

HIGHLIGHTS OF CABINET MEETING – FRIDAY 07 OCTOBER 2022

1. Cabinet has taken note that the First Schedule to the Morcellement Act would be amended through the Morcellement (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2022, to provide for any private owner who is subdividing his land for sale to the New Social Living Development Ltd and the National Housing Development Company Ltd to be exempted from a Morcellement Permit.

2. Cabinet has agreed to Regulations being made to provide for the operation of the National Wholesale Market by the Agricultural Marketing Board, namely –

- (a) the National Wholesale Market Regulations - to govern the overall operations of the National Wholesale Market;
- (b) the National Wholesale Market Fees Regulations - to detail the various fees applicable at the Market;
- (c) the Floor Price Fixing Regulations - to work out a minimum/floor price for produce on sale at the National Wholesale Market; and
- (d) the Auctioneer (Market Agent) Appointment Regulations - to detail the conditions governing the appointment and issue/renewal of licences of auctioneers/market agents.

The National Wholesale Market is situated at Five Ways, Belle Rive, and the project aims at providing adequate wholesale and auction facilities for agricultural produce.

3. Cabinet has taken note that the Prime Minister would effect an official visit to Rodrigues from 09 to 13 October 2022 in the context of the celebration of the 20th anniversary of the Autonomy of Rodrigues. On that occasion, he would also proceed with the inauguration of the Green Space in Port Mathurin to be named after Late Sir Anerood Jugnauth, GCSK, KCMG, QC and also the Commemoration of 50 years of operations of Air Mauritius in Rodrigues.

4. Cabinet has agreed to the extension of the existing provisions regarding the grant of leave without pay at the expiry of maternity leave to female public officers who have not yet completed one year's continuous service. In accordance with the PRB Report 2021, female public officers holding a substantive appointment may, at the expiry of their maternity leave, in addition to vacation leave, opt for leave without pay to a maximum of nine months or six months without pay followed by six months leave on half pay, subject to exigencies of service.

With a view to eliminating any discrimination and ensuring equity in the grant of leave for maternity purposes, the privilege of leave without pay at expiry of maternity leave would also be extended to female public officers who have not yet completed one year's continuous service. However, the probationary period of the officers would be extended by the corresponding period of leave without pay taken by them.

This new measure would enhance the country's compliance with the International Labour Standards on Maternity Protection which provides that expectant and nursing mothers be provided with special protection to prevent any adverse effects to them and their infants.

5. Cabinet has agreed to extend the negative excise duty scheme, which is applicable on the purchase of an electric vehicle by an individual, to a company purchasing an electric vehicle of up to 180 kilowatt. An individual who has purchased an imported electric vehicle is eligible to make a claim to the Mauritius Revenue Authority for an amount to be paid to him equivalent to 10 percent of the value at importation of the vehicle or Rs200,000, whichever is the lesser. However, the extension would be applicable only for electric vehicles of up to 180 kilowatt. The extension would be implemented with retrospective effect as from 01 July 2022, as is the case for individuals, up to 30 June 2023.

6. Cabinet has taken note that, upon the invitation of the Human Rights Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, a delegation from the Commonwealth Secretariat, would be in Mauritius to impart training, from 14 to 18 November 2022, on the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT). Dr Shavana Haythornthwaite, Adviser and Head of the Human Rights Unit of the Commonwealth Secretariat would lead the delegation.

Awareness sessions would be held, inter alia, for 460 Trainee Police Constables, including 178 ladies. The aim is to sensitise the new recruits on the importance of Human Rights, key elements of the CAT, including the prohibition of having recourse to torture. Training would also be given to 35 Police Officers and 15 Prison Officers. The training aims at building awareness of international and regional human rights standards prohibiting torture and would cover topics such as national and international Codes of Conduct for law enforcement as the basis for ethical policing, the Mendez Principles relating to principles of effective interviewing for investigations and information gathering, legal and procedural safeguards for evidence based and non-coercive interviewing techniques during the interviewing process.

7. Cabinet has taken note that Mauritius has been elected as a member of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Council for the term 2023-2026 in Region D-Africa at the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference 2022 held recently in Bucharest, Romania.

8. Cabinet has taken note of the activities being organised by the Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage in collaboration with the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund to commemorate the 188th Anniversary of the Arrival of Indentured Labourers in Mauritius on Tuesday 01 November and Wednesday 02 November 2022 as follows -

- (a) a wreath laying ceremony would be held at Antoinette Phooliyar, Barlow on Tuesday 01 November 2022;
- (b) the annual 'Yaj' would be performed at the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site by the Aapravasi Ghat Indian Indenture (Girmitya) Arrival Celebrations Committee in collaboration with the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund on Wednesday 02 November 2022 from 08 00 hours to 09 00 hours; and
- (c) the official ceremony would be held at the Trou Fanfaron Wharf next to the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site as from 10 00 hours on Wednesday 02 November 2022.

9. Cabinet has taken note that in view of the celebration of Divali Festival on Monday 24 October 2022, the Salary Pay Day in the Public Sector for the month of October 2022 has been preponed to Friday 21 October 2022.

