

HIGHLIGHTS OF CABINET MEETING – FRIDAY 23 DECEMBER 2022

1. Cabinet has taken note that, in recognition of the efforts and contribution of the working class in the economic recovery of the country during the year 2022, it has been agreed that Tuesday 03 January 2023 would be proclaimed as a special public holiday.

2. Cabinet has taken note that Statistics Mauritius has released its National Accounts estimate on 22 December 2022. The economic growth rate for 2022 has been revised upwards from 7.2 percent to 7.8 percent, given the performance of the economy and the policy measures announced in Budget 2022/2023.

The Gross Value Added (GVA) at basic prices has registered a growth of 9.1 percent instead of the forecasted 8.5 percent. Main sectors contributing to this higher economic growth include manufacturing, financial and insurance activities, accommodation and food service activities.

3. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the participation of the Prime Minister in the US Africa Leaders Summit held recently in Washington DC. The Opening of the Summit was preceded by a welcome dinner hosted by the Atlantic Council for the African Heads of State/Government, with the Guest of Honour being HE Macky Sall, President of Senegal and also Chair of the African Union. The aim of this event was to bring together African and US Heads of State as well as Government Officials and members of civil society, top figures of the diaspora and high-ranking private sector representatives with a view to fostering cooperation on a wide range of global challenges.

The Prime Minister was invited by the Corporate Council of Africa to speak at the high-level event entitled ‘Leveraging the Private Sector to Reach Health Security Goals in Africa’. This special event had as objective to bring together African Heads of State, US and African business executives and senior government officials with a view to discussing strategies and best practices for addressing key issues that could enhance health security and enable expanded access to quality healthcare in Africa.

On the first day of the Summit, discussions focussed on the theme Peace, Security and Governance Forum, Partnering for Sustainable Health Cooperation and Health Security and Conservation, Climate Adaptation, and a Just Energy Transition. The inauguration of the US-Africa Business Forum was effected on the second day of the Summit. In his address, President Biden underlined that Africa’s economic transition would depend on good government, healthy population and reliable as well as affordable energy. He announced a series of measures that would enable Africa to meet, inter alia, its objectives to improve its infrastructure, invest in sustainable clean energies, provide financing for fertilisers to help farmers in improving their output and also investment in digital transformation in Africa.

On the last day of the Summit, the three sessions were chaired by President Biden and focussed on the following themes –

- (a) Partnering on Agenda 2063;
- (b) Multilateral Partnerships with Africa to Meet Global Challenges; and
- (c) Promoting Food Security and Food Systems Resilience.

In his intervention, President Biden announced that he would support African Union joining G20 as permanent member as well as the UN Security Council. In the margins of the Summit, the Prime Minister had the opportunity to hold formal meetings with several personalities, namely the President of Togo, the President of Mozambique, the President of Kenya, the Deputy United States Trade Representative, the Deputy National Secretary Advisor and the Deputy Secretary of State.

4. Cabinet has agreed to grant a subsidy of Rs24 per kg on Full Cream Milk Powder 'Smatch' commercialised by the State Trading Corporation (STC). The subsidised wholesale price would then be fixed at Rs226.00 per kg and the retail price at Rs235.00 per kg on a stock of 189 Metric Tons available at the STC as at 16 December 2022.

5. Cabinet has agreed to the implementation of the project "Reconstruction and Upgrading of Gentilly Bridge, Moka" by the District Council of Moka. The existing bridge at Gentilly Road, Moka was constructed in colonial time with masonry structure and a narrow aperture which is no longer adequate to cater for the increased run off arising due to climate change.

The bridge structure is no more safe and represents a serious threat to road users. The bridge has been closed to the public and the District Council of Moka would demolish the existing bridge and reconstruct a new enlarged reinforced concrete bridge and consolidate the river banks with masonry retaining walls and rock revetment.

6. Cabinet has agreed to the prescription of the light rail fares following the extension of the light rail alignment to Réduit and to the Light Rail Fares and Light Rail Tickets Regulations 2019 being amended to give effect to these fares.

