

HIGHLIGHTS OF CABINET MEETING – 30 JULY 2021

1. Cabinet has agreed to the implementation of the project for the construction of a National Health Laboratory Services Centre on a “Design, Finance, Build and Maintain” model at Côte d’Or. The new services would be as follows –

- (a) the Central Health Laboratory would incorporate new services/departments such as immunology and genetic department, Central Laboratory Reagents/ Consumables warehouse, dedicated premises for clinical teaching and research activities for both undergraduate and post-graduate levels and medical devices evaluation department; and
- (b) the Government Analyst Division would be equipped to offer Analytical Chemistry courses for technical officers/scientists and specialised courses such as heavy metals analysis in food/feed/water/effluent. The courses, currently not available in Mauritius, would be both theoretical and hands-on with instrumentation and would consist of training new recruits for the Government Analyst Division, officers from other public entities and private individuals.

2. Cabinet has agreed to the promulgation of the Road Traffic (Public Service Vehicle, Road Service and Carrier’s Licence) (Amendment) Regulations 2021. In Budget Speech 2020/2021, provision was made to amend the Road Traffic Act to enable Holders of a ‘B Carrier’ Licence to lease their vehicles including for the carriage of goods. Section 84 of the Road Traffic Act was amended by the Finance (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2020, to provide for the leasing of a vehicle holding a Private Carrier’s Licence (‘B’ Carrier’s Licence) to another person for any purpose, including for the carriage of goods, other than sugar canes, and subject to such conditions as the National Land Transport Authority may impose. These amendments have entailed consequential amendments to the Road Traffic (Public Service Vehicle, Road Service and Carrier’s Licence) Regulations.

3. Cabinet has agreed to the erection of an additional Light Rail Transit (LRT) Station at the Phoenix Mall, over and above, the 19 LRT Stations along the LRT alignment from Curepipe to Port Louis, with all associated costs being met by Ascencia Ltd and for the Metro Express Ltd and Ascencia Ltd to sign an Agreement to this effect.

4. Cabinet has taken note of the situational analysis on the resumption of activities by tourist accommodations. The licensed tourist accommodations have been authorised to resume their operations as from 23 July 2021, subject to compliance with the relevant sanitary protocol for domestic tourism. As at 27 July 2021, a total of 138 tourist accommodations comprising 91 tourist residences, 32 guesthouses and 15 hotels have informed the Tourism Authority of the date they would start operating. Some 61 tourist residences, 28 guesthouses and 11 hotels started operating as from 23 July 2021.

During the weekend of 24 and 25 July 2021, officers of the Tourism Authority carried out inspections at tourist residences, guesthouses and hotels. The Tourism Authority would continue to carry out monitoring at the tourist accommodations to ensure that the sanitary protocol communicated to all its licensees was being duly complied with.

5. Cabinet has taken note of the status of implementation regarding the introduction of a measure of price control for seven essential commodities and to provide a subsidy as compensation to importers for their loss of revenue. The Consumer Affairs Unit of the Ministry of Commerce and Consumer Protection has effected 1,004 checks in different trade premises from 12 to 26 July 2021 and 94 contraventions pertaining mostly to higher price and non-affixing of price label have been established throughout Mauritius.

As regards the price control mechanism in Rodrigues, the Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Maximum Price of Essential Goods) Regulations 2021 were promulgated to align the prices of these essential commodities in Rodrigues with the new prices applicable in Mauritius with effect from 19 July 2021.

6. Cabinet has taken note of the rolling out of the electronic queue management system, "Mo Rendez Vous", by the Ministry of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation in four additional sites, namely the Mauritius National Identity Centres in Port Louis, Rose Hill and Flacq and the National Land Transport Authority Sub Office in Emmanuel Building, Port Louis with a view to enhancing public service delivery. The system which enables citizens to book appointments online, through the "Mo Rendez Vous" portal or mobile app, is expected to be operational at those sites during the first week of August 2021. The ultimate objective is to address the issue of long queues, therefore providing a more effective public service.

7. Cabinet has taken note that Mauritius Telecom has embarked on the deployment of the 5th generation of the wireless network (5G) technology and officially launched the project on 29 July 2021.

8. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the first Inter-Ministerial Meeting of the Indentured Labour Route Project(ILRP) held virtually on 16 July 2021, in the context of the 15th Anniversary of the inscription of the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site on the UNESCO World Heritage List. The ILRP is steered by the International Scientific Committee which comprises 20 members from 14 countries and also includes a representative from UNESCO. The Inter-Ministerial Meeting was organised to give a new impetus and ensure governmental support to the ILRP. The aim was to foster research on indenture and disseminate information on indentured labour as an international phenomenon while creating a synergy with the Slave Route Project.

The International Scientific Committee has developed an Action Plan for the period 2021 to 2023 so as to promote and raise awareness about the history of indenture. One of the main priorities of the Action Plan of the ILRP is the establishment of the International Database on Indentured Labour Migration which would require the setting up of a dedicated international committee with representatives from the National Archives of the participating countries, scholars and database experts.

