

HIGHLIGHTS OF CABINET MEETING – FRIDAY 28 MARCH 2025

1. Cabinet has agreed to the introduction of the National Agency for Drug Control Bill into the National Assembly. The Bill would provide for the establishment of the National Agency for Drug Control (NADC) as an apex body responsible for drug use prevention, as well as rehabilitation and drug control issues.

NADC would have broader responsibilities and powers than the defunct National Agency for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Substance Abusers (NATReSA), and would therefore be responsible -

- (a) for the demand reduction of drugs -
 - (i) through drug use prevention;
 - (ii) by coordinating and monitoring the treatment and rehabilitation of persons who use drugs, and their social reintegration;
 - (iii) through harm reduction of drugs, by minimising the negative health and social consequences on persons who use drugs and by minimising the transmission of HIV and AIDS and Hepatitis C among those persons; and
- (b) to coordinate the supply reduction of drugs by preventing, reducing or disrupting the entry, production and availability of drugs.

NADC would be administered and managed by the Drug Control Board which would have the responsibility to make policy decisions on the functioning of NADC, under several Divisions, such as a Policy, Research and Strategy Division, a Treatment and Rehabilitation Services Division, a Prevention and Public Awareness Division, an HIV and AIDS Prevention and Care Coordination Division and a Supply Reduction Coordination Division.

The Bill makes further provisions for the establishment of the National Drug Control Commission, chaired by the Prime Minister and comprising the Deputy Prime Minister and other Ministers. The National Drug Control Commission would be mainly responsible for, *inter alia* -

- (a) setting national objectives and goals, and determining policies and priorities with regard to drug control issues;
- (b) overseeing the overall coordination for all drug control activities in Mauritius for greater collaboration and synergy among stakeholders; and
- (c) monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the National Drug Control Master Plan and the National Action Plan for HIV and AIDS.

2. Cabinet has taken note that the Speaker of the National Assembly had set up, as a matter of utmost priority, consultative meetings with a view to looking into the practical hurdles that needed to be cleared before introducing the use of *Kreol Morisien* in the National Assembly.

3. Cabinet has taken note that the Municipal City Council and Municipal Town Council Elections (Amendment) Regulations 2025 would be promulgated to provide for, inter alia, same day counting and revision of the hours of poll from "7 am to 6 pm" to "7 am to 5 pm" for the forthcoming Municipal City Council and Municipal Town Council Elections.

4. Cabinet has taken note that a Ministerial Delegation led by the Deputy Prime Minister and comprising the Minister of Housing and Lands, the Minister of National Infrastructure, the Minister of Industry, SME and Cooperatives, Hon M. E. Juman, as well as Officials of the Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of Housing and Lands, the Ministry of National Infrastructure, the Outer Islands Development Corporation, the Mauritius Ports Authority and the Mauritius Police Force, would proceed to Agalega on 03 and 04 April 2025 to carry out a survey of all Government buildings and conduct an assessment of the status of infrastructure following the passage of Cyclone Chido. Thereafter, a plan would be worked out for the maintenance of these infrastructure.

5. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the second National Risk Assessment exercise carried out to assess the National Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing Risk in Mauritius.

The findings of the National Risk Assessment exercise would be disseminated to all stakeholders and the National Risk Assessment Public Report would be launched and made public. The Report covers the period January 2018 to December 2024 and provides -

- (a) a detailed snapshot of Money laundering/ Terrorist Financing activity, at national and sectoral levels for the period January 2018 to June 2022; and
- (b) major developments, including updated assessments on emerging threats for the period July 2022 to December 2024.

6. Cabinet has taken note of the outcomes of the 15th round of technical negotiations between the European Union and Eastern and Southern Africa States (ESA-5: Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius, Seychelles and Zimbabwe) on the deepening of the interim Economic Partnership Agreement.

The technical negotiations were conducted in parallel sessions and covered the following chapters: Trade in Services, Investment Liberalisation, and Digital Trade; Intellectual Property Rights, including Geographical Indications; Rules of Origin; Dispute Settlement & Institutional Provisions; and Trade and Sustainable Development.

