

HIGHLIGHTS OF CABINET MEETING - FRIDAY 13 JANUARY 2023

1. Cabinet has agreed to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the MP Industrial Development Corporation of Madhya Pradesh, India and the Economic Development Board. The objectives of the Memorandum of Understanding are as follows -

- (a) exchange and dissemination of non-confidential information on all economic and commercial matters, including specific industrial sectors;
- (b) exchange of professional experience relating to services rendered to their members facilitating development of mutually beneficial relationship;
- (c) active promotion of investments/joint ventures and exchange of business delegations;
- (d) support for the organisation of activities such as seminars, conferences, road shows by specialists in Madhya Pradesh and in Mauritius, as well as trade fairs and exhibitions; and
- (e) development and promotion of linkages between industries in both countries.

2. Cabinet has agreed to the Terms of Reference that establishes the principles, methodology and scope for the negotiation of a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) between the United Arab Emirates and Mauritius.

The CEPA would include, inter alia, Chapters on Trade in Goods, Rules of Origin, Customs Administration and Trade Facilitation, Trade Remedies, Investment Facilitation, Trade in Services, Transparency in Government Procurement, Intellectual Property Right, Innovation and Technology Transfer, Economic Cooperation, Competition and Dispute Settlement.

3. Cabinet has agreed to the promulgation of the Information and Communication Technologies (Registration of SIM) (Amendment) Regulations 2023 so as to postpone the effective date of the Regulations to 30 June 2023 instead of 16 January 2023, and the deadline for registration of existing SIM cards from 31 July 2023 to 31 December 2023 in order to enable the operators to connect their system with all the stakeholders concerned at the same time. The Information and Communication Technologies (Registration of SIM) Regulations 2021 were promulgated in December 2021 to control the sale and use of Subscriber Identity Module (SIM) cards in line with the recommendations of the Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Drug Trafficking published in 2018.

4. Cabinet has agreed to the Environment Protection (Control of Single Use Plastic Products) Regulations 2020 being amended to extend by two years, that is, from 15 January 2023 up to 14 January 2025, the moratorium for the banning of the following non-biodegradable single use products -

- (a) plastic bowls and plastic cups used solely for the packaging of food products such as dairy products; and
- (b) plastic trays used solely for the Modified Atmosphere Packaging of food such as fresh meat and pre-cooked/cooked food products.

Challenges are still being encountered by the local manufacturing industries, particularly regarding the packaging of certain foodstuffs. Pending a complete ban on the non-biodegradable single-use plastic bowls, cups and trays for these products, local manufacturing industries would be urged to send their plastic wastes to recyclers and to participate in clean-up campaigns.

5. Cabinet has agreed to the Agricultural Marketing Board being designated as the sole importer of onions and potatoes for year 2023 in order to have control over the total supply of these strategic products and ensure continuous availability of same on the local market at competitive prices for the public at large. No import permits would be issued to other importers for the year 2023, similar to years 2021 and 2022

6. Cabinet has agreed to the Ministry of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping authorising the extension period for the importation of “*Capitaine*” fish (*Lethrinus sp.*) until the end of February 2023.

7. Cabinet has taken note of the status regarding the implementation of the Premium Visa regime as at 31 December 2022. Some 4,313 applications were received from mid-November 2020 to 31 December 2022, out of which –

- (a) 3,282 applications have been approved;
- (b) 600 applications have not been entertained for not fulfilling the required criteria;
- (c) 375 applications were incomplete and awaiting missing documents; and
- (d) 56 applications were set aside as applicants were no longer interested in the Premium Visa scheme.

8. Cabinet has taken note of the programme of activities being organised in the context of the National Spring Festival 2023 by the United Chinese Associations, the Chinese Embassy and the China Cultural Centre in collaboration with the Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage, namely –

- (a) the Annual Spring Festival Banquet on 18 January 2023 at the Hua Lien Club, Trianon. A cultural show would be held during the Banquet with the participation of local artists;
- (b) a Float Parade on 03 February 2023, highlighting Chinese traditions such as the plugging of “Foong Pao” and fireworks as well as portraying the Chinese culture; and
- (c) a recorded Folklore Cultural Programme to be broadcast on MBC on 22 January 2023.

9. Cabinet has taken note that the price of sugar for Crop 2022, inclusive of the value of molasses by-product has been fixed as follows –

Growing Side	-	Rs21,917/T of sugar @ 98.5% Pol
Milling Side	-	Rs21,000/T of sugar @ 98.5% Pol

The new prices have already been communicated to the Sugar Insurance Fund Board, for the determination of the general insurance premium for that crop year and the compensation to be paid in case of declaration of Event Year.

