

HIGHLIGHTS OF CABINET MEETING – FRIDAY 23 SEPTEMBER 2022

1. Cabinet has agreed to the accession of the Republic of Mauritius to the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT). The Treaty which is administered by the World Intellectual Property Organization, makes it possible to seek patent protection for an invention simultaneously in a large number of countries by filing an “international” application. Such an application may be filed by anyone who is a national or resident of a PCT Contracting State.

There are currently 156 countries which are party to the PCT. The accession to the PCT would, inter alia, offer more visibility to the country on the international Intellectual Property arena and increase the attractiveness of the Mauritian jurisdiction for the filing of patent applications, especially in the emerging sectors such as Robotics and Artificial Intelligence Research on Sea Sponge.

2. Cabinet has agreed to the Government of Mauritius signing an Exchange of Notes with the Government of Japan for a Grant Aid of JPY550 million (approx. Rs174 million). The Government of Japan has agreed to extend the grant for the procurement of the medical equipment for the five regional hospitals of Mauritius and the Trust Fund for Specialised Medical Care-Cardiac Centre at Pamplemousses under its “Economic and Social Development Programme”.

3. Cabinet has taken note that the following regulations would be promulgated –

- (a) the Customs (Amendment) Regulations 2022;
- (b) the Customs Tariff (Amendment of Schedule) (No. 5) Regulations 2022;
- (c) the Excise (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2022;
- (d) the Excise (Amendment of Schedule) (No. 4) Regulations 2022; and
- (e) the Excise (Amendment) Regulations 2022.

These Regulations provide for the implementation of measures mentioned in the Annex to Budget Speech 2022 - 23 relating to customs laws as well as other policy and technical measures.

4. Cabinet has agreed to the promulgation of the Road Traffic (Historic Motor Vehicles) Regulations 2022, in the context of the setting up of a Historic Motor Vehicle Museum in Mauritius for showcasing a car collection of at least 150 originals, vintage and classic cars of 40 years or more. These cars are unique and would be exhibited under their unique registration marks.

5. Cabinet has taken note that the Ombudsperson for Financial Services (Sworn Statement) (Revocation) Regulations 2022 would be promulgated. The Ombudsperson for Financial Services (Sworn Statement) Regulations 2019 have now become obsolete.

6. Cabinet has agreed to the submission of the National Report on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) to the United Nations Environment Programme as one of the deliverables of the Global Monitoring Plan under the Stockholm Convention on POPs, which has been ratified by the Republic of Mauritius.

The Stockholm Convention is a global treaty to protect human health and the environment from chemicals that remain intact in the environment for long periods, also known as POPs. Parties to the Convention are required to comply with provisions of the Convention, take measures to eliminate or reduce the release of POPs in the environment and provide background data on POPs in ambient air and human milk under the Global Monitoring Plan.

7. Cabinet has taken note that the Department of Civil Aviation would host the fourth African-Indian Ocean Free Route Airspace Project Management Team (AFI FRA PMT) Meeting in collaboration with the International Civil Aviation Organisation, from 25 to 28 October 2022 in Mauritius.

The objective of the meeting is to provide the AFI FRA PMT with a forum to develop a road map for the regional Free Route Airspace project as well as to gain insight of the challenges and lessons learnt by Mauritius during the implementation of the project within the Flight Information Region. Some 60 participants from among the 48 Member States are expected to attend the meeting, along with some 10 participants from the key aviation stakeholders in Mauritius.

8. Cabinet has agreed to the Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage organising three Divali Shows at national level from 14 to 16 October 2022, in collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism and the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority, and with the participation of local and international artists. These three live performances would equally form part of the 12 *Fêtes Nationales* being organised throughout the island in the context of the 55th Anniversary of the Independence of Mauritius which would be celebrated next year.

9. Cabinet has taken note of the activities being organised by the Mauritius Post Ltd, in collaboration with the Ministry of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation, to mark the 250th Anniversary of the postal services in Mauritius. The event would coincide with World Post Day to be celebrated on 09 October 2022 under the theme “Post for Planet”.

