

HIGHLIGHTS OF CABINET MEETING – 03 SEPTEMBER 2021

1. Cabinet has agreed to the launching of the Request for Proposals for the ‘Development and Operation of an Integrated Urban Terminal at Rose-Hill’. The integrated Urban Terminal at Rose-Hill is expected to be iconic, encompassing a mixed-use development, act as a focal point for the Municipal area of Beau Bassin-Rose Hill and strengthen the identity and heart of the town centre.

2. Cabinet has taken note of the setting up of the Mauritius Institute of Biotechnology Ltd. As announced in Budget Speech 2021-2022, Government would provide a seed capital of Rs1 billion to the Mauritius Institute of Biotechnology for the setting up of a manufacturing plant for the local production of COVID-19 vaccines and other pharmaceutical products. The main objects of the Mauritius Institute of Biotechnology Ltd would be to –

- (a) promote, develop and accelerate the manufacturing of vaccines and other pharmaceutical products in Mauritius;
- (b) negotiate and secure licensing agreements with international vaccine and pharmaceutical companies;
- (c) conduct and promote high level research in various fields of biotechnology, including food technology; and
- (d) develop and facilitate the commercialisation of Mauritian made vaccines and pharmaceuticals, through collaboration with regional institutions, reputed universities and other international organisations such as the World Health Organization.

3. Cabinet has taken note of the launching of the MoKloud platform and the online issue of Birth and Marriage Certificates on 16 September 2021, to commemorate the Identity Day. The commemoration of the Identity Day is an initiative of the ID4Africa Movement which is a NGO founded in 2014 having as objective to accompany African nations in their journey to develop robust and responsible Identity ecosystems.

Online facilities for the delivery of free copies of birth and marriage certificates was one of the measures announced in Budget Speech 2019-2020 so as to reduce costs, avoid long queues to obtain such a certificate and to move towards a paperless administration. The Ministry of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation has developed the MoKloud platform to enable the issue and verification of documents in an electronic format, thus decreasing the use of paper documents.

4. Cabinet has agreed to the Native Terrestrial Biodiversity and National Parks (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2021 being made to extend the hunting season 2021 for deer from 30 September 2021 to 31 October 2021.

5. Cabinet has taken note of -

- (a) the formulation of a Business Continuity Plan for some critical Ministries with the financial assistance of the UNDP Mauritius; and
- (b) the organisation of a sensitisation programme on Work from Home by the Civil Service College, Mauritius for the benefit of some 140 senior officials of Ministries and Departments and representatives of trade unions.

6. Cabinet has taken note of the setting up of a Public Private Joint Committee (PPJC) under the chair of the Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development and which would be supported by four Economic Commissions under the Economic Development Board (EDB). The PPJC would comprise officers from the Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development, the EDB and representatives of the private sector.

The objective of the PPJC is to maintain a constant and dynamic dialogue with the private sector to address issues and challenges in a timely manner and tap into opportunities to foster economic development.

A Coordination Committee has been set up under the chair of the Financial Secretary to analyse the findings of the Commissions and make recommendations to the PPJC. Four Commissions would be set up as follows –

- (a) Export Development (Goods);
- (b) Export Development (Services);
- (c) Competitiveness, Productivity and Capacity Building; and
- (d) Sectoral Development.

7. Cabinet has taken note that the Domiciliary Monitoring Unit (DMU) of the Ministry of Health and Wellness would become operational as from Monday 06 September 2021. The medical practitioners of the DMU would be responsible to effect domiciliary visits on COVID-19 positive patients in self-isolation and would follow up with those patients according to a protocol defined by the Ministry of Health and Wellness. Each Regional Hospital would be provided with a dedicated DMU team.

8. Cabinet has taken note that the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities would promulgate the following Regulations -

- (a) Central Water Authority (Water Supply for Domestic Purposes) (Amendment) Regulations 2021;
- (b) Central Water Authority (Water Supply for Non-Domestic Purposes) (Amendment) Regulations 2021;
- (c) Ground Water (Amendment) Regulations 2021; and
- (d) Central Water Authority (Irrigation) (Amendment) Regulations 2021.

With a view to easing the financial burden of consumers during the COVID-19 pandemic, a moratorium of four months was given for the settlement of CWA bills as from 30 April 2021 to different categories of customers. The relevant provisions of the four Regulations would be amended to provide that where the prescribed time period for payment expires, or falls wholly or partly, during the COVID-19 period, no surcharge shall be imposed and the water supply shall not be disconnected, provided that the amount of fees, rates, charges or other duties that the consumer owed to the CWA is paid not later than such period as may be prescribed.

9. Cabinet has taken note of the proposed Project on the setting up of a platform for agricultural and nutritional statistics for Member States of the Indian Ocean Commission, to be funded by the European Union and to be implemented by the Food and Agricultural Organization. The objectives of the Project are –

- (a) the collection of data and information related to food and nutritional security to facilitate decision making and planning; and
- (b) the establishment of a regional information system with updated and reliable data on agricultural and nutritional statistics for Member States.

The main purpose of this information system platform would be to guide local producers, so as to meet local requirements. The Project would be implemented in four phases over a period of 46 months.

10. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of a National Voluntary Review on the implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM). The objectives of the National Voluntary Review on the implementation of the GCM are to –

- (a) assess, at the national level, the status of the implementation of the 23 objectives of the GCM in line with the 10 guiding principles; and
- (b) review the progress on the development and implementation of a national implementation plan and integration of the GCM, highlighting promising examples of the successful execution of the existing national plan and policies to the GCM.