7. Cabinet has taken note of the entry into force of the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) between Mauritius and the United Arab Emirates on 01 April 2025. The CEPA which marks a significant step towards the consolidation of bilateral economic and trade ties between the United Arab Emirates and Mauritius, covers Trade in Goods, Trade in Services, Economic Cooperation, Technical Barriers to Trade, Sanitary and Phytosanitary measures, Small and Medium Enterprises, Trade Remedies, Investment Facilitation, Intellectual Property Rights, Digital Trade among others.

8. Cabinet has taken note that the 59th SADC Trade Negotiating Forum (SADC TNF) and TNF Retreat would be held from 05 to 09 May 2025, in Mauritius. The meeting would be organised by the SADC Secretariat.

The SADC TNF technical meeting would consider a number of trade-related issues, namely progress made to implement Summit decisions and the 33rd SADC Committee of Ministers of Trade decisions, covering Trade, Customs, Sanitary and Phytosanitary issues, Technical Barriers to Trade issues, amongst others. The meeting would look into the implementation and consolidation of the SADC Free Trade Area.

9. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of an Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Mauritius and the Government of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire on reciprocal exemption of entry visas for holders of diplomatic and official passports.

Nationals of both countries, holding valid diplomatic or service passports would be exempted from visa entry requirements for stays of less than 90 days. This would be applicable to persons who are assigned to a Diplomatic Mission, Consular Post, Permanent Mission and Organisation in the other State or attending meetings and conferences. Such exemption of entry visas would thus facilitate travel for diplomatic staff and government officials of both countries.

10. Cabinet has agreed to Mauritius maintaining its candidature for the position of Vice-Chair of the Indian Ocean Rim Association for the period 2025 to 2027 and the position of Chair for the period 2027 to 2029.

11. Cabinet has agreed to the submission of the "Voluntary Pledges and Commitments" document of the Republic of Mauritius to the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, in the context of its candidature for a seat on the Human Rights Council for the period January 2026 to December 2028. The elections would take place in October 2025 at the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

The “Voluntary Pledges and Commitments” document was premised on the commitment of Government to enhance the protection of fundamental rights of citizens, including the constitutional right to privacy, workers’ rights, new generation rights relating to the environment, technology, health, education, other economic, social and cultural rights provided under international treaties, and also the rights of Nature.

12. Cabinet has agreed to the transfer of all activities of the Vallée D’Osterlog Endemic Garden Foundation to the National Parks and Conservation Service.

Following the conduct of a performance review by the Office of Public Sector Governance, with a view to redressing the current situation at the Vallée D’Osterlog Endemic Garden Foundation, the Ministry of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries had agreed that the transfer of all activities of the Vallée D’Osterlog Endemic Garden Foundation to the National Parks and Conservation Service was the best course of action. The Vallée D’Osterlog Endemic Garden Foundation Act would be repealed and amendments would be brought to the Native Terrestrial Biodiversity and National Parks Act, accordingly.

13. Cabinet has agreed to the introduction of an Application Fee of Rs100,000 for a Strategic Environmental Assessment and the review of the existing Application Fees for the Preliminary Environmental Report from Rs3,000 to Rs10,000 and for the Environmental Impact Assessment from Rs15,000 to Rs50,000.

The Environment Protection (Applications for PER Approval and EIA Licence) (Processing Fees) Regulations 2011, would be revoked and replaced with new set of Regulations.

14. Cabinet has taken note that the water level in the reservoirs had reached 47.5% of their capacity. The Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities, the Central Water Authority and the Water Resources Unit were monitoring the situation on a daily basis.

15. Cabinet has agreed to Polytechnics Mauritius Ltd signing a Memorandum of Understanding, jointly with King’s College London and the Guy’s and the St Thomas’ NHS Foundation Trust, London. The Memorandum of Understanding would aim at facilitating and enhancing academic collaboration among the three institutions in the following areas of mutual benefit -

- (a) development of articulation and Top-Up programmes of King’s College undergraduate and postgraduate qualifications in the fields of Nursing, Midwifery and Palliative Care to be run in the Republic of Mauritius, in collaboration with the Guy’s and the St Thomas’ NHS Foundation Trust;

- (b) development of programmes in the fields of Robotics, Artificial Intelligence and Informatics, in collaboration with the Faculty of Natural, Mathematical & Engineering Sciences of King's College;
- (c) offer of observerships, fellowships, placements and other clinical initiatives with the Guy's and the St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust;
- (d) development of Professional Education, capacity building programmes, micro-credentials modules and other programmes for students as well as for upskilling of Polytechnics Mauritius Ltd staff and other in-service professionals; and
- (e) offering students of either institution with mobility opportunities.