10. Cabinet has agreed to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) holding the First Edition of the Regional Diaspora Investment and Partnership Forum from 17 to 19 October 2022 in Mauritius. IOM Mauritius would host the Forum with the support of the EU-funded Southern African Migration Management and the Migration Resource Allocation Committee

The Forum aims, inter alia, at building a common understanding on Southern African Diaspora processes and initiatives for effective engagement of the Diaspora, Member States, key actors and partners. Some 50 delegates from the 16 SADC Member States, the African Union, UN agencies, and multilateral organisations such as the World Bank, the African Development Bank and the private sector were expected to participate in the Forum.

11. Cabinet has taken note of the activities being organised by the Ministry of Health and Wellness to mark the World Mental Health Day, observed on 10 October 2022. The theme chosen by the World Health Organization this year is "Make Mental Health and Well-Being for All a Global Priority". Activities being organised include –

- (a) a function at Brown Sequard Mental Health Care Centre on 10 October 2022;
- (b) launching of short video on Post-Partum Depression;

- (c) opening of an exhibition of creative activities by patients of the Occupational and Welfare Department of Brown Sequared Mental Health Care Centre;
- (d) launching of a training programme organised by the Mauritius Institute of Health for Nursing Officers, Health Care Assistants and Ward Managers on issues related to Mental Health;
- (e) capacity building of midwives on mental health topics for women such as post-partum depression, by Psychologists at Victoria Hospital during the month of October 2022; and
- (f) radio/TV programmes to sensitise the population on mental health issues.

12. Cabinet has taken note that, the Ministry of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management in collaboration with the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Centre, the Municipal Council of Beau Bassin-Rose Hill, the Mauritius Red Cross Society, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction and other relevant stakeholders, would hold an official ceremony to mark the International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction on 13 October 2022 at 10 00 hours at Plaza, Rose Hill, which would also include exhibitions and demonstrations.

Furthermore, sensitisation and awareness raising campaigns on social media, radios and TV, and Community Disaster Response Programmes/Refresher Courses as well as simulation exercises across Mauritius, amongst others, would be held concurrently. The theme for the International Day would focus on Target G of the Sendai Framework “Substantially increase the availability of and access to multi-hazard early warning systems and disaster risk information and assessments to people by 2030”.

13. Cabinet has taken note of the activities being 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 2022 to be celebrated on 10 December 2022, namely –

- (a) the holding of a Slam Competition for youth aged between 15 to 25 years in collaboration with Slam.mu, a platform regrouping slam performers and organisers across the island;
- (b) the organisation of an Atelier for Children to encourage them to convey, through drawings, their creativity and understanding of human rights on various themes;
- (c) the hosting of an Online Quiz open to all to promote the understanding of human rights; and

- (d) the production of a calendar for year 2023 portraying articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to be distributed to Ministries/Departments.

14. Cabinet has taken note of the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic prevailing in Mauritius. As at 05 October 2022, there were 37 active cases of COVID-19, out of which 10 were admitted at the New ENT Hospital. Over the period 29 September to 05 October 2022, two deaths were attributed to COVID-19.

15. Cabinet has taken note that Reunion Island and Mayotte have registered their second positive case of Monkeypox. There is no suspected case of Monkeypox in Mauritius.

16. Cabinet has taken note of an outbreak of the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) in three farms in Reunion Island. The Livestock and Veterinary Division of the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security has activated the preparedness plan in respect of the disease and the following measures have been put in place –

- (a) the Department of Civil Aviation has been requested to inform airline companies operating on the Reunion-Mauritius corridor that passengers should not bring any live poultry and poultry products;
- (b) the disinfection Mat, currently used to walk passengers from Rodrigues, would be used for those from Reunion Island as well;
- (c) the Customs Department has been requested to reinforce control on passengers coming from Reunion Island so as to prevent any smuggling of live birds or poultry products; and
- (d) the Food and Agricultural Research and Extension Institute would reinforce sensitisation on biosecurity measures regarding HPAI at the level of small poultry farmers.

17. Cabinet has taken note that a delegation from the Republic of Gambia would be in Mauritius from 11 to 16 October 2022 for a study tour of the Mauritian Digital ecosystem, infrastructure and development. The delegation would be led by the Minister of Communications and Digital Economy of the Republic of Gambia. The study tour is in line with the Republic of Gambia's efforts to accelerate its digital transformation process and to strengthen capacities in various pillars of digital economy.

18. Cabinet has taken note of a case of slope failure at Royal Road, Creve Coeur, on 06 October 2022. An urgent site visit was convened on the same day with relevant stakeholders and immediate remedial measures have been taken. The situation is being monitored by the relevant authorities.

19. Cabinet has taken note that the University of Mauritius would organise the International Conference on Advanced Research in Industrial and Manufacturing Applications 2022 from 13 to 14 October 2022, in a hybrid mode. The Conference would be organised in collaboration with the Mechanical Engineering Department of the Malaviya National Institute of Technology, Jaipur, India.

