

HIGHLIGHTS OF CABINET MEETING – 16 JULY 2021

1. Cabinet has agreed to the introduction of the Finance (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2021 into the National Assembly. The object of the Bill is to provide for the implementation of measures announced in the Budget Speech 2021-2022 and for matters connected, consequential and incidental thereto.

2. Cabinet has taken note of the resumption of activities by the licensed tourist accommodations, i.e., hotels, guesthouses, 'domaines' and tourist residences (villas, apartments and bungalows) as from 23 July 2021, in line with the established sanitary protocol. The resumption of their activities would have the following added advantages –

- (a) a pool of tourist accommodations would be available to the incoming travellers wishing to stay for more than the minimum of 14 days in Resort Hotels or quarantine facilities;
- (b) Mauritian residents would have the opportunity to book these tourist accommodations and therefore, boost domestic tourism; and
- (c) a multiplier effect on the other sectors of the economy.

The Tourism Authority would carry out regular monitoring at these tourist accommodations to ensure that the sanitary protocol was duly complied with.

3. Cabinet has taken note that the Consumer Protection (Maximum Price of Essential Goods) Regulations 2021 have been promulgated to come into effect on 12 July 2021 to fix the prices of edible oil, pulses, canned tomatoes, milk powder, margarine, cheese and canned fish (sardines and pilchards). New Regulations would be made to align the prices of essential commodities in Rodrigues with the new prices which are applicable in Mauritius. The Regulations would take effect as from 19 July 2021.

4. Cabinet has agreed to the Ministry of Land Transport and Light Rail, the National Land Transport Authority and Metro Express Ltd signing a Memorandum of Understanding to proceed with the licensing of 15-seater shuttle vehicles with a view to enhancing connectivity of passengers to and from the light rail stations. The shuttle services would be launched on a pilot basis and operate only within regions at Quatre Bornes and Belle Rose for the time being. The five shuttle routes being proposed for implementation would operate within the following areas –

- (a) Sodnac - Quatre Bornes Central Station;
- (b) Candos - Quatre Bornes Central Station ;

- (c) Vieux Quatre Bornes/Ollier - Belle Rose Station ;
- (d) Palma - Belle Rose Station; and
- (e) Bassin - Quatre Bornes Central Station.

A flat fare of Rs15 to Rs25 would be charged to passengers depending on the length of the route. Amendments would be made to the Road Traffic (Construction and Use of Vehicles) Regulations 2010 in order to cater for microbuses, that is, 15-seater vehicles. The Road Traffic (Conductors and Drivers of Public Service Vehicle) Regulations 1954 would be amended to provide for one-man operation with regard to the vehicles licensed under a Road Service Licence.

5. Cabinet has taken note of the ongoing unrest and violence in certain provinces of South Africa. The Mauritius High Commission in Pretoria has called upon the Mauritian Diaspora in South Africa to exercise extreme caution and avoid areas where violent incidents were taking place. The High Commission was closely monitoring the evolving precarious situation in the affected areas and its trickling effects on the livelihood of the Mauritian Diaspora in South Africa.

The High Commission has strongly recommended Mauritians in South Africa to keep safe within the premises of their homes and observe all local Laws and Regulations, as advised by the Government of South Africa.

6. Cabinet has taken note of the projects being implemented by the Ministry of Industrial Development, SMEs and Cooperatives in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The UNDP Country Office, Mauritius and Seychelles has approached the Ministry to seek technical support and collaboration in respect of the National Level Consultations on the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Protocol on Women in Trade. The Ministry would act as lead partner and dedicate a team to facilitate and support the consultations. The following collaboration is being proposed by UNDP –

- (a) Informal sector diagnostic: to support the undertaking of a comprehensive analysis at the informal sector in Mauritius, the purpose being to enable the informal sector to effectively engage in the AfCFTA;
- (b) Establishment of an integrated data information system for inclusive business: to support the conceptualisation and design of a national integrated SME database;
- (c) Video Conferencing Facility: to purchase and install video conferencing facility at the level of the Ministry of Industrial Development, SMEs and Cooperatives; and
- (d) Corporate Consultations on AfCFTA: to collaborate within the corporate framework of the UNDP and AfCFTA Secretariat in relation to AfCFTA Webinar and the

National Level Consultations on the AfCFTA Protocol on Women in Trade. The AfCFTA Webinar relates to the organisation of a technical session by UNDP and the AfCFTA Secretariat to discuss on regional opportunities for Mauritian SMEs and existing support infrastructure for Mauritian Business.

