



### **Economic outlook from Mauritius**

The COVID-19 pandemic is severely impacting on the world economy. In 2020, global output contracted by 3.5%. In Mauritius, GDP fell by around 15.2% in real terms.

Bold measures taken by Government to mitigate the negative impact of the pandemic on the economy and save thousands of jobs –

- Wage Assistance Scheme;
- Self-Employed Assistance Scheme and
- Other support provided to businesses and individuals.

The significant costs of these support schemes, together with the shortfall in tax revenue arising from the contraction in economic activities, have weighed heavily on public finances, leading to a rise in public sector debt.

With the gradual rollout of vaccine programmes and additional fiscal support across countries, global economic prospects for 2021 have improved.

Main concern of Government is, therefore, to direct our resources and efforts towards policy responses that will help us ride through the negative impact of the second lockdown, strengthen our economic recovery, boost investment, create more employment opportunities, address public health and climate change issues, while at the same time embarking on a medium-term fiscal consolidation programme.

Budget 2021/2022 will focus mainly on reducing recurrent expenditure by 25% compared to the voted provisions for FY 2020-2021, implementing projects and schemes that have high impact on growth and job creation and reviewing processes and procedures to ensure effective and timely implementation of projects, and improvement in service delivery.



## **Financing options for the vaccination programme**

Health is considered as a basic human right and is free of user cost in Mauritius.

The Expanded Immunisation Programme covers 100 % of the population.

Government also provides free vaccination to all persons aged 60 and above, persons with severe disabilities and children attending specialized schools for disabled with the Anti-influenza vaccines.

Government of Mauritius is convinced that vaccination of the population is the only option to be able to open our borders and give a boost to our economy. A High-Level Committee under the Chairmanship of the Hon. Prime Minister is having daily meetings to take stock of the evolution of the Pandemic in Mauritius and facilitate the National Vaccination Programme. The full procurement of vaccines against Covid-19 is being taken care of by Government. The vaccination programme is being financed from the National Budget.

The National Covid-19 Vaccination Programme Fund has been set up as a Special Fund under the Finance and Audit Act, to finance the National Covid-19 Vaccination Programme.

The objective of the Fund is to mobilise and manage the funds required for the implementation of the Programme, including the costs of the vaccines, storage equipment, air freight and other logistic.

The Fund consists of:

- sums received from the National Budget;
- contributions from public enterprises and statutory bodies;
- contributions and donations from the private sector and
- contributions, donations, grants etc. from any national or international organization, development partners, friendly countries, or persons.

Individuals contributing to the Fund are eligible for tax rebate.

The Fund has received contributions of Rs 431,916,998.



## **Vaccination Programme**

In collaboration with all stakeholders and with the assistance of the World Health Organisation, the Ministry of Health and Wellness has developed the National Deployment and Vaccination Programme, which lays down the vaccination strategy, procurement of vaccines, storage, distribution, cold-chain management, training of personnel, among others. In accordance with the Programme, Mauritius aims at vaccinating about 70 % of our population by July 2021.

Mauritius has initiated procedures for the procurement of vaccines through various sources, both at multilateral level and development partners as well as through bilateral cooperation.

- (i) Through the COVAX facility, the Mauritian allocation is for 507,200 doses of which 100,800 doses of AstraZeneca vaccines were to be supplied in March/April. However, up to now we have received only 24,000 doses.

Payments made up to now are as follows:

Down payment: USD 811,521 and a Bank Guarantee of USD 3,350,690

USD 451,658 for the supply of 100,800 doses of AstraZeneca, including freight, insurance and handling charges.

- (ii) Through the African Union, the African Medical Supplies Platform where our allocation is 151,231 doses of Johnson & Johnson for which an amount of USD 230,198 has been paid as 15 % down payment.
- (iii) Serum Institute of India from whom we have received 100,000 doses of Covishield as donation and purchased 100,000 doses for an amount of USD 523,501.78. 200,000 doses are still outstanding.
- (iv) Bharat Biotechnologies India Limited from whom we have purchased 200,000 doses of Covaxin at the price of USD 3,456,702.10.
- (v) 100,000 doses of Sinopharm vaccines received as donation from the People's Republic of China.



- (vi) An order has also been placed on the Russian Direct Investment Fund for the supply of 1,250,000 dose of Sputnik vaccines at the rate of USD 19.90 per dose. The order has not yet been confirmed.
- (vii) An order has been placed on the Afreximbank for the supply of 700,000 doses of Johnson and Johnson vaccines at the rate of USD 10 per dose. A down payment of USD 1,050,000 has been effected.

The National Deployment and Vaccination Programme has established priorities for the vaccination programme:

- Priority No. 1 covers 15,000 frontline healthcare workers; 5,000 frontline Police and Prison Officers and 25,000 other frontliners;
- Priority No. 2 covers 9,000 healthcare workers from the public and private sectors; 10,000 personnel from the Mauritius Police Force and 52,000 other essential workers;
- Priority No. 3 covers persons above the age of 60 years and
- Priority No. 4 covers adults with at least two co-morbidities, residents of dedicated homes, teaching and non-teaching staff of educational institutions, fire fighters, staff of supermarkets, bank front office personnel and scavenging personnel.

Training of personnel was undertaken to ensure that everyone is aware of the procurement cycle, cold-chain maintenance, deployment around vaccination centres, reporting of adverse effects following immunization, management of waste and pharmacovigilance activities.

Interagency collaboration between Ministries of Finance, Health, Agriculture and others, has been established in order to reduce costs.

Moreover, Ministry of Health has been using its own facilities to carry out the vaccination. We have also been able to secure the services of private clinics for the vaccination.

The vaccination started on 26 January 2021 and as at date we have been able to vaccinate a little over 208,000 persons with the first dose. The administration of the second dose has just started.



However, there a lot of uncertainties regarding availability of additional vaccines to continue with the vaccination campaign and achieve our target off vaccinating 70% of our population by July 2021. However, Government of Mauritius at its highest level is committed to attain this target. We are carrying out an intense procurement campaign both through our development partners and at bilateral level to secure adequate quantity of vaccines. The Honourable Prime Minister has also invested himself personally in this exercise.

Thank you.