

**REPUBLIC OF BURUNDI****PRESIDENCY OF THE REPUBLIC  
Secretariat-General of the State****MEDIA RELEASE NO 10 CONSECUTIVE TO THE CABINET MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 09 DECEMBER 2020**

A Cabinet Meeting was held on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> of December 2020, under the chairmanship of His Excellency Evariste Ndayishimiye, President of the Republic of Burundi. The following items were analyzed:

1. Draft organic law reassigning the powers of the Anti-Corruption Court and its General Prosecutor's Office as well as the reorganization of the Anti-Corruption Brigade, presented by the Minister of Justice.

This project intervenes to determine the new approach of the Government in the fight against corruption by restructuring the institutions in charge of the fight against corruption and related offenses in order to bring the anti-corruption criminal justice closer to litigants.

The abolition of the anti-corruption court in favor of the high courts and the courts of appeal appears to be a better approach.

Indeed, even if with the current structure of the Government, the Ministry of Good Governance which exercised the supervision over the institutions responsible for the fight against corruption does not appear, the Government is determined to continue the fight against corruption.

In order to fight effectively against this phenomenon of corruption, the project creates anti-corruption sections within the Public Prosecutor's Offices and Public Prosecutors on the one hand, and Anti-Corruption Chambers at the High Courts and Courts of Appeal on the other hand.

In the effectiveness of the penal response to the phenomenon of corruption, the investigation services play a preponderant role.

This is why the Anti-Corruption Brigade to which the investigative mission is entrusted also deserves to be reorganized for more efficiency, with this concern of the Government to have a single and unified police force.

After discussion and debate, the project was adopted with the recommendation of:

- Creating anti-corruption sections within the Prosecutor's Office and General Prosecutor's Office, and anti-corruption chambers at the High Courts and Courts of Appeal.
- Entrust the pre-trial phase in the fight against corruption to a specialized anti-corruption unit of the Judicial Police.

**2. Draft decree establishing, organizing and operating the Burundian Regulatory Authority for Medicines for Human Use and Food, presented by the Minister of Public Health and the Fight against AIDS.**

In order to respond to the new policies and challenges of the pharmaceutical sector, law n ° 1/11 of May 08, 2020 regulating the practice of pharmacy and drugs for human use has been implemented.

This law provides for the establishment of a Regulatory Authority for Medicines for Human Use and Food "ABREMA".

This project will implement this law.

ABREMA will be responsible for the regulation of all aspects related to the quality assurance and safety of products such as prefabricated and packaged foods, medicines for human use, cosmetics and dietetics, herbal medicines, traditional medicines, medical devices, materials or substances used in the manufacture of products the consumption of which may harm human health.

At the end of the discussions, the project was adopted with, among other recommendations, to endow ABREMA, like the other structures that generate a lot of funds for the Treasury, with sufficient operating resources so that it continues to effectively accomplish its missions.

**3. Draft revised National Defense Policy, presented by the Minister of National Defense and Veterans Affairs.**

Today and in the future, Burundi faces various threats to its security and stability.

It is therefore imperative to develop its capabilities within the National Defense Force to deter and neutralize potential enemies, and thus ensure an environment conducive to economic and social development.

The national defense policy aims to determine the main directives which outline the essential military capacities so that the National Defense Force accomplishes its missions effectively.

This revised national defense policy comes in order to adapt the one adopted in 2013 to the fundamental documents which are the Constitution of 2018, the organic law governing the National Defense Force of 2017 and the National Development Plan.

This revision is an important step in the ongoing process of professionalization and modernization of the National Defense Force.

Given that the threats that the country intends to face are both internal and external and that the security of a country is not the sole preserve of the armed forces, this policy outlines the responsibilities of all the actors in terms of security.

After exchange and debate, the draft policy was adopted.

**4.** Draft decree revising decree n ° 100/15 of January 30, 2017 reorganizing the National Land Commission and its Permanent Secretariat, presented by the Prime Minister's Services.