7. Cabinet has agreed to the submission of the updated and reformatted Progress Report on the Implementation of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) - Programme of Action in Mauritius, prepared by the APRM National Governing Committee, to the APRM Secretariat. The APRM is a mutually agreed instrument acceded by African Union Member States, on a voluntary basis, as a governance self-monitoring mechanism. A first APRM Country Progress Report was prepared by the National Governing Committee in January 2019 and transmitted to the APRM Secretariat. Pursuant to the recommendations of the APRM Secretariat, the first APRM Country Progress Report was updated and reformatted by the National Governing Committee.

8. Cabinet has agreed to the proposed accreditation of the Permanent Representative of Mauritius to the United Nations in New York, Ambassador J.D. Koonjul, GCSK, as the Representative of Mauritius to the International Civil Aviation Organization.

9. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change and the Mauritius Museums Council on the Extension of the Existing Nursery at National Museum of Mahebourg.

The Living Environment Unit of the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change undertakes, inter alia, the cleaning and embellishment on a daily basis of various public sites across the island. It proposes to green and embellish the motorways M1 and M2 and main roads in towns and major villages, which would also include the planting of appropriate trees and plants. The existing nursery of 2,450 m², located within the compound of the National History Museum of Mahébourg, would be extended by 1,400 m² for propagation of the required additional plants.

10. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security and the United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office in Mauritius, for the organisation of the National Food Systems Dialogues in Mauritius and the preparation of a Country Report. The UN Secretary-General has convened a World Food Systems Summit to be held in September 2021, to raise global awareness, global commitments and actions for the transformation of food systems to not only resolve hunger, but also reduce diseases associated with malnutrition and heal the planet.

Member States have been urged to organise multi-stakeholder Food System Dialogues to develop national pathways towards sustainable food systems that shall be presented at the UN Food Systems Summit. Four National Dialogues in the northern, eastern, central and

southern regions of the island would be held on different themes, namely crop, agro-processing, livestock including fisheries, and value chain. The other activities include radio and television programmes and the preparation of a Country Report, among others.

11. Cabinet has taken note of the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic prevailing across the world. Some 189.6 million cases have been reported globally, of which 173.1 million persons have been successfully treated. With regard to Mauritius, as from March 2020 to 16 July 2021, 2,535 cases (including imported cases) of COVID-19 had been registered. There were 579 active cases of COVID-19 in Mauritius, out of which 568 were local cases and 11 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 detection of several positive cases of COVID-19 at Bois Chéri, the locality was declared as a Red Zone on 14 July 2021 up to 04 August 2021 at 6 a.m.

Cabinet has further taken note of the proposed measures for Qurbani in Red Zones for Eid-Ul-Adha. An Order would be made to regulate activities related to Qurbani, in order to prevent any spread of the virus within the community.

12. Cabinet has taken note of progress in the implementation of the national COVID-19 vaccination programme. More than 600,000 persons have received a first dose of vaccine and more than 430,000 a second dose of vaccine.

Cabinet has also taken note that the COVAX Facility has informed that Mauritius would be allocated 76,050 doses of Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine in Quarter 3 of 2021, that is during the period July to September 2021.

Cabinet has further taken note that the African Union would start the distribution of the COVID-19 vaccines donated by the US Government. The distribution concerns five million doses of Johnson and Johnson vaccines and ten million doses of Pfizer/BioNTech vaccines. The African Union would be responsible for the distribution of five million doses of Johnson and Johnson vaccines whereas the allocation of the Pfizer vaccines would be through the COVAX Facility.

13. Cabinet has taken note that the status of projects being implemented by the National Housing Development Co. (NHDC) Ltd, as well as forthcoming projects that are expected to be completed by 2024. The NHDC Ltd has, for the period November 2019 to June 2021, delivered 951 housing units. In addition, 99 housing units at Chebel would be delivered shortly. For the

period July 2021 to June 2024, some 3,409 housing units were expected to be completed and delivered as follows –

(a)	July 2021 - June 2022	- 1,384 housing units
(b)	July 2022 - June 2023	- 463 housing units
(c)	July 2023 - June 2024	- 1,562 housing units

Government has provided for the full funding of housing projects at Baie du Tombeau, La Valette and Agalega.

