

HIGHLIGHTS OF CABINET MEETING – FRIDAY 09 DECEMBER 2022

1. Cabinet has agreed to the introduction of the Waste Management and Resource Recovery Bill into the National Assembly. The main object of the Bill is to provide for the regulatory framework to ensure the environmentally safe and sound management of solid waste and hazardous waste and a sustainable waste management system through the adoption of a circular economy approach focusing on waste reduction, reuse, treatment, safe disposal, material recovery and recycling. The Bill, inter alia, provides for –

- (a) a Department of Waste Management and Resource Recovery;
- (b) a National Waste Management Coordination Committee;
- (c) the appointment of technical advisory committees by the Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change to advise him on waste management matters;
- (d) a system of extended producer responsibility in relation to solid waste; and
- (e) the duties and obligations of different stakeholders in relation to waste.

2. Cabinet has agreed to the promulgation of the Education (Amendment No. 4) Regulations 2022 and the Private Secondary Education (Amendment) Regulations 2022. The following amendments would have to be brought to the Education Regulations 1957 to cater for the extension of the school year and for students in Government Secondary Schools who are now “overaged” due to that extension –

- (a) Regulation 15(1) would now provide for admission in Grade 7 to be effective as from 01 January instead of 01 June of a school year;
- (b) Regulation 15(1A) which was introduced after the extension of the school calendar in 2021, is being replaced by a new sub-paragraph to provide for overaged students (born between 2000 and 2016) joining Grade 7 at the age of 14 (instead of 13) and for those who qualify to join Grade 12 after the age of 19 (instead of 18) to be allowed to remain in school; and
- (c) a new sub-paragraph has been included as Regulation 15(1B) to provide for overaged students (born between 2000 and 2016) to remain in a Government Secondary School up to the end of the school year in which they turn 21 (instead of 20).

The Private Secondary Education Regulations 1977 would also be amended in respect of grant-aided Private Secondary Schools.

3. Cabinet has taken note that the Public Health (Restrictions on Tobacco Products) (Amendment) Regulations 2022 would be promulgated. The amendments being brought to the Regulations have as objectives to -

- (a) reduce the percentage display of the pictorial health warning on the front of the package of tobacco products from 90 percent to 80 percent in Regulation 8(3)(c);
- (b) exempt the duty-free shops at departure at the airport and port from plain packaging;
- (c) maintain the existing set of pictorial health warnings as under the Public Health (Restrictions on Tobacco Products) Regulations 2008 and specifications for the layouts of cigarette packages for the duty-free shops at SSR International Airport and the port (International Departure only) and the duty-free shop at Plaine Corail Airport (International Departure only);
- (d) exempt cigars and cigarillos from plain packaging only;
- (e) provide a set of specifications regarding the health warnings to be placed over the packages of cigars and cigarillos;
- (f) authorise hotels classified in the grade of four star or above, to import and use a waterpipe and tobacco products to be used in connection with a waterpipe;
- (g) delete Regulation 29(2)(b) of the Public Health (Restrictions on Tobacco Products) Regulations 2022, pertaining to the moratorium period granted to importers and retailers to deplete the existing stock of tobacco products; and
- (h) extend the moratorium given to importers pertaining to plain packaging from 31 December 2022 to 30 May 2023.

4. Cabinet has agreed to the implementation of the National Action Plan to combat Trafficking in Persons in Mauritius 2022-2026, which has been drafted by a Consultant with the assistance of the International Organization for Migration. The National Action Plan has been developed to help guide the response to trafficking in persons in the country. It is intended to support well-coordinated and comprehensive actions, the efficient allocation of resources and tracking progress on Mauritius' response to Trafficking in Persons. It covers a five-year period and has been developed around five pillars, namely prevention, protection, prosecution and partnership as well as data collection and research.

A Technical Committee comprising representatives of Ministries/Departments having leading and supportive roles, would be set up to work on the implementation of the National Action Plan which would be monitored by the National Steering Committee. The Inter-Ministerial Committee, chaired by the Attorney General, Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security, would be regularly informed of progress achieved.

5. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the 23rd Meeting of the Mauritius-Seychelles Joint Commission of the Extended Continental Shelf held in Mauritius recently. The main outcomes of the discussions included, among others, -

- (a) Sea Cucumber Exploratory Fishery;
- (b) the Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement;
- (c) the conduct of Multi-Client Survey in the Joint Management Area (JMA); and
- (d) the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding for Maritime Surveillance in the JMA; and
- (e) marine scientific research.

Cabinet has agreed to Mauritius proceeding with the invitation of expressions of interest for sea cucumber exploratory fishery in the JMA.

