

REPUBLIC OF BURUNDI**PRESIDENCY OF THE REPUBLIC
Secretariat-General of the State****MEDIA RELEASE NO 13 CONSECUTIVE TO THE CABINET MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 17 FEBRUARY 2021**

A Cabinet Meeting was held in Bujumbura on Wednesday 17th of February 2021, under the chairmanship of His Excellency Evariste Ndayishimiye, President of the Republic of Burundi.

After the presentation of the agenda, His Excellency the President of the Republic invited the Prime Minister to present the summary of the observations resulting from the preparatory meeting of the Council of Ministers chaired by the Prime Minister on Friday 12 February 2021 , and which was devoted to the analysis of the same items on the agenda.

After restitution of the Prime Minister to the President of the Republic, the following files were analyzed:

1. Bill on the Code of Investments in Burundi, presented by the Services of the Presidency of the Republic.

During the Government Retreat held in Bukirasazi in April 2017, one of the recommendations was the revision of the legal framework on tax and customs incentives.

It is in this context that the project revising the Investment Code was drawn up and debated in July 2017 during a retreat intended for representatives of public institutions involved in the granting and management of tax incentives and customs.

This Bill thus contains much enrichment compared to the text in force.

Compared to the existing ones, the following innovations should be highlighted:

- The change of the name of the Investment Promotion Agency which became the Burundi Development Agency
- Strengthening the role of the Burundi Development Agency as it now becomes the sole interlocutor and the sole facilitator of investment activities
- The very purpose of the law has been changed by adding investment facilitation and export promotion
- The granting of advantages to a specific category of investors, in this case young people, women and the diaspora
- The definition of the investment sectors and the minimum eligible investment amount
- Strengthening and clarifying the monitoring and evaluation framework for exempt assets, in particular by granting the benefits according to the stages of the investment
- Transparency and clarification of the benefits to which investors are entitled
- Investor obligations
- The specification of the penalties in the event of failure to comply with the obligations contained in this Code
- The provision of remedies for any investor who feels aggrieved by a decision taken by the Agency

During the debate by members of the Government, the following observations among others emerged:

- There may be interference with other legal frameworks which grant advantages (Cooperatives, Free Zone, Special Economic Zone, etc.)
- There are overlaps between the missions of the Agency and those of certain ministries, particularly those in charge of Trade, Finance and Foreign Affairs
- The agency grants benefits, actually tracks them to make sure they were used for the purpose for which they were granted. The "export" component should not fall under the competence of the Agency because there are other structures that are responsible for it
- For the minimum investment required, it must be expressed in US \$ for foreigners and in Burundian Francs for Burundians

At the end of the discussions, the project was adopted taking into account these observations in its finalization

2. Draft decree establishing, steering and coordinating the Economic Empowerment Program for Young Graduates, presented by the Services of the Presidency of the Republic

Burundi, like most African countries, is characterized by dizzying population growth with over 60% of the youth. Thus, it faces a worrying situation between the demand for and the supply of employment. The unemployment rate is very high.

The establishment of training-employment programs, professional retraining, the creation of development micro-projects, are solutions to this problem.

This Program has among other objectives to improve the living conditions of young unemployed people so that they contribute to the development of Burundi.

It puts youth at the heart of development in order to make them autonomous by fighting against unemployment. It reinforces the patriotism and empowerment of young people in development actions.

This program will be implemented in all the municipalities of the country.

It aims to create at least 200,000 jobs for young graduates through cooperatives and existing businesses, and 550,000 indirect jobs for unschooled unemployed young people (gravel, bricks, sands, tree planting, etc.).

After discussion and debate, the project was adopted through grooming by a team appointed for this purpose, with the recommendation that, in the implementation of this program, all municipalities be treated fairly. The title of the text should also be corrected because the Program concerns all unemployed young people in general and young graduates in particular.

3. Draft decree revising decree n ° 100/068 of April 13, 2019 on the creation, organization, missions and functioning of the Multisectoral Platform for Food Security and Nutrition in Burundi, presented by the Prime Minister's Services

The Multisectoral Food Security and Nutrition Platform was set up by decree n ° 100/068 of April 13, 2019.

With the restructuring of the Government by Decree No. 100/007 of June 28, 2020, there have been changes at the institutional level and this structure, which was under the supervision of the 2nd Vice-Presidency of the Republic, has come under the supervision of the Prime Minister.

It is therefore essential to adjust the texts relating to the Multisectoral Platform for Food Security and Nutrition, in accordance with the new structure of the Government.

After discussion and debate, the project was adopted after having undergone some corrections.

4. Draft decree revising Decree No. 100/06 of January 9, 2013 creating a Geomatics Centralization Office, presented by the Prime Minister's Services

The main mission of the Geomatics Centralization Office is to coordinate all activities aimed at creating a national spatial data infrastructure in Burundi, to consolidate and organize the exchange and dissemination of geographic information between all partners, producers and users at national, regional and international levels.

Due to its transversal nature, it had been placed under the supervision of the 2nd Vice-Presidency of the Republic.

But with the new structure of the Government by decree n ° 100/007 of June 28, 2020, it came under the supervision of the Prime Minister.

It is thus necessary to adapt the text which organizes the Geomatics Centralization Office to the new context.

After the analysis, the project was adopted after having undergone some alterations.

5. Draft decree on the missions, organization and functioning of the National School of Administration (ENA), presented by the Minister of Public Service, Labor and Employment.

Since its creation in 2007, the Ecole Normale d'Administration (ENA) has been mandated to provide training in relation to the needs of the Burundian public administration, to promote applied research in key areas related to the functioning of the administration, and provide advisory support to public and Para public administrations.