An official function would be organised on 08 October 2022 at Caudan Arts Centre, Port Louis and the event would include –

- (a) the opening of a Philatelic Exhibition to be organised in collaboration with the “Association Philatélique de l’Océan Indien” and an exhibition on the historical journey of the Mauritius Post Ltd;
- (b) the launching of two stamps and two First Day Covers on the 250th Anniversary of Postal Services in Mauritius and 175th anniversary of Blue and Red Penny stamps;
- (c) the unveiling of a Commemorative Plate as well as a stele, depicting the 250th Anniversary of the postal services in Mauritius;
- (d) the recognition of six employees having the longest years of service in the postal sector, including one from Rodrigues; and
- (e) the launching of a new logo for the Mauritius Post Ltd.

In addition, the Mauritius Post Ltd has also planned other side activities. These activities would also be extended to Rodrigues in the coming month.

10. Cabinet has taken note of the status of road capital projects being implemented by the Road Development Authority as at 31 August 2022. For the current financial year, seven projects have been completed, 10 are under construction, contracts have been awarded for two projects, five projects are at procurement stage and six others are at preparation stage.

11. Cabinet has taken note of the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic prevailing across the world. Some 618.7 million cases have been reported globally, of which 598.6 million persons have been successfully treated. With regard to Mauritius, as at 21 September 2022, there were 57 active cases of COVID-19, out of which 10 were admitted at the New ENT Hospital.

12. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the participation of the Minister of Financial Services and Good Governance in the 22nd Eastern and Southern Africa Anti-Money Laundering Group (ESAAMLG) Council of Ministers Meeting and the 5th Sub-Saharan Africa Anti-Money Laundering/Countering the Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT) Public/Private Sector Dialogue held recently in Zambia as well as his official mission to South Africa.

A delegation from Mauritius attended the 44th ESAAMLG Task Force of Senior Officials Meeting, whereby the Enhanced Follow-up Report of Mauritius which included a request for technical compliance re-rating of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) Recommendation 15 on '*New Technologies*' was considered. It was the only outstanding recommendation where Mauritius had a rating of "*Partially Compliant*". On the basis of the progress made by Mauritius in addressing the deficiencies relating thereto, the ESAAMLG Task Force approved the upgrading of that Recommendation to "*Largely Compliant*". With this technical compliance upgrade, Mauritius is, now, "*Compliant*" or "*Largely Compliant*" to all of the 40 FATF Recommendations.

The Council of Ministers approved the appointment of Mrs Fikile Zitha from South Africa, as the new Executive Secretary of ESAAMLG. The 5th Sub-Saharan Africa AML/CFT Public/Private Sector Dialogue was launched immediately after the Council of Ministers Meeting with the theme "*Virtual Assets and the Implementation of the AML/CFT Programmes in the ESAAMLG Region*".

During the mission of the Minister to Johannesburg, South Africa, he participated in various meetings with potential investors and prospective operators for the Mauritius International Financial Centre in order to explore the interest of the investor community in South Africa to invest and operate in the Mauritian jurisdiction.

13. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the participation of the Attorney General, Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security in the African Green Revolution Forum and the First-In-Person Regional Dialogue with African Food Systems National Convenors organised by the African Union Development Agency, the United Nations Food Systems Coordination Hub, the Food Workstream of the United Nations Global Crisis Response Group on Food Energy and Finance and the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa held recently in Rwanda.

The theme of the Forum was "Grow, Nourish, Reward – Bold Actions for Resilient Food Systems". The Forum was organised following the Food Systems Summit, a United Nations initiative, preceding the National Dialogue on Food System. The African Green Revolution Forum was a platform to encourage African Food Systems Convenors to engage in the implementation of strategies related to the recent food, energy and finance crisis on the African continent. In the margins of the African Green Revolution Forum, a National Convenors Meeting was held and the Attorney General, Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security made a presentation on the National Pathway.