9. Cabinet has taken note that the composition of the Mauritius National Committee for the Slave Route Project would be reviewed to include persons with varied expertise including scholars of art, music, ethnography, history, media, archives, museums as well as representatives of Ministries/Departments, NGO's and individuals with an interest in slavery. The main objectives of the Slave Route Project are to –

- (a) break the silence and make universally known, the subject of the transatlantic slave trade and slavery in the Indian Ocean, Caribbean and the Mediterranean regions, with its causes and modalities;
- (b) highlight the global transformations and cultural interactions that have resulted from this history; and
- (c) contribute to a culture of peace by promoting reflection on cultural pluralism, intercultural dialogue and the construction of new identities and citizenships.

The Mauritius National Committee for the Slave Route Project would be chaired by the Minister of Arts and Cultural Heritage.

10. Cabinet has taken note of the activities being organised by the Human Rights Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade in collaboration with stakeholders to mark World Humanitarian Day 2021 on 19 August 2021. The theme for this year is “Climate emergency and its impact on the most vulnerable people”. The following activities would be organised –

- (a) a poster would be issued in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change on the theme covering the types of climate emergencies in Mauritius, impacts of most vulnerable groups and the key measures that are in place;
- (b) a radio talk on the theme would be held in collaboration with the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation;
- (c) the Ministry of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management would organise a half-day workshop to sensitise the Officer-in-Charge of Residential Care Homes located in the flood prone regions on the emergency preparedness and response in the event of a disaster event; and
- (d) a message on World Humanitarian Day would be forwarded to all stakeholders for wider dissemination.

11. Cabinet has taken note of the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic prevailing across the world. Some 197 million cases have been reported globally, of which 178.3 million persons have been successfully treated. With regard to Mauritius, as from March 2020 to 30 July 2021, 4,214 cases (including imported cases) of COVID-19 had been registered. There were 1,870 active cases of COVID-19 in Mauritius, out of which 1,861 were local cases and nine imported cases. Contact tracing exercises and random testing are being carried out in accordance with the established protocol.

Cabinet has also taken note that following the detection of positive COVID-19 cases among foreign workers in dormitories, some dormitories have been designated as quarantine facility. The situation was being closely monitored by the Ministry of Health and Wellness.

Cabinet has further taken note of progress in the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme. As at 29 July 2021, 676,702 persons had received a first dose of vaccine (representing 54 percent of the population). 549,812 persons had received a second dose of vaccine (representing 44 percent of the population).

12. Cabinet has taken note that following the extension of the quarantine period, the Prime Minister would make an Order under the Quarantine Act to extend the prohibition of entry of aircraft and ships into Mauritius until 31 August 2021, except for those aircraft and ships as he may approve. The Notice to Airman (NOTAM) for Rodrigues would be extended until 31 August 2021.

13. Cabinet has taken note that a 22-member delegation comprising athletes, coaches and officials proceeded to Japan for the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games. Seven Mauritian athletes competed at the Games in five sports disciplines, namely badminton, boxing, judo, swimming and weightlifting. With regard to the sixth discipline, namely athletics, where Mauritius would be represented, the competition would take place on 03 August 2021.

14. Cabinet has taken note of the activities that would be organised by the Ministry of Health and Wellness during the first week of August 2021 to mark World Breastfeeding Week 2021. The theme for World Breastfeeding Week 2021 is “Protect breastfeeding: a shared responsibility”.

The Ministry of Health and Wellness would organise a one-day workshop on the theme “Exclusive Breastfeeding – A Public Health Priority” for medical and paramedical staff of the Ministry and representatives from NGOs, on 4 August 2021 with a view to strengthening sensitisation on breastfeeding. Radio and TV programmes would be held to sensitise the population at large on the benefits of breastfeeding.

15. Cabinet has taken note of proposals to be made by the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation at the Experts meeting scheduled for 9 and 10 August 2021 to be followed by the Ministerial meeting of the *Commission de la Jeunesse et des Sports de l’Océan Indien* (CJSOI) on 12 August 2021.

16. Cabinet has taken note of outcome of the participation of the Minister of Labour, Human Resource Development and Training, Minister of Commerce and Consumer Protection in the 109th Session of the International Labour Conference held virtually in June 2021 in Geneva. Discussions during the first part of the Conference focused mainly on –

- (a) the Report of the Director-General;
- (b) Reports on the application of Conventions and Recommendations by Member States;
- (c) the strategic objective of social protection (social security), as a follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization; and
- (d) abrogation and withdrawal of International Labour Conventions and Recommendations.

In his report, the Director General of ILO emphasised that due to the unprecedented social and economic damage caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, it has become imperative for ILO to focus attention on the task of promoting a human-centred recovery, in light of the lessons learnt. His report also pointed out that the global working hours has fallen by around 9 per cent as compared to the last quarter of 2019. During his intervention, the Minister of Labour, Human Resource Development and Training, Minister of Commerce and Consumer Protection thanked the ILO and the World Health Organization for their continuous support and guidance in addressing labour market and health issues. He seized the opportunity to raise a special concern on the access to vaccines and made a vibrant appeal for vaccines to be made available to all countries so as to ensure a more level playing field in the current global vaccine race.

17. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Redundancy Board with Mr Abdool Rashid Hossen as President.
