

HIGHLIGHTS OF CABINET MEETING – FRIDAY 03 DECEMBER 2021

1. Cabinet has taken note that the Housing and Population Census would be carried out next year. In this connection, the Housing Census would be carried out from 31 January to 19 June 2022 and the Population Census from 20 June to 31 July 2022, in respect of all persons alive in the Republic of Mauritius at midnight on the night of 03 to 04 July 2022. Cabinet has also taken note of the arrangements being made to conduct that exercise.

2. Cabinet has taken note that the Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development would amend the First Schedule to the Freeport Act, by promulgating the Freeport (Amendment of Schedule) (No. 2) Regulations 2021. The amendment would provide for the inclusion of a new Freeport Zone of an extent of eleven thousand three hundred and ninety-six square metres (11,396m²). The Freeport Zone project would comprise the construction, development and management of warehousing facilities and office space.

3. Cabinet has taken note that the Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development would promulgate the Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (Federal Republic of Germany) (Amendment) Regulations 2021. On 29 October 2021, a Protocol to amend the Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement between Mauritius and the Federal Republic of Germany was signed, with a view to complying with the Base Erosion and Profit Shifting project recommendations.

4. Cabinet has taken note that the Minister of Health and Wellness would make the Pharmacy Council (Code of Practice) Regulations 2021. The Regulations embody the Code of Practice which has been prepared by the Pharmacy Council and which enshrines the principles and ethical standards which govern pharmacists in the practice of their profession, with a view to improving the health-related quality of life of patients.

The Regulations provide, inter alia, -

- (a) for the provision of standards of professional practice and professional responsibility that every registered pharmacist shall provide based on his qualification and expertise;

- (b) that every wholesale pharmacist shall supply pharmaceutical products with an affixed price to licenced pharmacies. In addition, no registered pharmacist shall sell pharmaceutical products above the affixed retail price or at a price that may lead to unfair competition vis-à-vis other pharmacists;
- (c) for patient privacy and confidentiality; and
- (d) for the prevention of abuse of professional privileges and skills.

5. Cabinet has agreed to the Consumer Protection (Control of Imports) Regulations 2017 being amended through the promulgation of the Consumer Protection (Control of Imports) (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2021 so as to include child restraint devices, commonly referred to as baby car seats, as a restricted good, in order to control its conformity to standards and maximise the safety and security of children travelling in vehicles.

Under the amended Regulations, importers will have to produce a certificate of conformity attesting compliance with the specifications of, either Regulation No. 44 of the Economic Commission for Europe of the United Nations – *Uniform provisions concerning the approval of restraining devices for child occupants of power-driven vehicles* or the newer Regulation No. 129 of the Economic Commission for Europe of the United Nations – *Uniform provisions concerning the approval of enhanced Child Restraint Systems used on board of motor vehicles*. The Regulations would come into operation in May 2022.

6. Cabinet has agreed to arrangements being made for the proclamation of the Children's Act 2020, the Child Sex Offender Register Act 2020 and the Children's Court Act 2020 on 14 December 2021.

7. Cabinet has taken note that officers of the Civil Status Division would be allowed to officiate civil marriages between non-citizens on board cruise ships and catamarans subject to specific conditions being complied with.

8. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Ministry of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity and the Ministry of Community Development of the United Arab Emirates on Care for the Elderly and Protection of People of Determination “Persons with Disabilities.” The objectives of the MoU would be to, inter alia, –

- (a) establish a framework for cooperation in the areas of provision of care for the elderly and protection of people of determination “Persons with Disabilities” between the Ministry of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity and the Ministry of Community Development of the United Arab Emirates;
- (b) facilitate exchange of information and documents related to the provision of care of the elderly and protection of People of Determination “Persons with Disabilities”; and
- (c) sharing of experience and development of virtual cooperative development programmes in the field of autism.

9. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the South African Bureau of Standards and the Mauritius Standards Bureau. The aim of this MoU is to establish cooperation in respect of development, promotion and maintenance of standardisation and quality in connection with commodities. The parties would be called upon to work in a practical strategic and symbolic alliance to enhance integrated trade and standardisation activities in their respective jurisdictions and internationally, especially in relation to the African continent.

10. Cabinet has agreed to the participation of Mauritius in the European Union’s Horizon Europe Call, Tackling Outbreaks of Plant Pests Project, in respect of which an application for funding would be submitted to the European Union through the University of Giessen, Germany. The objectives of the project are to develop a strategic, species-tailored containment and elimination plan to address outbreaks of two invasive and highly polyphagous fruit flies, *Bactrocera dorsalis*, which is the main fruit fly species locally, and *B. zonata*, by developing highly sensitive interception methods, characterizing main invasion facilitators and providing tools for enhanced Sterile Insect Technique programmes to rapidly respond to invasions or outbreak events.

11. Cabinet has taken note of the findings and recommendations of the Fourth Integrated Biological and Behavioural Surveillance Survey (IBBS) among Female Sex Workers which was carried out in Mauritius from November to December 2020. The main objective of the IBBS survey is to provide information on the prevalence of HIV, Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and Syphilis among the key populations. The report will be uploaded on the website of the Ministry of Health and Wellness.

12. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the 6th Round of Technical Negotiations between the European Union (EU) and Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA 5-Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius, Seychelles and Zimbabwe) on the deepening of the interim Economic Partnership Agreement (iEPA), held virtually from 22 to 26 November 2021. The technical negotiations were co-chaired by Mr Rammos Thanos from the Trade Directorate General, EU Commission and the Director, International Trade Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade for the ESA 5. Negotiations were held in parallel sessions on eight issues, namely, Agriculture, Economic Development Cooperation/Means of Implementation, Intellectual Property Rights, Transparency in Public Procurement, Technical Barriers to Trade, Sanitary and Phyto Sanitary Measures, Rules of Origin and Trade and Sustainable Development.

13. Cabinet has taken note of the comments made by the Human Rights Committee in respect of the Follow-up Report to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The Human Rights Committee examined the Follow-up Report to the Concluding Observations during its 133rd session held from 11 October to 05 November 2021 and has recently communicated its assessment. In this context the relevant Ministries/Departments would take necessary remedial measures as appropriate or initiate policy decisions thereon.

14. Cabinet has taken note of the temporary closure of the Ring Road as from the last roundabout, the left of which leads towards the Swami Vivekananda International Convention Centre, as from Monday 06 December 2021.

15. Cabinet has taken note of the activities which would be organised by the Human Rights Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade in the context of the International Human Rights Day 2021, under the theme “Equality – Reducing inequalities and advancing human rights”.

16. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the Extraordinary Council of Ministers of the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) which was recently held in Reunion Island and wherein the Minister of Land Transport and Light Rail, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade participated. The issues discussed at the Extraordinary Council of Ministers were, inter alia, as follows –

- (i) the *Agence Française de Développement* (AFD) has provided an additional funding of €1.8M through the IOC SEGA One Health Programme for the provision of medical equipment to IOC members including Mauritius. Mauritius would also benefit from a new technology, namely, RUNCOV, which has been developed by the *Centre de Coopération Internationale en Recherche Agronomique pour le Développement* for the detection of the various variants of COVID-19;
- (ii) Post COVID Economic Recovery Plan - A regional plan is being elaborated by the IOC for the economic recovery of its Member States;
- (iii) the activities being undertaken under the Maritime Security (MASE) Programme;
- (iv) Climate Change - The Hydromet (Hydrology and Meteorology) is the first programme of the IOC to benefit from the Green Climate Fund (€52.8M). The EU and AFD are providing additional funding to the tune of €5.6M and €5M respectively. The objective of this programme is to reinforce the capacity of the hydrology and meteorology services of the IOC countries; and
- (v) Food Security - The EU is funding a programme on food security to the tune of €16M.

17. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent participation of the Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change in a virtual meeting of the Heads of Delegation of the tenth meeting of the Conference of Parties (COP10) to the Nairobi Convention for the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Western Indian Ocean Region.

The Nairobi Convention for the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Western Indian Ocean Region, to which Mauritius is a contracting party, came into force in 1996. The Convention aims at addressing the accelerating degradation of the ocean and coastal areas in the Western Indian Ocean region through the sustainable management and use of the marine and coastal environment.

18. Cabinet has taken note of the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic prevailing across the world. Some 263.8 million cases have been reported globally, of which 238.2 million persons have been successfully treated.

With regard to Mauritius, as at 02 December 2021, there were 979 active cases of COVID-19, out of which 29 were admitted at the New ENT Hospital. Over the period 25 November to 01 December 2021, 119 deaths were attributed to COVID-19.

Cabinet has further taken note of progress in the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme, including the administration of the booster dose in the Republic of Mauritius. As at 02 December 2021, 928,983 persons had received a first dose of vaccine (representing 73.4 percent of the population). 895,815 persons were fully vaccinated (representing 70.8 percent of the population). 112,083 persons had received a booster dose.

19. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development to Paris and London. During his mission, the Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development had meetings with, inter alia, the Executive Team of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, representatives of *Mouvement des Entreprises de France*, eminent personalities including Mr Robert Ophèle, Chairman of the *Autorité des Marchés Financiers*, Mr Jean Pisani-Ferry, Economist, as well as Mrs Natacha Valla, Dean of Sciences Po Paris School of Innovation, Senior Executives of Moody's and UK Export Finance. The various topics discussed during the meetings included Global Minimum Tax, potential areas of cooperation and investment, among others.

20. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity to Dubai and Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates in the context of Expo 2020 Dubai.

During her mission, the Minister had the opportunity to speak during a session at the Women's Pavilion. The Minister also met various Ministers and personalities from the UAE, with whom avenues of cooperation in the field of welfare of elderly persons and persons with disabilities including persons suffering from autism, were discussed.

21. Cabinet has taken note that Honourable Mrs Marie-Celine Zialor, Minister of Youth, Sports and Family of Seychelles, would lead a four-member delegation to Mauritius from 08 to 11 December 2021, in her capacity as President of the *Commission de la Jeunesse et des Sports de l'Océan Indien*.

The programme of visit of Honourable Mrs Zialor includes, inter alia, a courtesy call on the Minister of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation and working sessions with relevant stakeholders.

22. Cabinet has taken note that the President of the Republic of Mauritius has assented to the Criminal Code (Amendment) Act, which was passed in the National Assembly on 26 November 2021. Same has entered into operation on 29 November 2021.

23. Cabinet has taken note of the re-election of Mr Marday Venkatasamy, GOSK, as Chairperson of the COMESA Business Council, for a period of two years.

24. Cabinet has taken note that the President of the Republic has appointed Mr Joseph E. Charles Cartier as Chairperson of the Statistics Board, for a period of three years with effect from 02 December 2021, pursuant to section 23(2) of the Statistics Act.