7. Cabinet has agreed to the promulgation of the Light Rail Fares and Light Rail Tickets (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2022 in order to –

- (a) make the use of the personalised MECards, on board the light rail vehicles, mandatory for students, disabled persons and senior citizens for them to benefit from free travel;
- (b) introduce a penalty fee to deter fare evasion and misuse of tickets; and
- (c) to impose an administrative charge upon any person failing to leave the light rail vehicle within the period specified in the conditions of use of the light rail ticket and who stays, without reasonable excuse, on board the light rail vehicle after the expiry of such period.

8. Cabinet has agreed to the naming of the temporary Platform to serve the commuters of the light rail from the North, located on the Waterfront area in Port Louis as Place d'Armes. The construction works for the temporary platform was ongoing and was expected to be completed by December 2022.

9. Cabinet has agreed to the Ministry of Housing and Land Use Planning further extending the time frame of the current National Development Strategy for a period of one year ending December 2023. Thereafter, the Ministry of Housing and Land Use Planning would invite the President of the Republic to approve the extension of the operative date of the Municipal and District Council Outline Planning Schemes to December 2023.

10. Cabinet has agreed to the implementation of the Mauritius National Open Educational Resources (OER) Policy which has been worked out by the Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology in collaboration with the Commonwealth of Learning. The National OER Policy would have as main objectives to –

- (a) encourage and embed a culture of OER adoption and integration, including revision, remixing, repurposing and reuse;
- (b) establish a framework to provide access and allow sharing of educational materials produced by public funds; and
- (c) share privately produced open educational materials through the issue of appropriate licences.

An online National OER Repository would be set up in collaboration with the Commonwealth of Learning, to host and provide access to OERs. Public and private institutions would be encouraged to have their own institutional OER repository, which would be linked to the National OER.

11. Cabinet has taken note of the main findings and recommendations of the Court of Investigation which was set up to look into the grounding of the Motor Vessel (MV) Wakashio off Pointe d'Esny. An Inter-Ministerial Committee, chaired by the Prime Minister has been set up to examine the recommendations contained in the Report and chart out the way forward for the effective implementation thereof.

12. Cabinet has taken note of the participation of Mauritius in the first two meetings on the calendar of meetings of the G20 as envisaged by the Indian Presidency, namely the First Sherpa Meeting held in Udaipur and the First Development Working Group Meeting held in Mumbai.

The first Sherpa meeting discussed all thematic issues of the G20 under five broadly labelled sessions, namely 'Technological Transformations', 'Green Development and Lifestyle for Environment', 'Accelerated, Inclusive and Resilient Growth', 'Multilateralism – Food, Fuel and Fertilizers' and 'Women-led Development'. The discussions of the Development Working Group focussed on themes such as 'Accelerating Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals', 'Data for Development' and 'LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment)'.

13. Cabinet has taken note that MV MSM Douro left Port Louis for its second voyage on 23 December 2022 with some 210 containers which includes, among others, 12 containers with LPG cylinders, 12 tanktainers (5 mogas and 7 gas-oil), one Jet A1 tanktainer and 10 containers with bottled mineral water. The vessel is expected to reach Rodrigues on 25 December 2022.

14. Cabinet has taken note that following the grounding of FV Yu Feng No. 67 off St Brandon, the National Coast Guard Incident Command Post at Ile du Sud, St. Brandon has, inter alia, reported the following, as at 21 December 2022 –

- (a) 195 metres of fence booms have been deployed inside the lagoon in front of casualty;
- (b) no oil spill at sea;
- (c) no smell of diesel oil; and
- (d) no tar ball, dead fish or birds sighted along the shoreline.

Cabinet has also taken note that, following an international expression of interest conducted, a contract was awarded to Bridge Maritime Ltd to proceed with the oil removal operations. Bridge Maritime Ltd has carried out survey of the surroundings on 18 and 19 December 2022. The appointed Salvage Company has triggered mobilisation of equipment and logistics from Mombasa as from 18 December 2022.

