

HIGHLIGHTS OF CABINET MEETING – FRIDAY 17 SEPTEMBER 2021

1. Cabinet has taken note that the Local Government (Fees) (Amendment) Regulations 2021 regarding the payment of trade fees would be promulgated in line with measures announced in Budget 2021/2022.

With a view to further supporting Small and Medium Enterprises by stimulating their growth and thereby mitigating the impact of the pandemic on small businesses, it was announced in Budget Speech 2021/2022 that the exemption on trade fees not exceeding Rs5,000 would be extended for an additional five years and an amnesty on trade fees and related penalties and interests that were due before 01 January 2020 would be granted.

With the coming into effect of the new Regulations for the extension of the exemption from trade fees not exceeding Rs5,000 for an additional five years, these business operators would be exempted therefrom up to year 2027. Business operators would be granted an amnesty on trade fees, related penalties and interests that were due prior to 01 January 2020. The Local Government (Fees) (Amendment) Regulations 2021 would be deemed to be effective as from 30 June 2021.

2. Cabinet has taken note that the Road Traffic (Registration of Personalised Registration Mark for Motor Vehicle) Regulations 2021 would be promulgated. These Regulations make provision for new personalised combinations, as follows –

- (a) a combination of eight letters followed by any number between numbers 1 and 9;
- (b) a combination of seven letters followed by any number between numbers 1 and 99;
- (c) a combination of six letters followed by any number between numbers 1 and 999;
- (d) a combination of five letters followed by any number between numbers 1 and 9999;
- (e) a combination of four letters followed by any number between numbers 1 and 9999;
- (f) a combination of three letters followed by any number between numbers 1 and 9999; and
- (g) a grouping of alphabets up to nine letters.

Relevant fees would be applicable. The Regulations would be effective as from 01 October 2021.

3. Cabinet has taken note that the date for the coming into operation of the Construction Industry Development Board (Amendment) Act 2021, has been fixed for 01 October 2021. The following Regulations would also be promulgated –

- (a) the Construction Industry Development Board (Collaboration between Foreign and Local Consultants) Regulations 2021;
- (b) the Construction Industry Development Board (Collaboration between Foreign and Local Contractors) Regulations 2021;
- (c) the Construction Industry Development Board (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2021; and
- (d) the Construction Industry Development Board (Registration of Consultants and Contractors) (Amendment) Regulations 2021.

4. Cabinet has taken note that the Africa Finance Corporation (Privileges and Immunities) Regulations 2021 would be promulgated under the International Organizations and Conferences (Privileges and Immunities) Act. The Africa Finance Corporation is a Pan-African multilateral development financial institution established by a treaty among sovereign African States. In September 2019, the Africa Finance Corporation welcomed Mauritius as the 23rd Member Country of the Corporation. Following the ratification of the Agreement, each Member State has to enact laws to give effect to the provisions regarding the immunities, exemptions and privileges set forth in the Agreement, and promptly inform the Corporation of the specific action it has taken, for that purpose.

5. Cabinet has taken note that the Environment and Land Use Appeal Tribunal would make Rules to set out, with more clarity, the procedures for lodging of appeals and the conduct of proceedings before the Tribunal. The objective of the Rules is, to give a better guidance in the conduct of the proceedings of the Tribunal and for expeditious case management.

6. Cabinet has agreed to payment of basic pensions being effected to beneficiaries whose pensions are credited into their banks on the fourth working day of each month instead of the first working day as from February 2022, in order to curtail overpayment of basic pensions in respect of cases of death of beneficiaries.

7. Cabinet has taken note of the setting up of the Project Implementation and Monitoring Agency (PIMA) under the Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development as announced in Budget Speech 2021-2022. PIMA would –

- (a) assist and advise in the implementation of budgetary measures; and
- (b) submit its findings and make recommendations to a Coordination Committee.

The Director of PIMA, after analysis of the various submissions by the public bodies, would submit its monthly Consolidated Progress Report to a Project Implementation and Monitoring Committee under the chairmanship of the Financial Secretary. The Consolidated Progress Report would be submitted to a Coordination Committee under the chair of the Prime Minister.

8. Cabinet has taken note of the Cambridge Higher School Certificate Examinations Results for the year 2021. Out of 7,866 school candidates in the Republic of Mauritius, 7,079 were successful representing a pass rate of 89.99 percent, as compared to 74.95 percent in 2019. The HSC pass rate for 2021 for Rodrigues is 81.82 percent, as compared to 67.92 percent in 2019. Girls have performed better than boys with a pass rate of 92.01 percent compared to 87.22 percent for boys. Three schools with a cohort greater than 50 candidates have achieved 100 percent pass rate.

