experience and knowledge on poverty reduction and development; and
- (d) promotion of bilateral exchanges and cooperation under the framework of the Africa-China Alliance for Poverty Alleviation.

7. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a Cooperation Agreement between the Data Protection Office and the Information Regulator of South Africa. The main objectives of the Cooperation Agreement would be to have a formal reciprocal arrangement with a view to –

- (a) developing and maintaining cooperation relationships in the area of data protection;
- (b) carrying out mutual consultations on issues related to personal information and data; and
- (c) collaborating on joint initiatives aimed at strengthening professional capacities in relation to data protection and privacy.

8. Cabinet has taken note of the recommendations made by the e-Governance Academy of Estonia regarding the Project for the setting up of the Mauritius Digital Transformation Agency and to the implementation of the report. The consultants have, inter alia, carried out a SWOT analysis of the current institutional arrangements governing the Digital Transformation agenda of Government. Based on their analysis, and taking into consideration international best practices, the Consultants have carried out a mapping of core competencies needed for the proposed new agency and availability of those competencies.

A high-level Steering Committee would be set up under the chair of the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation to look into implications of recommendations contained in the report from a legal, organisational, financial and human resource perspective and work on an Action Plan for the implementation of the recommendations.

9. Cabinet has agreed to the promulgation of the Waste Water (Miscellaneous Waste Water Services) (Fees) (Amendment) Regulations 2022 to review fees pertaining to the following –

- (a) disposal of waste water at waste water disposal station;
- (b) clearances for morcellement permit;
- (c) clearing waste water blockages within industrial, commercial and public premises in seweried areas;
- (d) attendance to meetings and site visits convened by private developers and witnessing percolation tests; and
- (e) verification of design of sewers, treatment plant and disposal system.

10. Cabinet has taken note that the Small Farmers Welfare Fund (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2022 would be promulgated to allow a larger number and category of breeders to be registered. The definition of breeders would be reviewed so as to properly reflect the new configuration of the farming sector and to enable the Small Farmers Welfare Fund not to leave out any category of farmer in the extension of its facilities.

11. Cabinet has taken note that the Public Procurement (Amendment No. 3) Regulations 2022 would be promulgated to amend the First Schedule of the Public Procurement Regulations 2008, relating to “Exempt Organisations”, to exempt the Ministry responsible for the subject of health, from the purview of the Public Procurement Act, for the procurement of medical supplies under a pooled procurement agreement with a regional organisation or international organisation of States where Mauritius is a member.

12. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation would organise the third edition of the 12-Hour National Relay Walk, Jog and Run for Health and Fun in collaboration with the Mauritius Sports Council, at the Côte d'Or National Sports Complex on 20 November 2022 in 12 slots of one hour, between 06 00 hours and 18 00 hours. The objective is to sensitise the population to engage in regular physical activity as part of a healthy lifestyle. Side demonstration activities including boxing, karate, tae kwon do and gymnastic would be held in the margins of the event.

13. Cabinet has taken note that the Mega Blood Donation 2022 organised by the Ministry of Health and Wellness in collaboration with the Blood Donors Association would be held from Monday 19 to Thursday 22 December 2022 at the Municipal City Council of Port Louis. The objectives of the Mega Blood Donation are to –

- (a) cope with the continuous demand for blood and blood components during the festive months of December and January;
- (b) raise awareness among the population on the importance of blood and motivate them to donate blood; and
- (c) encourage the younger generation to donate blood in order to compensate for ageing donors.

14. Cabinet has agreed to the National Productivity and Competitiveness Council (NPCC) accepting the second Vice-Presidency of the Pan African Productivity Association. The Pan African Productivity Association is a regional association of national productivity organisations of 19 African countries. It is the umbrella organisation, federating African National Productivity Organisations established for championing the enhancement of productivity in Africa. The NPCC would be represented on the Board by its Executive Director.