15. Cabinet has taken note that the Fisheries Protection Service of the Ministry of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping had obtained information on 21 December 2022 about the existence of diesel in the fish holds in a Taiwanese-flagged fishing vessel (FV) Hung Jie Wie No. 21 which had already left the port on that day. The Ministry sought the assistance of the National Coast Guard (NCG) to intercept the fishing vessel. A team of the NCG accompanied by Fisheries Protection Officers intercepted the FV Hung Jie Wie No. 21. The ship was escorted back to Port Louis by the NCG and Fisheries Protection Officers which berthed at Quay D.

A full inspection of the vessel was carried out in the presence of the Master and the crew. Four fish holds were found containing diesel oil. The matter was reported to the Police on 22 December 2022. A Notice of Detention was issued to the Master of the Vessel according to the Merchant Shipping Act.

16. Cabinet has taken note that the total storage in the main reservoirs of Mauritius as at 22 December 2022, was 46.02 million cubic meters equivalent to 49.9 percent of the total capacity. The average groundwater levels for period ending 13 December 2022 show a declining trend and are presently below average. In general, river flows vary from 25 percent to 65 percent of seasonal normal.

In view of the persisting dry season and storage level of the reservoirs, the following projects have been implemented by the Central Water Authority to improve water supply –

- (a) installation of Containerized Pressure Filter at Crève Coeur, Bassin Solitude, L'Espérance Trébuchet, Grand Gaube (Melville), Poste La Fayette, Constance, Melrose, Pont Lardier and Ballisson; and
- (b) exploitation of boreholes at Petit Bois, Plaine Magnien, L'Escalier, Yemen La Coupe and Côte D'Or.

17. Cabinet has taken note of the forthcoming sensitisation and health promotion campaigns on the National Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) Vaccination programme for children aged nine to 15 years early 2023 prior to the launching of the vaccination campaign. Clinical trials have shown that HPV vaccines are highly effective in preventing cervical infection with the types of HPV they target, when administered before individuals begin to engage in sexual activity.

The sensitisation activities would include, amongst others, –

- (a) production and broadcast of short videos with the participation of health professionals, which would be aired on MBC TV;

- (b) production of information sheets, pamphlets which would be distributed among students, educators and parents, through the Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology, Parent Teacher's Associations, School Health Clubs and social media platforms;
- (c) production of animated videos with cartoon character targeting children aged nine to 15 years; and
- (d) dissemination of the above on the Government Information Service digital platforms and the Government portal.

18. Cabinet has taken note that the following Regulations would be promulgated –
- (a) the Nursing Council (Continuing Professional Development) Regulations 2022;
 - (b) the Nursing Council (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2022; and
 - (c) the Nursing Council (Registration of Nurses and Midwives) (Amendment) Regulations 2022.

These Regulations would be made under the Nursing Council Act with a view to –

- (i) introducing mandatory Continuous Professional Development programme for all registered nurses and midwives;
- (ii) amending the rules of election of members of the Nursing Council; and
- (iii) increasing the fees for registration of nurses and midwives.

19. Cabinet has taken note of the implementation of the "Pilot Youth Diaspora Volunteering Project", entitled 'Nou Rasinn: Look Forward Give Back'. The project would be run by the International Organisation for Migration in Mauritius in partnership with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade and other Government of Mauritius bodies.

The objective of the project would be to select 20 volunteers between the age of 18 and 35 years (inclusive), from among the Mauritian Diaspora Overseas, to be placed in internships in Host Organisations in Mauritius for a period of three months, with the aim of allowing these volunteers to contribute to the sustainable socio-economic development of Mauritius as well as to reconnect with their roots in Mauritius and the Mauritian culture.

20. Cabinet has taken note that Mauritius would submit a report on the Special Project of Agenda 2063 to the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD). Agenda 2063 is Africa's strategic framework to achieve inclusive growth and sustainable development.

On 31 January 2022, Mauritius presented its first Country-level report on the Status of Implementation of Agenda 2063. The African Union Commission and the AUDA-NEPAD have been directed to lead the process of the Evaluation of Agenda 2063 First Ten-Year Implementation Plan (2014-2023) and the development of the Second Ten-Year Implementation Plan (2024-2033) dubbed as the Special Project, and to report on the two processes at the African Union Summit to be held in February 2023.