9. Cabinet has taken note that Mauritius has been ranked 1st in Africa and 17th globally in the Global Cybersecurity Index Report 2020, which has been recently released by the International Telecommunication Union. The score of Mauritius has improved from 88 percent in 2018 to 96.89 percent in 2020.

Cabinet has further taken note that with the advent of the forthcoming Cybersecurity and Cybercrime Bill, the legal framework would be further strengthened and would provide for increased compliance, international cooperation in cybercrime matters and adoption of comprehensive measures against cyber threats. Mauritius is expected to further improve its rating at the level of the Global Cybersecurity Index with the implementation of a new National Cybersecurity Strategy, which is currently under preparation.

10. Cabinet has taken note of the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic prevailing across the world. Some 227.8 million cases have been reported globally, of which 204.4 million persons have been successfully treated.

With regard to Mauritius, as at 17 September 2021, there were 2,562 active cases of COVID-19, out of which 29 were admitted at New ENT Hospital including three on ventilators. Over the past week, seven deaths were attributed to COVID-19.

Cabinet has also taken note of progress in the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme. As at 16 September 2021, 844,306 persons had received a first dose of vaccine (representing 67 percent of the population). 785,280 persons had been fully vaccinated (representing 62 percent of the population). A donation of some 50,000 doses of Johnson and Johnson vaccine would be received on 17 September 2021 from the Government of South Africa.

Cabinet has further taken note that the Minister of Health and Wellness would promulgate the COVID-19 (Self-Confinement) (Amendment) Regulations 2021, so that henceforth a person who is tested as being infected with COVID-19 by any reliable COVID-19 test, may be ordered by the Quarantine Officer to be self-confined at his residence, subject to certain specific conditions.

Cabinet has also taken note that the operation of commercial flights to Rodrigues would resume on 01 November 2021.

11. Cabinet has agreed to the submission of the First Country-level Report on the Status of Implementation of the African Union's Agenda 2063, for the period 2013 to 2020, to the African Union Development Agency – New Partnership for Africa's Development (AUDA-NEPAD) Secretariat. The Agenda 2063, adopted at the African Union (AU) Summit in May 2013, is a set of strategic orientations to guide the development efforts of Africa over a period of 50 years. Each AU Member State is expected to submit, every two years, its Country-level Report on the Status of Implementation of the Agenda 2063 to the AUDA-NEPAD Secretariat. The Country-level Reports are used by the AUDA-NEPAD to prepare the Continental Report on the Implementation of the Agenda 2063.

12. Cabinet has taken note of the activities that the Ministry of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity would organise, in collaboration with the National Social Inclusion Foundation and the National Empowerment Foundation, to mark the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty 2021, commemorated every year on 17 October. The theme for this year is "Building Forward Together: Ending Persistent Poverty, Respecting all People and our Planet". The programme of activities for Mauritius includes –

- (a) a main event on Sunday 17 October 2021 at the Sir Harilal Vaghjee Hall, Port Louis, which would comprise, among others, the handing over of keys to 40 beneficiaries across the island under the Fully Concrete Housing Scheme and 51 beneficiaries of the NHDC Housing Scheme; and
- (b) the inauguration of the extension of the Residential Rehabilitation and Night Shelter to accommodate some 33 additional homeless persons at the Ex-Rishi Building, Abattoir Road, Roche Bois.

Activities would also be organised in Rodrigues including the launching of an Expo-Sales for some 50 entrepreneurs and training courses in handicraft, electrical installation and garment making.

13. Cabinet has taken note of the event being organised by the Ministry of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity to mark the International Day of Older Persons on 01 October 2021 at the Sir Harilal Vaghjee Hall, Port Louis, in accordance with COVID-19 sanitary protocols. The UN theme for the International Day of Older Persons 2021 is "Digital Equity for All Ages".

14. Cabinet has taken note that the International Conference on Electrical, Computer, Communications and Mechatronics Engineering (ICECCME 2021), would be hosted by the University of Mauritius on 7 and 8 October 2021. The ICECCME 2021 is being organised by the Aksaray University, Turkey, in collaboration with the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) headquarters in New York and its local branch, IEEE-Mauritius. The Conference which would be held in hybrid mode would provide a broad and multi-disciplinary platform for industry professionals, academics, and engineers from related institutions to exchange information and ideas, and discuss findings of research works on emerging technologies such as Sustainable Development, Artificial Intelligence, Internet of Things, Deep Learning, Renewable Energy and Systems Integration. Some 280 professionals, academics, researchers and industry experts, both local and international, would participate in the Conference.

15. Cabinet has taken note that the contract of Mr Ramesh Sunt as Ombudsperson for Sports would be renewed for a further period of one year.
