

HIGHLIGHTS OF CABINET MEETING – FRIDAY 29 APRIL 2022

1. Cabinet has agreed to maintain the present provisions of the Consumer Protection (Maximum Price of Essential Goods) (Amendment) Regulations 2021 concerning the seven essential product categories namely canned fish, canned tomatoes, cheese, edible oil, margarine, milk powder and pulses, and to provide an additional subsidy of Rs150 million to allow consumers to purchase these products up to 30 June 2022 at the same prices fixed under the Consumer Protection (Maximum Price of Essential Goods) (Amendment) Regulations 2021.

2. Cabinet has agreed to grant additional subsidy to bakeries purchasing flour in 25 kg bags directly from the State Trading Corporation, in order to meet the double objective of maintaining the price of scheduled bread '*pain maison*' at Rs2.60 while not penalising bakeries for increases in their production costs. Consequently, the bakeries would purchase a 25 kg bag of flour at Rs108.85 instead of Rs155.50.

3. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the mission of the Prime Minister to India from 18 to 23 April 2022. He was invited by Shri N. Modi, Prime Minister of the Republic of India to the Ground-Breaking Ceremony for the WHO-Global Centre for Traditional Medicine and the Inaugural Session of the 'Global Ayush Investment and Innovation Summit'.

The laying of the foundation stone of the WHO-Global Centre for Traditional Medicine was held on 19 April 2022 in Jamnagar, Gujarat, by Prime Minister Modi in the presence of Dr Tedros Ghebreyesus, Director-General of WHO, and the Prime Minister of Mauritius. The aim of the Centre is to bring together the use of modern technology and traditional medicine practices and therapy, build a solid evidence base for policies and standards on traditional medicines practices and products and help countries integrate same into their existing health systems. The Prime Minister of Mauritius intervened during the event and thanked both the Government of India and WHO for such a laudable initiative which would be the very first and only global outpost of the WHO traditional medicine.

The Global Ayush Investment and Innovation Summit which was also inaugurated by Prime Minister Modi was held on 20 April 2022, in Gandhinagar, Gujarat in the presence of the Director-General of WHO and the Prime Minister of Mauritius. One of the main objectives of the Summit was to attract investments in order to make India the preferred destination as a Global AYUSH Healing Centre in the world. The Prime Minister of Mauritius intervened on that occasion and emphasised that the knowledge of traditional medicine, treatments and practices should not only be respected but should be preserved and promoted.

During his visit, the Prime Minister had a bilateral meeting with Shri N. Modi and they discussed ongoing and future development projects as well as partnership and cooperation in various sectors. He thanked the latter for the numerous infrastructural projects being financed by the Indian Government.

The Prime Minister also had a meeting with the Director-General of the WHO and he seized the opportunity to thank the WHO for its valuable assistance provided to Mauritius in

terms of supply of vaccines in the fight against COVID-19 pandemic. He informed the Director General of the decision of Government to set up a pharmaceutical industry and a vaccination industry in Mauritius in order to ensure security of vaccines and medicines to the country and eventually the region.

The Prime Minister met HE Dr S. Jaishankar, Minister of External Affairs of India in New Delhi and briefed him on the possible avenues of further cooperation between the two countries. He, inter alia, discussed the possibility of the Indian authorities providing training to the staff of the Forensic Science Laboratory in order to improve service delivery, particularly in the field of forensic ballistics and explosive services.

The Prime Minister had the opportunity to meet HE Bhupendrabhai Rajnikant Patel, the Chief Minister of Gujarat and Hon Smt Anandiben Mafatbhai Patel, the Governor of the State of Uttar Pradesh, as well as HE Shri Yogi Adityanath, Chief Minister of the State of Uttar Pradesh. He briefed them on the various projects that the Government of India was currently financing as well as future projects.

4. Cabinet has agreed to the introduction of the Road Traffic (Amendment) Act 2019 (Amendment) Bill into the National Assembly. The Road Traffic (Amendment) Act 2019 would soon be proclaimed but before same is done, there is need to amend the said Act with a view to curing some cross references with regard to Schedules in the Act.