21. Cabinet has taken note of the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic prevailing in Mauritius. As at 21 December 2022, there were 58 active cases of COVID-19, out of which 23 were admitted at the New ENT Hospital. Over the period 15 to 21 December 2022, one death was attributed to COVID-19.

22. Cabinet has taken note that there was no suspected case of mpox in Mauritius during the period 15 to 21 December 2022.

23. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent participation of the Minister of Land Transport and Light Rail, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade in the meeting of the 10th Organisation of the African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) Summit held in Angola. The theme of the Summit was: "*Three continents, Three oceans, A Common Destiny: Building a Resilient and Sustainable OACPS*".

The Summit adopted the Luanda Declaration, which called on greater OACPS resilience and sustainability and reaffirmed the commitment of the organisation to address global challenges and to consolidate partnerships for development by building knowledge-based economies as well as fostering investment and competitiveness.

In the margins of the Summit, the Minister had bilateral meetings with the Minister of Foreign Relations of Angola, the Minister of Transport of Angola, the State Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia, the Director General of the International Organisation for Migration, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Maldives, and the President of the Central African Republic.

24. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent mission of the Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity to Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in the context of the 6th International Conference on Disability and Rehabilitation. The Minister was one of the speakers at the Conference and her intervention focused on the progress made by the Republic of Mauritius to integrate, as far as possible, persons with disabilities in all spheres, namely cultural, artistic, sports and educational fields, amongst others and also highlighted the various assistance schemes put in place by the Government of Mauritius to uplift the quality of life of persons with disabilities. The Minister also gave an interview to the Media Centre of King Salman Centre for Disability Research.

In the margins of the Conference, the Minister had meetings and discussions with the Minister of Education of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the CEO of the Authority for People with Disabilities, and the Secretary General of Alwaleed Philanthropies and a United Nations Goodwill Ambassador.

25. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the recent participation of the Minister of Public Service, Administrative and Institutional Reforms at the 41st African in Association for Public Administration and Management (AAPAM) Roundtable Conference organised in collaboration with the Department of Public Service and Administration, South Africa in Cape Town, South Africa. The Conference was attended by some 550 delegates from 25 countries. The theme of the Roundtable Conference was "*Africa's Renewal in the era for sustainable development: shared responsibility for strengthening institutions*".

The Minister had the opportunity to chair the main plenary session, which was articulated around the theme of the conference. During his opening remarks, he stressed on the need for public institutions to embrace innovation and digital transformation to deliver more effective, timely and responsive services. In the margins of the Conference, the Minister had various bilateral meetings.

This year's AAPAM Innovative Management Award attracted participation from 68 public institutions from the African continent. Egypt was the grand winner and Mauritius obtained the Presidential Award for a presentation made by the Non-Communicable Disease, Health Promotion and Research Unit of the Ministry of Health and Wellness on the project entitled "Effective Organisational Change for the National COVID-19 Vaccination Programme in Mauritius".

26. Cabinet has taken note that the World Health Organization would host the Multi-Country Tobacco Control Training Workshop for Judicial and Government Legal Advisors from 01 to 03 March 2023, in Mauritius. The main objectives of the Workshop are to -

- (a) strengthen the capacity of government lawyers and policy makers on the importance of various legal tools for tobacco control;
- (b) share emerging best practices on tobacco control laws and their implementation; and
- (c) exchange information on progress and pathways to accelerate the adoption and implementation of tobacco control laws.

Some 50 delegates from various countries, including Mauritius would attend the Workshop.

27. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Residential Care Homes Board with Mr Kumarduth Puddo, Deputy Permanent Secretary, as part-time Chairperson.

28. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Hearing Committee of the Training and Employment of Disabled Persons Board with Mrs Ni'mah Rojubally as part-time Chairperson.

29. Cabinet has taken note of the composition of the Optical Council of Mauritius for the period December 2022 to November 2025.