The formulation of the National Voluntary Review Report emanated from the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 73/326, adopted in July 2019, encouraging Member States to consider presenting the result of their reviews of progress in implementing the Global Compact, on a voluntary basis, drawing on contributions from all relevant stakeholders, as a part of their national statements.

11. Cabinet has taken note of the main findings of the report of Capital Economics, a UK-based consultancy firm, on the role of Mauritius in facilitating growth, employment and prosperity in Africa. The services of Capital Economics were enlisted by the Economic Development Board to carry out an assessment of the role of Mauritius in Africa's economic development. The main purpose of the report was, to obtain empirical evidence on the significant role played by the Mauritius International Financial Centre (IFC) in Africa's economic development. It highlights the following seven key messages –

- (a) Mauritius is an important and growing partner for investment into Africa, playing a role in stimulating growth and development;
- (b) investment activity in Mauritius supports jobs, gross domestic product and tax receipts in Africa;
- (c) Mauritius stimulates economic activity and tax revenues through increased Foreign Direct Investment while the scope for any tax leakage is limited;
- (d) Mauritius is a real and balanced economy, which has established itself as a diverse and stable place to do business;
- (e) the Mauritius IFC provides a wide array of services, which facilitates cross-border investment in Africa and elsewhere;
- (f) there is opportunity for long-term sustainable development in Africa; and
- (g) Africa needs private investment to facilitate economic growth and development.

The report provides key statistics on growth, investments and jobs generated by cross-border investments mediated through the Mauritius IFC and channeled into Africa.

12. Cabinet has taken note of the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic prevailing across the world. Some 219.8 million cases have been reported globally, of which 196.5 million persons have been successfully treated.

With regard to Mauritius, as at 03 September 2021, there were 3,385 active cases of COVID-19, out of which four were serious cases. Over the past week, five deaths were attributed to COVID-19.

Cabinet has also taken note of progress in the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme. As at 02 September 2021, 824,232 persons had received a first dose of vaccine (representing 66 percent of the population). 760,972 persons had been fully vaccinated (representing 61 percent of the population). Some 30,000 doses of Sputnik V (Component II) vaccines have been received on 01 September 2021.

13. Cabinet has taken note that 915 applications for Premium Visa have been received as at 31 August 2021 and 673 applications which fulfilled the required criteria, have been approved.

14. Cabinet has taken note of the performance of the following Mauritian para-athletes in the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games –

- (a) Miss Noemi Alphonse, MSK, wheel chair specialist, qualified for four finals in the 100m, 400m, 800m, and 1500m T54 events, setting four new African records in these different events but did not make it in the finals;
- (b) Miss Anais Angeline who qualified for the Women's Long Jump - T37 Final ranked 7th in that event; and
- (c) Miss Brandy Perrine participated in the heats for the Women's 100m, 400m and 800m T54 wheel chair competitions but did not make it to the finals.

Cabinet further noted that Mr Eddy Capdor would compete in the preliminaries of the Men's Long Jump T20 competition scheduled on Saturday 04 September 2021.

15. Cabinet has taken note of the commendable performance of Mauritian badminton players who participated in the All-Africa Under-15 and Under-19 Badminton Championships held in Cotonou, Benin from 19 August to 01 September 2021.

Mauritius won four bronze medals in the Under-15 competition and three bronze medals in the Under-19 competition.

16. Cabinet has taken note of the activities being organised by the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change in the context of the International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer celebrated on 16 September to commemorate the date on which nations signed the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, in

1987. The Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change would hold a half-day Advocacy Workshop with journalists and the Media Trust on 16 September 2021 to increase understanding of the Montreal Protocol and latest developments in relation thereto, as well as to underscore the importance of ozone layer protection while also dissipating the confusion between global warming and ozone layer depletion.

The following activities have also been planned from September to November 2021 –

- (a) training of Trainers of the Mauritius Institute of Training and Development on domestic air conditioners which use environment friendly refrigerants;
- (b) training of Custom Officers to empower them to combat the illegal trade of Ozone Depleting Substances which are controlled under the Montreal Protocol; and
- (c) radio programmes in Bhojpuri and Creole with a view to sensitising the population and prompting collective action towards the protection of the ozone layer.

17. Cabinet has taken note that the fire which broke out on 24 August 2021 on board the Taiwanese fishing vessel RUEY CHIEN TSAI 112, which at the time of the incident was berthed at the entrance of the Port, had been completely extinguished on 28 August 2021.

Cabinet has also taken note that a total of 104 cubic metres of diesel mixed with sea water had been pumped out from the vessel and the pumping operations were completed on 31 August 2021. Cleaning and carting away of debris around the vessel have already started. Non-contaminated wastes would be disposed at the Mare Chicose Landfill whilst steel waste would be sent for recycling. Wastes such as contaminated booms would be stored temporarily at the Interim Storage Facility at La Chaumiere. Disposal of all wastes is being monitored by the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change.

Cabinet has further taken note that environmental surveys carried out in relation to the above incident have revealed that there is no visible damage to the marine ecosystem. With respect to sea water quality monitoring, according to the results of analysis carried out by the Albion Fisheries Research Centre of the Ministry of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping, neither grease nor oil was found at the various sites monitored. The National Environmental Laboratory of the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change carried out ambient air quality monitoring in the region and no odour or toxic pollutant was detected thereat.