15. Cabinet has taken note that the Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development would chair the Tripartite Committee Meeting on salary compensation for 2022 on Wednesday 30 November 2022. The Technical Committee Meeting would be held on Wednesday 23 November 2022 under the chairmanship of the Minister of Labour, Human Resource Development and Training, Minister of Commerce and Consumer Protection.

16. Cabinet has taken note that the “*Semaine de L’industrie Locale*” would be held from 29 November to 04 December 2022 in order to promote the “savoir-faire” of Mauritian enterprises as announced in Budget Speech 2022/2023. Two major events would be held, namely the holding of a National Manufacturing Summit on 29 and 30 November 2022 and a “*Salon de L’industrie Locale*” from 02 to 04 December 2022. The official launching of the “*Salon*” would be held on 01 December 2022.

17. Cabinet has taken note of the human resources constraints that the Tourism and Hospitality Industry is facing. A consultative workshop would be organised by the Ministry of Tourism with relevant stakeholders on 30 November 2022, to brainstorm on the issue with the objective to identify ways to address the labour mismatch in the industry. The training policy and the institutional framework of *Ecole Hôtelière Sir Gaëtan Duval* regarding its functioning and training provided, would also be revisited during the consultative workshop.

18. Cabinet has taken note of the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic prevailing in Mauritius. As at 02 November 2022, there were 73 active cases of COVID-19, out of which 32 were admitted at the New ENT Hospital. Over the period 27 October to 02 November 2022, one death was attributed to COVID-19.

Cabinet has also taken note that there is no suspected case of Monkeypox in Mauritius.

19. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of the Supply Agreement in respect of the procurement of 1,000 units of the vaccines against Monkeypox. The Trade and Therapeutics Committee and the Pharmacy Board of the Ministry of Health and Wellness have already approved the extended use of the vaccine to include the monkeypox indication, in addition to smallpox.

20. Cabinet has taken note of the activities that would be organised by the Ministry of Health and Wellness in the context of World AIDS Day, observed on 01 December each year. The theme for World AIDS Day 2022 is “Equalize”. On 01 December 2022, the Ministry would launch various activities at *Centre Artistique de Pointe Canon*, Mahebourg, namely –

- (a) a march from the National Museum at Mahebourg to *Centre Artistique de Pointe Canon*;
- (b) slams and songs performed by youth and members of the community;
- (c) sketches by People Living with HIV; and
- (d) prevention programmes and screening for HIV, Hepatitis C and Syphilis at specific sites.

Other activities, including TV programmes on HIV and AIDS would also be organised.

21. Cabinet has taken note that the Land Drainage Authority, in collaboration with the University of Mauritius, has conducted a training workshop over two weeks entitled ‘Short Professional Course on Geographical Information System for Planners’. The Head Planners and Planners of the 12 local authorities attended the training.

The objective of the course was to empower the personnel of local authorities to –

- (a) enhance the processing of the Building and Land Use Permits (BLUP);
- (b) induce a sustainable urban and land use planning; and
- (c) prevent unwarranted rejection of BLUP applications.

The training was also geared to support the officers in the use of flood prone and natural drainage path GIS maps.

22. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent participation of the Minister of Industrial Development, SMEs and Cooperatives to the 13th African Ministerial Cooperative Conference (AMCCO) held in Egypt. The theme of the Conference was “Growing Africa Together: The Role of African Cooperatives in accelerating Sustainable Development Goals 2030 and the Africa We Want (Agenda 2063)”.

The main themes of the Conference were –

- (a) Governments' support and enabling environments for cooperatives;
- (b) “Cooperation Among Cooperatives”: An integrated socio-economic development model;
- (c) Cooperatives and Community Development;
- (d) maximising the benefits of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (ACFTA, 2019) through cooperatives;
- (e) legal and regulatory policy frameworks; and
- (f) cooperatives and climate change.

23. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the National Solidarity Fund Board with Mr Tayonand Baboorun as part-time Chairperson.