16. Cabinet has agreed to the Quality Assurance Authority, Mauritius, signing Letters of Intent with the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education of the United Kingdom and the Council on Higher Education of the Republic of South Africa. The aims of the Letters of Intent would be to -

- (a) facilitate the exchange of information and promote the sharing of best practices in the field of quality assurance;
- (b) provide the Quality Assurance Authority with networking opportunities within the global higher education community and thus enhance the visibility and credibility of the Authority on the international level; and
- (c) empower the Quality Assurance Authority to improve its quality assurance processes and enhance its international standing, hence contributing to the development of a robust higher education system in Mauritius.

17. Cabinet has agreed to the Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science and Research signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the Edith Cowan University, Australia.

The Memorandum of Understanding would aim at fostering collaboration between the institutions. The Memorandum of Understanding would provide for the following avenues of cooperation -

- (a) capacity building, curriculum development, academic and articulation agreement in designated areas of mutual interest;
- (b) professional development courses in the areas of teacher education, nursing, paramedics and other areas as mutually agreed by the parties;
- (c) tuition-waiver for PhD seats in the field of education;

- (d) research collaboration;
- (e) student and staff mobility; and
- (f) facilitating the enrolment of beneficiaries of scholarships from the Mauritian Government or other sponsoring bodies in Mauritius and signified interest to pursue their studies at Edith Cowan University.

18. Cabinet has agreed to the Ministry of Industry, SME and Cooperatives signing with the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, an Implementation Agreement with a view to completing the activities under a Technical Assistance Facility project to further enhance the development of the leather value chain in Mauritius.

19. Cabinet has taken note of the status regarding measures taken to phase out the use of coal in electricity generation by the Independent Power Producers, through an increased utilisation of biomass.

20. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent participation of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade in the SADC Extraordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government which was held virtually. The Agenda of the Summit related to the security situation in the Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. The Junior Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade led the Mauritius delegation to the Council.

21. Cabinet has taken note that, in accordance with Section 87 of the Constitution, the President of the Republic of Mauritius had conveyed his approval to the appointment of -

- (a) Dr Rajeshwar Jeetah as High Commissioner of Mauritius to the United Kingdom with residence in London;
- (b) Ms Sarojini Seenevassen as High Commissioner of Mauritius to Australia with residence in Canberra;
- (c) Mr Brian Neil Joseph Glover as Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Mauritius to the United Nations in Switzerland with residence in Geneva;
- (d) Mr Bruno Clifford Cunniah as Ambassador of Mauritius to the Republic of Madagascar with residence in Antananarivo; and
- (e) Mrs Anne Marie Danielle Perrier as High Commissioner of Mauritius to the Republic of Mozambique with residence in Maputo.

22. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the -

- (a) Board of the Small Farmers Welfare Fund with, Mr Mahendrah Goonniah as part-time Chairperson;
- (b) Seafarer's Welfare Fund Board, with Mr Jacques Patrick Bouquet as part-time Chairperson;
- (c) Board of Trustees of the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam Botanic Garden Trust, with Mr Rigg Singh Needroo as part-time Chairperson;
- (d) Board of Trustees of the Trust Fund for Specialised Medical Care, with Dr Pravish Rai Sookha as part-time Chairperson;
- (e) Board of the National Council for Sports in Schools and Universities, with Mr Shailendra Dhuromsingh as part-time Chairperson;
- (f) National Productivity and Competitiveness Council, with Mr Arshad Duymun as part-time Chairperson;
- (g) Board of Trustees of the Mauritius Tamil Cultural Centre Trust, with Mrs Vimala Sawmy as part-time Chairperson; and
- (h) Board of Trustees of the Mauritius Telugu Cultural Centre, with Mr Mootaloo Poolovadoo as part-time Chairperson.
