

HIGHLIGHTS OF CABINET MEETING – FRIDAY 24 SEPTEMBER 2021

1. Cabinet has agreed to the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security issuing drafting instructions to the Attorney General's Office for an Animal Health and Livestock Production Bill. The proposed Animal Health and Livestock Production Bill would provide, among others, for the following –

- (a) setting up of a National Livestock Information System under the Animal Production Division;
- (b) regulate the movement of livestock and mandatory identification of all livestock;
- (c) ensure traceability of products of animal origin;
- (d) an obligation for all individuals and organisations having livestock under their control or ownership to be officially registered with the Division of Veterinary Services and to have an approved Animal Health Management Programme in place;
- (e) control over the authorisation, import, distribution and use of feed additives, premixtures and medicated feeds to address issues of residues in food of animal origin and anti-microbial resistance; and
- (f) all establishments processing food of animal origin for human consumption to have a food safety management system based on Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) principles.

2. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family Welfare would organise two National Consultative Workshops with representatives of the public sector, private sector, civil society organisations and other relevant stakeholders on the draft Gender Equality Bill. The overall objective of the National Consultative Workshops is to have the views and comments of all stakeholders on the proposed provisions of the draft Bill to ensure its effective implementation, once enacted.

3. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of an Exchange of Letters with the Government of Australia, which would enable funds to the tune of Rs12.1 million from “The Australian Food Aid Counterpart Fund Account” to be disbursed for financing the Sea Cucumber Project. The Project is being implemented by the Ministry of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping, through the Albion Fisheries Research Centre, in collaboration with the University of Sunshine Coast of Australia. The University is assisting the Centre in developing a research programme for sea cucumber production, which includes devising new techniques for culture and farming, and carrying out specialised training for staff of the Centre. The project would be of three years' duration and would enable Mauritius to improve its capacity for sea cucumber production.

4. Cabinet has taken note that Road B104 from Case Noyale to Chamarel would be temporarily closed in the context of the implementation of the Landslide/Slope Stability Treatment along Baie du Cap - Chamarel - Case Noyale – La Gaulette Road Project, as from 27 September 2021 for a period of about four months.

Alternative arrangements are being made for the provision of social and other facilities so as not to cause any inconvenience to the inhabitants of these localities.

5. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Mahatma Gandhi Institute (MGI) and the Information and Library Network (INFLIBNET) Centre, India. The INFLIBNET Centre is an Inter-University Centre of the University Grants Commission that operates under the aegis of the Ministry of Education of India. It is involved in modernising university libraries in India by enabling them to use state-of-art technologies for the optimum storage and utilisation of information.

The Memorandum of Understanding provides that the MGI would partner with the INFLIBNET Centre mainly with a view to computerising its library using the Software for University Libraries.

6. Cabinet has taken note of the ranking of the Republic of Mauritius at the 52nd position in the Global Innovation Index (GII) 2021 Report, which has been released on 20 September 2021. The GII Report is co-published annually by the World Intellectual Property Organisation, Cornell University of New York and *Institut Européen d'Administration des Affaires*. It provides detailed metrics about innovation performance of 132 countries and economies around the world, including Mauritius. Mauritius maintains its first position not only in the Sub-Saharan region but in Africa.

7. Cabinet has taken note of the launching of an Inclusive Digital Literacy Programme by the National Computer Board. The programme would address the digital divide and encourage citizens to adopt the latest ICT technologies and fully utilise all online government services.

The objective of the programme is to promote safe use of digital technologies to access information, communication, e-Governance service, job skills, learning and financial services. The target audience for the programme would be senior citizens, housewives, children, unemployed citizens and people with disabilities. The programme would be launched in October 2021 and was expected to be completed by March 2022.

8. Cabinet has agreed to the Government of Mauritius making a donation of USD25,000 as an act of solidarity towards the people of the Republic of Haiti, following the declaration of a state of emergency by the Haitian Government, and international calls for support to humanitarian assistance and relief operations in the aftermath of the two natural disasters which hit the country in August 2021.

9. Cabinet has agreed to the National Land Transport Authority -

- (a) waiving the Public Service Vehicle (Contract) Licence fees in respect of all individual contract bus operators involved in the conveyance of tourists for one year on the same line as for Destination Management Companies and other companies operating in the tourism sector, owning Public Service Vehicle Licences for their buses for a period of one year or for the ensuing year for those who have already renewed their licence;
- (b) extending the delay for implementation of contract car licences up to 30 June 2022; and
- (c) extending the delay for the replacement of contract cars up to 30 June 2022.

It is also proposed that the timeframe to implement a contract car licence be exceptionally extended up to 30 June 2022, in order to provide licencees with an additional delay for the implementation of their contract car licences. Contract car operators would also be granted a delay of up to 30 June 2022 to replace their vehicles. This extension of the delay would thus provide contract car operators with a reasonable timeframe to replace their fleet.