5. Cabinet has agreed to drafting instructions being conveyed to the Attorney General's Office to prepare the Private Recruitment Agencies Bill that would repeal and replace the existing Recruitment of Workers Act. The legislation would regulate the licensing and activities of private recruitment agencies in Mauritius. The Bill would incorporate ethical recruitment standards in line with the recommendations of the International Labour Organization and the International Organization for Migration. It would also serve to increase the powers of the Licensing Authority to include suspension of a licence and increase the liabilities of private recruiting agents towards workers they place or persons to be placed.

6. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the National Cooperative College and the Cooperative Institute of Malaysia. The main objective of the Memorandum of Understanding is to further enhance the networking, strengthen the relationship and consolidate the synergistic efforts between the two institutions. It would also create opportunities to develop programmes for cooperation in training, education and other knowledge-based activities for mutual benefit.

7. Cabinet has agreed to the reopening of the southern part of the Pointe Jérôme embarkation point and two delimited areas inside and outside the lagoon at Pointe d'Esny as

well as maintaining restriction over a radius of 300 metres from the wreck site off lagoon at Pointe d'Esny in the aftermath of the MV Wakashio wreck removal operations.

8. Cabinet has agreed to the Road Development Authority implementing some temporary measures to relieve traffic congestion at the entrance of Vallée des Prêtres, namely at the Abdool Razack Mohamed/Bernardin de St Pierre Junction. As a short term solution, the following measures have been proposed -

- (a) signalisation of existing junctions along the B32 Road;
- (b) provision of a right turning lane for vehicles heading towards Vallée des Prêtres at the B32/B143 junction; and
- (c) construction of a dedicated slip lane which would connect B143 to the Military Road/Abdool Razack Mohamed Streets junction, for traffic coming from Vallée des Prêtres, heading towards Plaine Verte.

9. Cabinet has taken note of the status regarding the implementation of the Premium Visa regime as at 31 March 2022. A total of 2,297 applications for Premium Visa has been received from December 2020 to 31 March 2022. Out of these applications, 239 have not been entertained for not fulfilling the required criteria, 382 applications were incomplete and awaiting missing documents, and 46 applications were set aside as applicants were no longer interested in the Premium Visa scheme.

10. Cabinet has taken note of the status of capital building projects implemented by different Ministries/Departments and which are being administered by the cluster teams of the Technical Sections of the Ministry of National Infrastructure and Community Development.

As at date, some 271 projects have been registered for implementation in the Project Management Information System (PROMIS) which has been developed in-house, by the Ministry of National Infrastructure and Community Development for effective monitoring of the capital building projects. PROMIS is an interactive intelligent information system which allows the technical officers of that Ministry to administer and update progress on projects on a daily basis. The system is also accessible online to authorised officers, including focal points of Ministries/Departments who have been trained on the system, to view the status of their respective projects and also input relevant information as regards actions taken at their level.

11. Cabinet has taken note of the constitution of the National Tripartite Council with the Minister of Labour, Human Resource Development and Training, Minister of Commerce and

Consumer Protection as Chairperson. The main functions of the Council are to make recommendations to Government on the following issues -

- (a) labour, industrial relations and health and safety;
- (b) social and economic policies in the light of changes in the world of work;
- (c) employment policies and job creation;
- (d) skills training and upgrading for greater employability; and
- (e) productivity, competitiveness and efficiency at the workplace.

12. Cabinet has taken note of progress achieved so far regarding the implementation of the Sandbox Framework, introduced in January 2021 to facilitate the development of proof of concepts and pilot exercises to test the possibilities of innovative technologies in Ministries/ Departments.

The Ministry of Public Service, Administrative and Institutional Reforms has so far received 28 projects for consideration from 11 Ministries/Departments and seven projects from a private company geared towards improving quality of service of different Ministries/Departments under the Sandbox Framework. These projects have been assessed by a Technical Committee and 13 of them have been retained for implementation in view of their transformative impact on service delivery.

13. Cabinet has taken note that the Mauritius Revenue Authority would host the following three World Customs Organisation (WCO) Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA) meetings in May 2022 -

- (a) Regional Training Centre Heads Meeting from 5 to 6 May 2022;
- (b) 35th Regional Steering Group Meeting from 9 to 11 May 2022; and
- (c) 28th Governing Council Meeting from 12 to 13 May 2022.