The National Land Commission was instituted by the Land Code with the particular mission of monitoring the proper application of land legislation. It is organized by decree n ° 100/15 of January 30, 2017. It was placed under the coordination of the 2nd Vice-Presidency of the Republic.

In accordance with Decree No.100 / 065 of September 22, 2020 on the organization and functioning of the Prime Minister's office, the Permanent

Secretariat of the Commission is today a specialized service attached to the Prime Minister's Office.

There is a need to revise the decree that organizes this Commission to adapt it to the legal and regulatory texts in force.

This project proposes a light structure compared to the one that was in place for more efficiency.

At the end of the debate, the project was adopted with some modifications.

## 5. Motivational note for the refinancing of COGERCO for the development of the cotton sector in Burundi, presented by the Minister of the Environment, Agriculture and Livestock.

The cotton sector is of great importance for the Burundian economy as it is the main supplier of raw material to the textile industry. Formerly, it was the second largest source of foreign exchange after coffee.

Endogenous and exogenous factors prevented COGERCO from promoting and ensuring the sustained production which the country needed to develop the cotton-textile-clothing sector. These factors include:

- Insufficient land
- Poor mechanization
- Financial difficulties
- Etc....

As part of the revival of cotton production, the Government of Burundi adopted the National Strategy for the Revitalization of the Cotton-Textile-Clothing Sector in 2019, which is not yet operational to date.

In addition, the Government signed, in May 2020, a memorandum of understanding with the company AFRITEXTILE to revitalize the cotton sector, but this company has not yet fulfilled its commitments.

However, it is more than urgent to revitalize this sector so that it can contribute to the growth of the national economy.

From the retreat organized in August 2020 to reflect on ways and means to revitalize the sector, two alternatives were proposed:

- Government's own financing by mobilizing FBU 8,747,400,000 in favor of COGERCO so that it produces 6,000 tons of cotton per year on 3,000 hectares. It will take ownership of all the links in the sector from production to marketing of the product by planning to repay the debt over a period of three years
- Partnership between the Government and the AFRITEXTILE Company.

After discussion and debate, the Council noted that if it is a question of financing, it will be focused on the development of cotton cultivation. It is not about financing COGERCO but rather about finding ways and means to increase cotton production.

It was therefore requested to continue the path of partnership with the company AFRITEXTILE which will develop cotton cultivation on land granted to it by the State. The terms of this partnership will be defined.

**6.** Draft ministerial order regulating the sale and transport prices of forest products and their derivatives from State forests and afforestation, presented by the Minister of the Environment, Agriculture and Livestock.

The 2016 Forest Code makes the issuance of a logging permit subject to the prior payment of the logging authorization fees determined by an ordinance of the Ministers having forests and finances in their attributions, as well as the payment of transport costs.

It is therefore to operationalize the provisions of this Code that this project is proposed.

In addition, the selling prices of timber in Burundi have long been underestimated in relation to production costs. There is an urgent need to adjust them according to production costs and the current market price situation.

After discussion and debate, the Council noted that the state does not plant trees for sale.

Thus, this draft ordinance needs to be reoriented because it must regulate the felling of private timbers. From now on, before asking for authorization to cut, the private sector must first show the trees that they have planted to replace

those they want to fell, according to the principle "who reforest cuts" and not "who cuts reforests" .

In addition, there should be a preliminary work of marking the trees to be cut which would be done step by step, in order to avoid razing all the tree plantations.

It was also recommended to study strategies to use metal scaffolding during construction instead of wood, in order to preserve trees and thus protect the environment.

## 7. Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Republic of Burundi and the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania for the establishment and operationalization of a Tanzanian Ports Authority Liaison Office in Bujumbura, presented by the Minister of Commerce , Transport, Industry and Tourism

The management of the Tanzanian Ports is ensured by the "Tanzanian Ports Authority" which ensures the management of all the related problems, so that the users receive their cargoes without difficulty.