10. Cabinet has taken note of progress made in respect of projects and reforms being implemented by the National Housing Development Co. (NHDC) Ltd. The NHDC Ltd has, since June 2021, delivered 99 housing units, thus bringing the total number of housing units delivered to 1,050 for the period November 2019 to August 2021. Out of these 1,050 housing units, 92 have been earmarked for the National Empowerment Foundation to be allocated to its eligible beneficiaries. The NHDC Ltd has, for the period December 2019 to August 2021, disbursed some Rs172 million to 2,239 beneficiaries under the Casting of Roof Slab Grant Scheme.

11. Cabinet has taken note of the activities that the Ministry of Health and Wellness would organise in the context of World Heart Day 2021 observed, on 29 September. World Heart Day aims at raising awareness of individuals, families, communities and Governments about cardiovascular diseases. The theme chosen for this year is “**Use Heart to Connect**”. The activities would include –

- (a) an official ceremony for the launching of activities on 29 September 2021 at Dr A.G Jeetoo Hospital, Port-Louis which would include the official launching of the 24/7 Primary Percutaneous Coronary Intervention;
- (b) MBC TV and Radio programmes during the month of September and October 2021;
- (c) screening and counselling for Non-Communicable Diseases (NCD) at worksites and in the community for persons aged 18 years and above;
- (d) empowerment sessions for NCD patients on cardiovascular diseases and health related issues at regional level; and
- (e) cooking demonstration (food plate models) on healthy eating.

12. Cabinet has taken note of the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic prevailing across the world. Some 231.3 million cases have been reported globally, of which 208 million persons have been successfully treated.

With regard to Mauritius, as at 23 September 2021, there were 1,904 active cases of COVID-19, out of which 45 were admitted at New ENT Hospital including four on ventilators. Over the period 18 to 23 September 2021, 19 deaths were attributed to COVID-19.

Cabinet has also taken note of progress in the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme. As at 23 September 2021, 849,326 persons had received a first dose of vaccine (representing 67.1 percent of the population). 793,269 persons had been fully vaccinated (representing 62.7 percent of the population).

A donation of some 50,400 doses of Johnson and Johnson vaccine from the Government of the Republic of South Africa reached Mauritius on 17 September 2021. Some 30,000 doses (Component II) of Sputnik V vaccines reached Mauritius on 21 September 2021 and 76,050 doses of Pfizer vaccine donated by the US Government were received on 23 September 2021.

The administration of the third dose of Sinopharm vaccine has started on 23 September 2021. Pfizer vaccines would be administered to adolescents aged between 15 and 17 years in educational institutions, as from 28 September 2021.

13. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the participation of the Minister of Land Transport and Light Rail, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade in the 21st annual Commonwealth Foreign Affairs Ministers Meeting held virtually. The agenda of the meeting focused on the Commonwealth's roles and contributions towards its Member States' recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and building back better, including on health and vaccine equity, trade issues, and climate change, in particular the upcoming COP26 meeting in Glasgow. Ministers were provided with policy and operational updates.

The Minister of Land Transport and Light Rail, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade expressed support to the call made by the Secretary-General on G20 members to urgently work with the Commonwealth and other partners for the adoption of a robust plan to vaccinate the world's 42 smallest states and shield them from COVID-19. He also renewed the commitment of Mauritius to the Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub, hosted by Mauritius, which testified to the Commonwealth's engagements to improve access by small and vulnerable countries to climate finance. He also expressed the support of Mauritius for the joint UN-Commonwealth Small States Advocacy Strategy, designed to mobilise global efforts for addressing the core vulnerabilities of small states.

14. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the participation of the Minister of Land Transport and Light Rail, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade in the G-33 Informal Ministerial Meeting that was held virtually on 16 September 2021. The G-33 is a group of Member States of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) with common positions on a number of issues relating to the Agriculture negotiations. The objective of the Meeting was to discuss the agricultural priority issues of G-33 and the way forward for the Twelfth WTO Ministerial Conference (MC-12) scheduled from 30 November to 03 December 2021.

In his opening statement, the Minister of Trade of the Republic of Indonesia emphasised the key priority issues, namely a permanent solution for Public Stockholding for food security purposes, a meaningful outcome on Special Safeguard Mechanism, and a balanced outcome in agricultural domestic support. The meeting concluded with the adoption of the G-33 Joint Ministerial Statement reaffirming commitment for expeditious resolution of the WTO's mandated issues in agriculture. The meeting also called for satisfactorily addressing the development issues of developing countries and Least Developed Countries, with Special and Differential Treatment remaining an integral part of WTO system.

15. Cabinet has taken note of the appointment of Mr Rooben Maran as General Manager of the Central Water Authority.

16. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Board of Trustees of the Edgar Laurent Tuberculosis Foundation for a period of three years as from September 2021, with Dr Beerdarshansingh Caussy, Director, Health Services, as part-time Chairperson.

17. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the National Road Safety Council with Mr Alain Jeannot as part-time Chairperson.