The construction of 656 social housing units at Dagotière and 300 social housing units at Mare Tabac financed by the Government of India was expected to be completed in October 2021. The construction of 1,050 housing units was also being funded from a Line of Credit from the Saudi Fund for Development and the housing projects were being implemented at Petit Bel Air, Cascavelle, Bassin and Mon Gout and were expected to be completed in fiscal year 2023-2024.

The NHDC Ltd also carries out maintenance, rehabilitation and upgrading works to NHDC housing estates and these projects are fully funded by Government. For period November 2019 to April 2021, Rs118 million have been spent for rehabilitation of existing wastewater network and ancillary works on five housing estates.

As regards the roof slab grant scheme, an amount of Rs55.5 million has, since November 2019 to June 2020, been disbursed to 738 families. For fiscal year 2020/2021, 1,105 families have benefited from the scheme and an amount of Rs76.3 million has been disbursed.

14. Cabinet has taken note that the Instrument of Ratification of the “ILO Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190)” and its accompanying “*Violence and Harassment Recommendation, 2019 (No 206)*” have been deposited by Mauritius on 1 July 2021. The ILO Convention No.190 is the first international treaty to address violence and harassment in the world of work adopted by the International Labour Conference in June 2019. The Convention and its Recommendation (No 206) provide for a common framework of action and a unique opportunity to shape the future of work based on dignity and respect. It also underlines the right of every worker to a world of work free from violence and harassment. It is the first international labour instrument which defines violence and harassment in the world of work, including gender-based violence.

Member States having ratified the Convention are required to adopt, in consultation with representatives of employers' and workers' organisations, an inclusive, integrated and gender-responsive approach with a view to preventing and eliminating violence and harassment, through prevention, protection and enforcement measures and remedies, as well as guidance, training and awareness-raising.

Mauritius became the first country in the Indian Ocean, the third in Africa and the seventh country in the world to ratify the ILO's Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190).

15. Cabinet has taken note of the enlargement of the scope of the existing Enhancement of Work Environment Programme to also cater for projects relating to greening of the Public Sector. The Ministry of Public Service, Administrative and Institutional Reforms would also consider financing projects from Ministries and Departments relating, amongst others, to –

- (a) solar water heaters;
- (b) solar panels for electricity generation;
- (c) rainwater harvesting;
- (d) recycling processes and tools;
- (e) sensors to control lights in office; and
- (f) energy saving bulbs.

The financial support in respect of green projects would be up to a ceiling of Rs100,000 per project. The Ministry would support projects in relation to protection of public officers against COVID-19 infections including wall-mounted infrared thermometers and infrared sensing hand sanitizers.

16. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Land Transport and Light Rail would hold an Award Ceremony for National Drawing Competition on Road Safety for primary school students on 17 July 2021 at the Municipal City Council of Port Louis, under strict sanitary measures.

The drawing competition on Road Safety for primary school students on the theme “Streets for Life” in the context of a Road Safety campaign was launched during the 6th United National Global Road Safety Week held from 17 to 23 May 2021.

17. Cabinet has taken note of the recent UN advocacy for the introduction of 30km per hour speed limit in zones within towns and villages which are being used by pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists. In this connection, the Ministry of Land Transport and Light Rail was carrying out detailed survey and analysis with a view to introducing that measure in Mauritius.

18. Cabinet has taken note that Japan P & I has not effected any payment/re-imbursement for the past three weeks in connection with the MV Wakashio Oil Spill. Cabinet has also taken note that following consultations held, Japan P & I would resume payment within the shortest possible delay with priority given to Government expenses.

19. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the online bilateral meeting that the Minister of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation had with Messrs Witold Banka and Rodney Swigelaar, President of the World Anti – Doping Agency (WADA) and Director of WADA Africa Office, respectively. The WADA is an organisation set up to monitor and promote the fight

against drugs in sports and develop capacities for doping-free sport and is a worldwide harmonised system with 700 co-signatories.

Discussions focused on the ongoing actions undertaken by Mauritius to promote clean sport and its adherence to the zero-tolerance policy on doping in accordance with the World Anti-Doping Code. The Minister informed WADA about the setting up, in June 2021, of the new National Anti-Doping Organisation, which would be actively implementing WADA educational programmes, conducting anti-doping tests and dealing with other anti-doping matters related to WADA. The representatives of WADA informed that governance reforms and innovation in education have been initiated to further strengthen its functioning and coverage.

The President of WADA congratulated the Republic of Mauritius for winning the 2019 Indian Ocean Islands Games and for its successful organisation.
