

REPUBLIC OF BURUNDI**PRESIDENCY OF THE REPUBLIC
Secretariat-General of the State****MEDIA RELEASE NO 16 CONSECUTIVE TO THE CABINET
MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 07 April 2021**

A Cabinet Meeting was held in Bujumbura on Wednesday 7th of April 2021, under the chairmanship of His Excellency Evariste Ndayishimiye, President of the Republic of Burundi.

Before presenting the agenda, His Excellency the President of the Republic congratulated the new Minister of National Education and Scientific Research for the confidence bestowed upon him and welcomed him to the Council of Ministers.

He also wished him good success in the mission of implementing the country's education policy entrusted to him, because it is his ministry that is responsible for training the experts that all services in the country need. He told him that the Government must work in close collaboration as a whole, be united to be complementary in all sectors and that one should not hesitate to seek the advice or support of colleagues when necessary.

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 the 1st of April 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 items were analyzed:

1. Roadmap and Memorandum of Understanding for the construction of a shopping centre on the ruins of the central market of Bujumbura, presented by the Services of the Prime Minister.

On December 9, 2020, the Council of Ministers analyzed a 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 centre on the ruins of the former central market of Bujumbura.

The Council of Ministers had given its agreement in principle for the continuation of the project, and had, among other things, recommended to the representatives of the State and to those of the Association of Banks and Financial Institutions to come together to develop a roadmap, and eventually a schedule of activities, and if necessary, give oneself a clear and precise schedule of the start and end of the execution of the works, so that the center is effectively operational within a reasonable timeframe, because the Burundians have been waiting for a long time looking forward to the rehabilitation of this market.

This roadmap presented for the implementation of the project includes all the activities to be carried out from the establishment of the joint technical commission until the official inauguration of the large shopping center that will have been built on this site. It is expected that the construction works will last five years.

The official inauguration of this Center is scheduled for April 3, 2026.

As for the Memorandum of Understanding, it fixes the financial package of the project via the creation of a joint investment company, indicates the obligations of each of the parties and determines the mode of management of the joint project.

After discussions, the two documents were adopted subject to certain elements to be taken into account in their finalization, in particular:

- The availability of the title deed of the site of the former central market of Bujumbura in the name of the State as well as the determination of the area of the land as well as its commercial value;
- Ensure that when signing the Agreement each bank is committed in its capacity;
- Rework the Memorandum of Understanding to keep only the essentials, especially since the details will be in the Convention that will be signed afterwards;
- In the agreement to be signed, specify that the land is part of the capital but that it remains the property of the State.

2. Draft teaching policy document, presented by the Minister of National Education and Scientific Research.

Since 2015, the international community has adopted a new international agenda for education, the philosophy of which is "to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education, and promote lifelong learning opportunities for everyone ". However, teachers are the key to the success of this agenda.

Since 2006, Burundi has already embarked on major reforms in the education system, the implementation of which requires the establishment of a consistent teaching policy.

Several initiatives aimed at improving the quality of education in Burundi have been undertaken, including the establishment of free education at the basic level, educational reforms at the basic, post-basic and higher levels. , etc...

All of these reforms would be small in scope if they were not supported by an effective teaching policy.

It is within this framework that this policy was developed. It revolves around three axes, namely:

- Strengthen initial and in-service training for teachers in order to improve their skills and learning outcomes;
- Streamline the management of teaching staff to improve productivity, ethics, retention and motivation;
- Standardize the qualifications and practices of teachers at all levels of the education system.

After discussions, the Council appreciated this policy but noted that there was a need to support it with an action plan for its implementation, as well as the necessary budget, specifying what is currently allocated to the component "Education".

The file will be brought back to the Council of Ministers within two weeks.

3. Draft decree establishing the conditions for access to higher education in Burundi, presented by the Minister of National Education and Scientific Research.

Access to higher education is until today regulated by Decree No. 100/275 of October 18, 2012.

This decree did not specify the fate of the laureates of the vocational education centers and vocational training centers who would stand out, with the capacity to continue in higher education.

This project opens up the access of these laureates to higher education.

It also opens higher education to postulants from Member States of the East African Community, under the same conditions as Burundian laureates, provided that they meet the conditions for access to this level of education in their country of origin.