High level officials from the 24 Member Countries of ESA were expected to participate in the meetings which would be in hybrid format in compliance with the sanitary protocol. The 28th Governing Council Meeting would be attended by, amongst others, Dr K. Mikuriya, Secretary General of the WCO, the Vice-Chair of WCO ESA and Commissioner Generals from ten Member States.

14. Cabinet has taken note of the various observations made by the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights following the review of the 9th and 10th Combined Periodic Report of the Republic of Mauritius on the implementation of the African Charter on Human and

Peoples' Rights held virtually on 07 August 2020. These observations were adopted at the 70th Ordinary Session of the Commission held in The Gambia, from 23 February to 09 March 2022.

The State of Mauritius is expected to report on each of the recommendations made in its 11th Periodic Report, which is due in March 2024. The National Mechanism for Reporting and Follow Up would in the near future ventilate the observations made and ensure that remedial actions as appropriate are effected and policy decisions initiated, if warranted. Some of the recommendations made, have already been implemented.

15. Cabinet has taken note of the activities being organised by the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service to mark the International Firefighters' Day on 04 May 2022 at the Coromandel Fire Station. The programme would start with the traditional Sound Off which reflects the commitment and sacrifices of firefighters worldwide in a truly poignant manner for emergency service workers. It would comprise a wreath laying ceremony at the memorial stele of firefighters and blood donation at the Coromandel Fire Station.

A Fire Safety and Emergency Preparedness Campaign for the year 2022 would also be launched on that day. The aim of the campaign is to ensure reduction in risk to the community, through a wide range of appropriate interventions and education programmes in areas such as Fire Safety, Disaster Preparedness, Road Safety, Rope Rescue/Basic Life Support Skills and Hazmat safety.

16. Cabinet has agreed to the Senior Citizens Council, which is an 'approved service', being governed by the Pay Research Bureau.

17. Cabinet has taken note of the activities that the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family Welfare would organise in collaboration with the National Children's Council, in the context of the Day of the African Child 2022 starting as from 01 June 2022 culminating with a Forum Debate on 16 June 2022. The African Union and its Member States commemorate the Day of the African Child on 16 June every year. The theme chosen by the African Union for this year is "*Eliminating Harmful Practices Affecting Children: Progress on Policy and Practice since 2013*". A local theme has been retained.

A Forum Debate on the role and importance of social media among the young generation would be held on 16 June 2022 at the National Women Development Centre, Phoenix. The target audience would be the youth from upper primary and secondary schools. The Ministry would also launch a "16 Days 16 Rights" special campaign which would be based on "Eliminating Harmful Practices Affecting Children" where the young generation would be sensitised on their rights for 16 days, one right per day and also their corresponding duties, responsibilities and obligations.

18. Cabinet has taken note of the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic prevailing across the world. Some 511.8 million cases have been reported globally, of which 465.5 million persons have been successfully treated.

With regard to Mauritius, as at 27 April 2022, there were 293 active cases of COVID-19, out of which 15 were admitted at the New ENT Hospital. Over the period 21 to 27 April 2022, three deaths were attributed to COVID-19.

Cabinet has also taken note of progress in the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme, including the administration of the booster dose in the Republic of Mauritius.

19. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the second edition of the National Innovation Challenge organised by the Mauritius Research and Innovation Council. One of the goals of the competition was to inculcate and nurture an innovation culture amongst the Mauritian population whilst finding practical innovative solutions to common life problems, thereby paving the way for a dynamic, proactive and progressive society.

The three winners of the competition were rewarded, namely Ms Haadeeyah Oozeerally (first prize), the Food and Agricultural Research and Extension Institute (second prize) and Mr Bhooneswar Nunkoo (third prize).

20. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the following Council/Committees under the Clinical Trials Act –

- (a) Clinical Research Regulatory Council with Dr Marie France Lan Man Hiew Chan Sun, as Chairperson;
- (b) Ethics Committee with Mr Dinay Reetoo, as Chairperson; and
- (c) Pharmacovigilance Committee with Dr Teewaree Roupesh Jaggeshar, as Chairperson.