10. Cabinet has taken note of the National Action Plan on the Prevention and Control of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) in the Republic of Mauritius for Years 2023 to 2027 developed by the Ministry of Health and Wellness, in collaboration with the World Health Organization and various stakeholders.

The National Action Plan provides a roadmap for collaborative and complementary actions to reduce the impact of STIs in the Republic of Mauritius. The plan sets forth a clear national vision with goals, objectives, strategies, actions and indicators to drive the national response under four priority areas across the STI continuum of care, namely prevention, testing, treatment as well as ongoing care and support to populations who are particularly vulnerable to STIs, including the youths, pregnant women, mobile population (seafarers, migrant workers, foreign workers and foreign students) and other key populations.

11. Cabinet has agreed to Mauritius hosting the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) Workshop on Tax Governance, Anti-Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing (AML/CFT) from 26 to 30 January 2023.

The objectives of the Workshop are -

- (a) sharing experiences and best practices from Member States to train a critical mass of experts who can provide support for capacity building on Tax Good Governance and AML/CFT in interested OACPS countries;
- (b) engagement in a high-level dialogue between the OACPS Ministers and the EU Commissioner for Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Markets Union; and
- (c) envisaging possible partnership agreements between countries on Tax Good Governance and AML/CFT.

The Workshop would be attended by some 34 OACPS Member countries.

12. Cabinet has taken note of developments with regard to the technical assistance being provided by the European Union under the Migration EU Expertise (MIEUX+) initiative to enhance the capacity of the Mauritian authorities to combat Trafficking in Persons.

The MIEUX+ team would organise a workshop from 23 to 26 January 2023, aiming at developing Standard Operating Procedures on investigation and prosecution of trafficking cases and for the management of shelters for male adult victims. The objective of the workshop is to enable the participants to develop, with the support of the MIEUX+ experts, the structure for various Standard Operating Procedures.

13. Cabinet has taken note that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) would conduct an Integrated Nuclear Security and Support Plan (INSSP) Review Mission for Mauritius from 06 to 10 February 2023 and a one-day national workshop to raise awareness on nuclear security for senior Government officials on 06 February 2023. The main objectives of the Review Mission are to -

- (a) raise awareness on nuclear security and to provide a broad overview on how to develop, maintain and sustain a national nuclear security regime;
- (b) identify and consolidate our nuclear security needs into the INSSP for Mauritius, that includes the necessary nuclear security improvements, based on the IAEA's Nuclear Security Series publications, to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of our national nuclear security regime; and

- (c) provide a customised framework, within the INSSP for Mauritius, for coordinating and implementing nuclear security activities conducted by the State concerned, the IAEA and other partners.

14. Cabinet has taken note that the Data Protection Office would organise a Conference on 30 January 2023 to celebrate the Data Protection Day 2023. The theme would be “*The protection of personal data across all economic sectors in Mauritius*”.

The objective of the Conference would be to underscore the importance of protection of personal data in the conduct of business to build trust among data subjects. Organisations dealing with personal data would be encouraged to strengthen their data protection implementation framework and would be motivated to embark on Data Protection Certification. A newly completed e-services of the Data Protection Office, namely the “e-DPO” would be officially launched to showcase the increasing number of online services provided by Government to ease the life of citizens and organisations.

15. Cabinet has taken note of the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic prevailing in Mauritius. As at 11 January 2023 there were 40 active cases of COVID-19, out of which 12 were admitted at the New ENT Hospital. Over the period 05 to 11 January 2023, one death was attributed to COVID-19.

16. Cabinet has taken note that there was no suspected case of mpox in Mauritius during the period 05 to 11 January 2023.

17. Cabinet has taken note of the outcome of the Extraordinary Council of Ministers of the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) which was held recently in a virtual mode. The main issues raised at the meeting were, inter alia, -

- (a) Observer Status of IOC with the African Union;
- (b) the 5th IOC Summit of Head of States and Government to be held in 2023;
- (c) Maritime Security;
- (d) *Règlement Intérieur* of the IOC; and
- (e) *Plan de Développement Stratégique* (PDS) 2023 – 2033 and *COI Horizon 2030* which is meant to fund the PDS over the next four years and to enable a restructuring of the Secretariat.

18. Cabinet has taken note of the election of Mr Mahendranath Busgopaul and Mr Vinesh Chintaram as Deputy Chairperson (Eastern Africa region) and Member of the 4th Permanent General Assembly of the African Union Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC), respectively in December 2022. Mr Busgopaul is the Secretary General of the Halley Movement and Mr Chintaram is the CEO of VISIOArchitecture.

19. Cabinet has taken note of the reconstitution of the Board of the Higher Education Commission with Dr Abdess Salem Saumtally as part-time Chairperson.