6. Cabinet has taken note of the proposals contained in the draft Master Plan of Curepipe. The main objectives of the draft Master Plan are to -

- (a) provide optimal conditions for the development of an Urban Terminal in the Town Centre;
- (b) decongest the town centre by delocalising traffic generating activities including the bus terminal and the market;
- (c) implement green and sustainable practices;
- (d) plan for the appropriate use of available State Lands; and
- (e) promote an integrated and planned town centre development.

Cabinet has agreed to the proposed uses being included in the Urban Terminal Project and to the relocation of major traffic generating activities from the town centre to La Vigie as formulated in the draft Master Plan. Further consultations would be conducted with regard to the implementation of the Master Plan.

7. Cabinet has agreed to the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) Action Plan 2021-2023. The Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change has benefitted from technical assistance from the *Agence Française de Développement* for the formulation of a NDC Action Plan which would act as the guiding document to meet the adaptation and mitigation targets and goals set out in the 2021 updated NDC as well as to track and report progress thereon.

With respect to measures for the mitigation sectors, the NDC Action Plan had been developed based on completed and ongoing initiatives/projects at the level of sectoral Ministries and Departments. As regards the adaptation sectors, actions have been formulated based on completed and ongoing sectoral initiatives and projects, namely the 2021 National Climate Change Adaptation Policy Framework and adaptation policy measures announced in the Budget 2021/2022.

8. Cabinet has taken note of the results of the PSAC Assessment 2022. Out of the 16,011 school candidates of the Republic of Mauritius who took part in the PSAC Assessment for the first time, 12,909 have met the requirement for the PSAC, representing a percentage of 80.63 percent, as compared to 73.91 percent in 2021. 80.79 percent of candidates have met the PSAC requirements in the Island of Mauritius, 77.44 percent in Rodrigues and 64.29 percent in Agalega. With regard to the performance in the ZEP schools in Mauritius and Rodrigues, 46.02 percent of candidates have met the PSAC requirements.

9. Cabinet has taken note of the exemption from payment of the Passenger Service Charge, the Passenger Solidarity Fee and the Terminal Expansion Fee in respect of the registered members of the Mauritian delegation participating in the 17th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention 2023 to be held from 08 to 10 January 2023 in Indore, Madhya Pradesh, India.

10. Cabinet has taken note of the non-financial facilities which are being provided for the promotion of the MICE (Meeting, Incentive, Conference, Event) and wedding segments as a niche market for the tourism industry. These facilities relate, inter alia, to visa requirements, security measures, police escort, excess baggage, importation of food and fresh fruits, importation of cargo by air or sea and fast track clearance at the Airport.

The marketing of the financial and non-financial facilities would contribute in making Mauritius stand out as the destination of choice for both weddings and MICE group events and ultimately, contribute in increasing the number of tourists that would visit the country.

11. Cabinet has taken note of the updated status of implementation of the projects under the Contingency Plan for the Dry Season 2022/2023. The following additional projects have been/are being implemented by the Central Water Authority (CWA) –

- (a) mobilisation of water from Rivière Labourdonnais to Crève Coeur Reservoir to alleviate water supply issues in the regions of Montagne Longue and Camp La Boue;
- (b) a borehole has been drilled at Albion and would cater for the inhabitants of Splendid View, Morcellement Terre d'Albion, Morcellement de Chazal, Club Med, Morcellement Beerjaraz, Morcellement Raffray and Camp Créole; and
- (c) the CWA is taking over boreholes from AML which would supply an additional 8,000m³ of water daily.

12. Cabinet has taken note that on 05 December 2022, Taiwanese Fishing Vessel (FV) Yu Feng No. 67 was grounded at 0.8 nautical miles from Ile du Sud, St. Brandon. Immediate actions were undertaken by the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change. The National Oil Spill Contingency Plan was activated by the Director of Environment and a first meeting of the National Oil Spill Coordination Committee was held.

On 08 December 2022, officers from the National Coast Guard, Shipping Division, Fisheries Division, the Mauritius Oceanography Institute and the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change sailed to St Brandon on board the CGS Barracuda with fence boom, sorbent booms, sorbent pads, skimmer, pump, generator and related accessories. The purpose is to effect environmental surveys and deploy fence booms thereat as a precautionary measure. The National Coast Guard would also set up a Mobile Command Post with seven officers of its Pollution Response Team thereat until 21 December 2022. As at date, no case of water ingress inside the vessel and oil spill were reported.

13. Cabinet has taken note of the findings of the National Health Accounts (NHA) 2020 study undertaken by the Ministry of Health and Wellness in collaboration with the World Health Organization and of the preparation of the next National Health Accounts Report for the Republic of Mauritius for the period 01 January to 31 December 2023. The specific objectives of NHA are to, inter alia, –

- (a) track and monitor health expenditure trends, both public and private, including spending on health by households and funding by external entities;
- (b) make financial projections for the public health sector;
- (c) provide evidence to enhance Health in All Policies;
- (d) support the monitoring of Universal Health Coverage; and
- (e) use international indicators to compare the country's health system performance with that of other countries.