The objective of the Conference is to provide an interdisciplinary platform for academics and researchers to discuss the most recent innovations, trends as well as practical challenges encountered and solutions adopted in the fields of Industrial and Manufacturing Applications. Some 64 researchers and practitioners, including 53 from Botswana, India and Zimbabwe would participate in the event.

20. Cabinet has taken note that the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation would organise a one-day workshop on the theme '*Gestion des Emotions*' for youth aged between 14 to 17 years old who would participate in the 12th edition of the '*Commission de la Jeunesse et des Sports de l'Océan Indien*' (CJSOI) Games to be held in Mauritius in December 2022. The target group would be a team of 143 athletes selected to participate in the 11 sports disciplines of the CJSOI Games and a group of 12 young persons, forming part of the "Mauritius Youth Team", who would participate in the Youth Programme known as '*Concours Culturel*', comprising the '*Assemblée des Jeunes*', '*Spectacle Musical*' and '*E-sports*'.

The objectives of the workshop are to –

- (a) support the participants in understanding and successfully managing their emotions;
- (b) equip the young participants with the required skills to enable them to manage and cope with stress; and
- (c) raise awareness about the '*Service d'Écoute*' programme of the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation, which is available for young persons who are in need of emotional support.

21. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the participation of the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology in the 10th edition of the Pan Commonwealth Forum organised by the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) in Canada. The Forum is organised every three years and provides a platform for participants to share experiences, insights and best practices and reflect on a spectrum of ideas and emerging trends in education. The overarching theme, ‘Innovations for Educational Resilience’, was explored from four thematic perspectives, namely building resilience, fostering lifelong learning, inspiring innovations and promoting equity and inclusion.

The Vice-Prime Minister chaired the panel discussion on the sub-theme “Fostering Life-long Learning” and she elaborated on the fact that the notion of a lifelong career is today being questioned, especially in a world that has increasingly become complex and uncertain. A Ministerial Round Table was chaired by the Prime Minister of Samoa and country representatives were invited to share their experience gained and lessons learned during the pandemic period.

The Vice-Prime Minister was one of the eight recipients of the Honorary Fellowship of the COL. The conferment of the Honorary Fellowship was based on the recognition of the far-reaching reform in education that has been undertaken and which cuts across the different levels and subsectors.

22. Cabinet has taken note of the official visit of the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management to Rodrigues. The objectives of the visit were as follows –

- (a) sharing of the overall strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM) in Mauritius and Rodrigues and the operational lessons learned by the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Centre;
- (b) high-level consultations with the Rodrigues Regional Assembly on DRRM issues and roundtable discussions with DRRM stakeholders;
- (c) assessing community preparedness and community disaster response programmes; and
- (d) effecting site visits to facilities of Emergency Services/First Responders in Rodrigues.

During his visit, the Vice-Prime Minister had a meeting with the Chief Commissioner and discussed, among others, DRRM issues and areas of collaboration, in view of the forthcoming cyclonic/rainy season 2022-2023. He also met the Commissioner for Health and others and discussions focused on the Fire and Rescue Service. The Vice-Prime Minister also co-chaired a working session with the members of the Rodrigues Emergency Operations Command.

23. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent Investment Promotion Mission led by the Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development across three major cities in South Africa, namely Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban. The objective of the Mission organised by the Economic Development Board (EDB) was to sensitise the South African investing community, stakeholders and individuals on the competitive advantages that Mauritius offers for investments, trade and residency and the substantial opportunities that exist following the signing of the trade agreements with India and China and other existing trade agreements whereby the businesses can service around 75 percent of the world population. 14 operators from the local private sector also accompanied the delegation to South Africa.

The business forums held in the three cities attracted around 200 attendees each, in various sectors of economic activities, including manufacturing, pharmaceutical and healthcare, ICT, financial services, real estate, as well as individuals seeking to relocate or retire in Mauritius. The EDB also signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Business Unity South Africa. High-level one-to-one meetings were conducted in each city with investors and corporates in the field of banking and financial services, ICT, fintech, manufacturing, pharmaceutical and healthcare, real estate, hospitality and tourism.

24. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the participation of the Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change in the Eighth Edition of the World Green Economy Summit (WGES) 2022 in the United Arab Emirates. The theme was “Climate Action Leadership through Collaboration: the Roadmap to Net-zero”. The WGES is one of the leading global forums on green economy, bringing together world-class experts in critical sectors to focus on advancing the global green economy and sustainability agenda to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

The Summit was kick-started by a panel discussion on the implementation of the Paris Agreement. The critical need to translate commitments into actions, honouring the pledges made at COP26 to fund climate projects in developing and vulnerable countries as well as the importance of building meaningful partnerships were highlighted. Discussions also revolved around the issue of demand management to ensure sustainable consumption and the decoupling of economic activities with environmental impacts. The Minister also participated in a Ministerial Round Table on Green Economy which aimed at consulting countries on the immediate needed next steps to transit to a green economy and making the necessary linkages with the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