During the meetings of the East African Community, it was recommended that the managers of the Ports in Tanzania and Kenya open their agencies in landlocked countries to allow users not to make a lot of trips which have an impact on the prices of imported products.

This Memorandum of Understanding between the Republic of Burundi and the United Republic of Tanzania is part of this process of effective regional integration and aims to strengthen bilateral trade relations between the two countries.

The opening of this office in Bujumbura will allow the Government of Burundi on the one hand and Burundian businessmen on the other hand, to minimize the foreign exchange costs associated with travel to Dar es Salaam.

At the end of the analysis, the Memorandum was adopted with the reminder to members of the Government to each time submit before the analysis of the Council of Ministers the Memoranda to be signed.

8. Note on a request from the Association of Banks and Financial Institutions of Burundi (ABEF) to the Government of Burundi to build a large shopping center on the ruins of the former central market of Bujumbura, presented by the Services of the Prime Minister.

As a reminder, the central market in Bujumbura caught fire on the morning of January 28, 2013, leaving behind the destruction of all the goods that were there and all the structure that supported the infrastructure.

The operation file for the site of the central market in Bujumbura has been the subject of analysis by the Council of Ministers on numerous occasions since 2016.

The various calls for tenders launched were unsuccessful.

Through this request, the Association of Banks and Financial Institutions of Burundi (ABEF) would like to materialize its commitment to play a leading role in the development of the country in general and that of the city of Bujumbura in particular. The college of bank and financial institution leaders expressed interest in the development project of a shopping center on the Former Central Market square of Bujumbura.

The banking sector proposes the execution of this project through a public-private partnership whose main shareholders would be banks and financial institutions whose capital contribution would come from investment reserves, and the State of Burundi whose contribution would be the land.

To enhance the capital, the shareholding may be open to any other private or institutional investor according to the conditions to be defined in the articles of association of an investment company to be created for this purpose.

The financing of the project will consist of:

- The capital released by Burundi's banks and financial institutions from investment reserves
- Other private and institutional investors
- Loans from international financial institutions

After discussion and debate, the Cabinet gave its agreement in principle for the continuation of the project, but that the shareholding should be opened up to people who have sufficient financial capacity because it is an infrastructure that will require a lot of resources.

It was recommended to the representatives of the State and to those of the Association of Banks and Financial Institutions to get together to develop a roadmap as well as a chronogram of activities, and if necessary give themselves a clear and precise start and end of the execution of the works, so that the center is effectively operational within a reasonable timeframe, because Burundians have been waiting impatiently for the rehabilitation of this market for a long time.

## 9. Any Other Business

- The Minister of Communication, Information Technologies and Media briefed the Council on the implementation of the agreement signed between the Government of the Republic of Burundi and the Government of the People's Republic of China which relates to a donation of 190,000 decoders. This donation was granted as part of the migration to digital television broadcasting in Burundi.

- His Excellency the President of the Republic expressed his satisfaction for the fact that Burundi has been removed from the political agenda of the United Nations Security Council. This is indeed another page that has been turned both for Burundi and for its partners.

As the time is right to devote focus more to development activities, he asked that concrete projects to be submitted to partners be developed and that budget support for the day-to-day functioning of the State no longer form part of the financing to be negotiated.

He also recalled that requests for official audiences with state institutions must pass through the channel of the Ministry in charge of Foreign Affairs.

Adjourning the Meeting, His Excellency the President of the Republic informed the members of the Government that a government retreat is scheduled from



December 21 to 22, 2020 and that the latter will focus mainly on the assessment of the state of implementation of the basic principles of "Reta Mvyeyi, Reta Nkozi".

**Done at Bujumbura, December 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020**

**Prosper NTAHORWAMIYE  
Secretary-General and Spokesman.-**