

## **HIGHLIGHTS OF CABINET MEETING – FRIDAY 21 MARCH 2025**

1. Cabinet has agreed to the introduction of the Public Inquiries Bill into the National Assembly. The object of the Bill is to repeal the Commissions of Inquiry Act and replace it with a modern, more transparent and legally robust framework for the conduct of public inquiries into matters of significant public importance.

In lieu of a Commission of Inquiry, a Board would be set up with wider powers. The purpose and scope for the setting up of a Board of Inquiry would be broadened. The Bill would make new provisions, *inter alia*, for –

- (a) consultations to be held with the person who had been appointed as Chairperson of a Board of Inquiry, or the person who was being proposed to be appointed as Chairperson thereof, prior to the terms of reference of the Board of Inquiry were finalised;
- (b) fixing a deadline by which a Board of Inquiry shall complete its inquiry and submit its findings;
- (c) apprising the National Assembly when a Board of Inquiry had been set up or would be set up;
- (d) enabling the public to obtain and view a record of evidence given, or produced, at an inquiry;
- (e) enabling any person who was of the opinion that his reputation was likely to be prejudicially affected by a public inquiry of being heard and to give evidence, and produce any document, in his defence; and
- (f) for making it mandatory to lay a copy of the findings of a public inquiry before the National Assembly and for its publication in the Gazette.

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2. Cabinet has taken note that the Customs Tariff (Amendment of Schedule) (No. 2) Regulations 2025 would be promulgated to provide for the implementation of the fifth round of customs duty reduction by Mauritius under the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement (CECPA) between Mauritius and India with effect from 01 April 2025.

The CECPA was signed in February 2021 and implementation of the respective market access preferences started on 01 April 2021 and customs duty reduction was to be effected over a total of 15 years. The CECPA comprised three components namely, Trade in Goods, Trade in Services and Economic Cooperation.

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3. Cabinet has taken note that the Mauritius Shipping Corporation Ltd would deploy the MV Peros Banhos to Agalega on 29 March 2025 for the supply of commodities to Agalega.

Necessary arrangements had been made to ensure safe berthing of MV Peros Banhos. The Mauritius Ports Authority arranged for a qualified tug master to travel to Agalega on Board the MV Peros Banhos to assist the Tugmaster in Agalega for the proper berthing and unberthing of the vessel. The Outer Islands Development Corporation was liaising with the Indian Authorities for the only tug available in Agalega to be manned by a qualified tug master and additional fenders to be fixed on the jetty.

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4. Cabinet has agreed to Mauritius joining the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) Partnership, which had been established to facilitate collaboration in order to provide timely support for accelerated climate action. Mauritius, being a Party to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and in line with the Paris Agreement, had a commitment to prepare and submit its Nationally Determined Contributions, whereby targets were set for the reduction of its greenhouse gas emissions. By joining the NDC Partnership, Mauritius would gain access to a global network of knowledge and resources to support the work in climate action.

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5. Cabinet has agreed to the accession of the Republic of Mauritius to the Harare Protocol on Patents and Industrial Designs which would guarantee protection for patents and industrial designs and utility models by allowing registration of Intellectual Property. The objective of the protocol was to foster social, economic and technological growth in Member States.

Mauritius acceded to the membership of the African Regional Intellectual Property Organization (ARIPO) under the Lusaka Agreement in September 2020. The ARIPO administers five treaties on intellectual property, including the Harare Protocol on Patents and Industrial Designs. Accession to the Harare Protocol on Patents and Industrial Designs would ensure an effective engagement and enable Mauritius to benefit from the services of ARIPO.

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6. Cabinet has agreed to the introduction of new minimum entry requirements for eligibility to apply for a seat to study at public universities, in alignment with the decision to allow students of secondary schools who achieve at least three credits and at least a pass in English Language at a single sitting at School Certificate level or equivalent to progress to Higher School Certificate level.

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7. Cabinet has agreed to the Ministry of Education and Human Resource signing a Letter of Exchange with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Institute for Information Technologies in Education for the implementation of the Education Management Information System (EMIS) in Mauritius.

The two institutions would explore opportunities to establish close cooperation on matters of mutual interest on educational aspects of information and communication technology applications within the scope of their respective objectives and functions. Among the topics of interest, focus would be made on national capacities in the use and management of quality data that accurately reflects changes in the education system.

The EMIS, an open-source system, would provide real-time quality and accurate data at all levels of education administration for better planning and decision-making. It would be implemented on a pilot basis in 21 secondary schools for 12 months and would eventually be rolled out to all state secondary schools.

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8. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent participation of the Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries in the 48<sup>th</sup> session of the International Fund for Agricultural Development Governing Council, held in Italy, on the theme "Catalysing Investment at the First Mile."

The Council primarily focused on funding mechanisms to integrate small farmers into the economic mainstream. The necessity for Public-Private Partnerships was highlighted, with calls for funding from multilateral agencies and active participation from non-governmental organisations. The Council also addressed critical issues such as climate change mitigation and adaptation.

The Minister had a bilateral meeting with the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) where discussions centered on FAO's support in advancing strategic planning to enhance food security and reduce dependency on food import.

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9. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Attorney-General to Singapore to discuss avenues of collaboration with the Singaporean authorities regarding judicial reform, as outlined in the Government Programme 2025-2029. Discussions were also held on anti-financial crime measures and prosecutorial cooperation.

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10. Cabinet has taken note that HE Dr Milan Jaya Nyamrajsingh Meetarbhan, GOSK, Permanent Representative to the United Nations, would be accredited to the International Seabed Authority.

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11. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the –

- (a) Board of the Food and Agricultural Research and Extension Institute, with Mr Ritesh Sumputh as part-time Chairperson;
- (b) Sugar Investment Trust Board;
- (c) Mauritius Cane Industry Authority Board, with Dr Dhanandjay Kawol, Senior Chief Executive as part-time Chairperson;
- (d) Sugar Insurance Fund Board, with Mr Kailash Bheenick as part-time Chairperson;
- (e) Law Reform Commission, with Mrs Yanilla Moonshiram as part-time Chairperson; and
- (f) Board of Trustees of the Mauritius Marathi Cultural Centre Trust, with Mr Danirow Bhiwajee as part-time Chairperson.

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