Little by little, the ENA has changed by adding diploma training to the on-the-job training that it was originally called upon to provide.

Currently, the ENA needs to be reformed to be part of the new line of economic development reforms and the fight against poverty contained in the National Development Plan which, in some of its pillars, aims to develop human capital.

Thus, the missions of the ENA must be redesigned. The abolition of diploma training should allow the ENA to focus on activities related to the development of executives and civil servants, coaching and advisory support in certain areas of expertise, support public policies of the State and to ensure the quality assurance of all the training offered to the executives and agents of the State, in order to contribute to the improvement of the performance of the Burundian public administration.

This is the purpose of this draft decree.

After discussion and debate, the project was adopted with, among other recommendations, to elevate the Directorate of ENA into a Directorate-General supported by Directorates, and to set the period of support for students in diploma training at three years.

It was also recommended to consider, after the end of the transitional period of support for graduate students, the merger of ENA and ISGE.

6. Draft decree on the missions, organization and functioning of the Higher Institute of Business Management (ISGE), presented by the Minister of Public Service, Labor and Employment

From its creation, the Higher Institute of Business Management had the following missions:

- Ensure the specialization and development of executives exercising management functions in public and private companies and other organizations
- Retrain, through seminars and specialized conferences, the staff responsible for the management of public and private companies and other organizations
- Organize and distribute, for the benefit of said companies and with the help of various publications, documentation in the field of management.

This triple mission is the one that the Government wishes to strengthen for ISGE in order to leave the diploma training component to the universities and institutes with this academic mission.

This draft decree adjusts the missions of the ISGE according to this orientation and reframes its supervision which now falls to the Ministry of the Civil Service and Employment.

After discussion and debate, the project was adopted with, among other recommendations, to clean up the text by removing everything related to diploma training because the mission of the ISGE is the improvement in business management, and to ensure that ISGE strengthens the practical component in the modules it offers.

It was also recommended to elevate the ISGE Directorate to a General Directorate.

7. Draft decree regulating the management of poles, presented by the Minister of the Environment, Agriculture and Livestock

The poles are used for various services including the construction of houses, fences, scaffolding, etc.

The quantities of poles used are increasing day by day. This causes the forest cover to decrease. The main consequences are timber scarcity, forest degradation, loss of diversity, soil erosion, land degradation, increased air pollution, etc.

To ensure the sustainable management of forest resources and mitigate the negative impact of the misuse of these resources, it is important to lay down rules governing the management of the use of forest products, starting with poles which are currently the most in demand.

This is the purpose of this draft decree.

After discussion and debate, the Council of Ministers noted that the implementation of such regulations requires prerequisites.

It recommended first evaluating the preventive measures that have already been taken in this context and, if necessary, strengthening them.

He further recommended considering measures that encourage the use of other wood substitutes such as metal scaffolding, gas, etc., by granting facilities to those who want to import them.

The Minister in charge of the Interior and that in charge of the Environment should also sensitize the various provincial and municipal officials under their orders on the importance and interest of the good management of afforestation.

**8. Note on the state of operationalization of the main mission of CAMEBU:
Monopoly in the importation of drugs for the whole country, presented
by the Minister of Public Health and the Fight against AIDS**

The main mission entrusted to CAMEBU by the Government is "to ensure a good supply of essential generic drugs, medical devices, products and laboratory materials necessary for the proper functioning of public and private health facilities and pharmacies"

It is to meet this mission that the Government Retreat held in Gitega in December 2018 recommended the extension of CAMEBU's coverage of national health product needs, by centralizing the needs of both public and private health facilities.

Before 2018, CAMEBU's needs satisfaction rate was 15%.

With direct consultation with manufacturers, the satisfaction rate increased from 15% to 40% in 2020.

With the BADEA funds, the satisfaction rate has risen to only 60%.

To ensure drug coverage of 100% of national needs, CAMEBU needs a fund of 34,627,600,000 FBU intended to:

- The purchase of drugs and other health products
- Construction of storage spaces in Bujumbura, Gitega and Ngozi
- Acquisition of means of transporting medicines

The note requests the intervention of the Government from the authorized institutions of the State so that CAMEBU can benefit from this financing in the

form of credit at the preferential rate, which it will reimburse within a period that may later allow it financial autonomy (at least 15 years)

During the discussions and the debate, the members of the Government made the following observations:

- CAMEBU needs to be supported so that the public and private sectors can source the drugs and other health products in the quantities they need
- As a first step, CAMEBU should focus efforts on the public sector so that it imports drugs in sufficient quantity and at prices that encourage private individuals to purchase them
- CAMEBU must be the gateway for all drugs entering the country, including those imported by the private sector, to ensure that they meet the required standards
- It is necessary to carry out an audit on the functioning of CAMEBU
- CAMEBU should not limit itself to the import of generic drugs only. Imports must extend to specialties.

The Council ultimately called for the review of the legal framework of CAMEBU so that it can properly fulfill its role.

9. Any Other Business

The Council of Ministers expressed its satisfaction for the results achieved by the Ministry in charge of the Interior during the test week in the collection of municipal taxes, as well as by the work done by the Ministry in charge of Trade with regard to concerns the fight against speculation in the marketing of BUCECO cement.

The Council of Ministers is also pleased that the measures taken to prevent and fight against the coronavirus have yielded very satisfactory results in view of the statistics which show that contaminations have decreased significantly in recent weeks.

The Council nevertheless urged the population to continue to apply the measures that have been taken in the fight against this pandemic.

Done at Bujumbura, February 18th, 2021

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