14. Cabinet has agreed to the submission of a list of scholars and institutions for consideration in the context of nominations for the 'Vishwa Hindi Samman' during the forthcoming 12th World Hindi Conference to be held from 15 to 17 February 2023 in Fiji.

15. Cabinet has agreed to the Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology signing a Non-Disclosure Agreement with the Educational Consultants of India Ltd to ensure that data on educators and pupils is kept confidential in the context of the implementation of the Early Digital Learning Programme Phase III, particularly with regard to the integration of the Classroom Management System in 12,800 tablets distributed in Grade 4.

16. Cabinet has agreed to the procurement of tablets, charging racks, projectors and notebooks for the implementation of Phase V (Grade 6) of the Early Digital Learning Programme. The aim of the project is to induce a paradigm shift in teaching and learning through the use of digital tools right from an early age.

17. Cabinet has taken note of the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic prevailing in Mauritius. As at 07 December 2022, there were 89 active cases of COVID-19, out of which 38 were admitted at the New ENT Hospital. Over the period 01 to 07 December 2022, one death was attributed to COVID-19.

18. Cabinet has taken note that there was no suspected case of Monkeypox in Mauritius during the period 01 to 07 December 2022.

19. Cabinet has taken note that in the context of Phase 1 of the construction of La Vigie-La Brasserie-Beaux Songes Link Road, major road works would be undertaken from 12 to 20 December 2022, along the A10 Phoenix - Plaisance Road, in the vicinity of the UBS Garage at 16ème Mille. Subsequently, the A10 Phoenix - Plaisance Road would be closed to traffic between Ferney Spinning Mills and the UBS Garage as from 2000 hours to 0500 hours on weekdays from 12 to 20 December 2022 and traffic would be diverted. The necessary traffic signs would be set up and the Police would be present to inform and guide road users accordingly.

20. Cabinet has taken note that excavation works for the construction of drains along Syed Hossen Road at Phoenix would be carried out from its junction with Phoenix-Plaisance Road to its junction with Pandit J. Nehru Road. Subsequently, this section of the road would be closed to traffic from 12 to 20 December 2022 and from 16 to 31 January 2023. Traffic entering and exiting the Syed Hossen Road would be diverted through the Pandit J. Nehru Road and Edgar Quirin Road. The necessary traffic signs would be set up and Police would be present to inform and guide road users accordingly.

21. Cabinet has taken note that the Minister of Financial Services and Good Governance recently participated in the *Comité de Suivi* of the Interreg Indian Ocean program in Reunion Island. The objective of the *Comité de Suivi* was, namely for the Région Réunion to present the –

- (a) outcome of the Interreg V program 2014-2020; and
- (b) outline of the Interreg VI program 2021-2017.

248 activities have been implemented through the Interreg V program. Mauritius has benefitted from 133 of these activities.

22. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Financial Services and Good Governance to Belgium where he attended the 115th Session of the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) Council of Ministers and the 45th Session of the Joint ACP-EU Council of Ministers. The 115th Session of the OACPS Council of Ministers focused on, inter alia, the following –

- (a) application for Membership and withdrawal from the OACPS;
- (b) approval of the Budget for the OACPS Secretariat; and
- (c) commodities and value chains guaranteeing continued market access for OACPS goods in the EU's market in light of the new EU legislation.

The 45th Session of the Joint ACP-EU Council of Ministers focused, inter alia, on –

- (a) addressing global consequences of the Russian aggression against Ukraine, including in the area of food and energy security;
- (b) the new EU-OACPS Partnership Agreement; and
- (c) Global Gateway Strategy, its relevance for the OACPS and implementation of Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI)-Global Europe.

In the margins of the events, the Minister met the Portuguese Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation and the EU Commissioner, Mrs Mairead McGuiness.

23. Cabinet has taken note that a workshop on Capacity Building and Training on Project Finance and Facilitation in the Atlantic, Indian Ocean and South China Seas (AIS) Region would be organised by the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) from 12 to 14 December 2022 in Mauritius. The workshop would contribute to enhancement of the capacities of local players in structuring renewable energy project financing deals in Small Island Developing States in the AIS region.

Some 25 participants, both local and international, were expected to attend the workshop including project developers, project advisors and financial institutions from Mauritius, Cape Verde, Comoros, Guinea-Bissau, Maldives and São Tomé and Príncipe.

24. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Appeal Committee under the National Land Transport Authority Act with Mr Sandilen Calliapen, Barrister-at-Law, as part-time Chairperson.