Finally, it facilitates the mobility of students holding a state diploma within faculties, departments and institutes in a training course other than the one initially attended, with capitalization of credits.

After analysis, the project was adopted with some retouching aspects.

4. Draft decree amending Decree No. 100/192 of June 29, 2012 on the conditions for obtaining the State diploma, presented by the Minister of National Education and Scientific Research.

The decree on the conditions for obtaining the state diploma has been in force since June 2012. The current context requires its updating.

While in the decree in force a candidate who did not pass during a session of the state examination could re-apply only once within a period not exceeding three years after the unsuccessful session, this project remove this limitation especially as an administrative fee of fifty thousand Burundian France (50,000 Fbu) is required, so that they can appear as many times as necessary in compliance with the standards in force.

In addition, in the decree in force, to obtain a State diploma, the candidate must have a mark greater than or equal to 50% resulting from the summary of the mark obtained at school in the disciplines covered by the examination and that obtained in the state examination.

This project eliminates the consideration of the school mark to consider only the mark obtained in the State Examination to avoid speculation and for more fairness and objectivity. It has in fact been observed that certain schools, especially private ones, award high marks out of complacency in the disciplines

subject to state examination to maximize the chances for laureates to obtain the 50% required to obtain the diploma of State.

After discussions, the project was adopted with, among other things, a recommendation to increase the amount of the fee for those who appear for the state examination after several years of delay or on several occasions.

5. Draft decree restructuring the Rundi Academy, presented by the Minister of National Education and Scientific Research.

The Rundi Academy was established by decree n ° 100/188 of August 25, 2014. Its main mission is to protect and promote the Rundi culture, promote the use of Kirundi in the country and abroad, supervise all research and all planned actions on Kirundi.

Several factors have meant that the Rundi Academy has not been operational since its inception.

Thus, in order to make it functional, it has been repositioned to the Ministry in charge of Education through Decree No. 100/090 of October 28, 2020 which organizes this Ministry.

In addition, an Academic Council has been planned in place of the Board of Directors initially provided for in the decree creating this Academy.

After discussion and debate, the project was adopted with some alterations.

6. Note on the management of the issue of execution of the contract for the sale of the land housing the former AFB stadium concluded between the Government of Burundi and TOYOTA BURUNDI, presented by the Minister of Infrastructure, Equipment and Social Housing.

The purpose of this Note was to inform the Council of Ministers of the progress of the execution of the contract between the Government and TOYOTA BURUNDI company in connection with the land of the former AFB stadium that the latter bought to the State of Burundi since February 2013.

It is also a question of the position to be taken after the formal notice sent to TOYOTA BURUNDI with regard to its breaches of its contractual obligations as well as the follow-up to it.

It can be observed that the reaction to the formal notice was made by a company other than TOYOTA BURUNDI which signed the contract with the State of Burundi.

After discussion and debate, the Council of Ministers recommended inviting TOYOTA BURUNDI to respond to the correspondence sent to it, especially since it is party to the contract.

In the event that it expresses interest in pursuing the project to which it is committed, it must be granted, in an additional agreement, a period not exceeding three months to begin the work, as well as a period for having finished them.

7. Business plan for the rehabilitation, modernization-extension and establishment of a distillery project at SOSUMO, presented by the Minister of Finance, Budget and Economic Planning.

SOSUMO was established in 1982 with the aim of transforming sugar cane production to meet local demand for sugar.

The installed capacity of the plant was 20,000 tons per year and the population was estimated at five million at that time.

Today, the population is estimated at twelve million and the society is unable to meet local demand.

This project for the rehabilitation, modernization-extension and establishment of a distillery aims, on the one hand, to rehabilitate the plant's equipment which has become obsolete, to increase the yield of sugar cane per hectare and to increase production up to 'to 35 thousand tons per year, on the other hand.

The cost of the investment is equivalent to 132,189 556,593 Fbu including:

- 105 993 994 078 Fbu for rehabilitation, modernization-extension
- 26,195,562,515 Fbu for the project to set up a distillery

After analysis, the Council of Ministers supported the project but recommended that the “rehabilitation, modernization-extension” component be given priority over the “distillery” component.

The Ministers in charge of Finance, Trade and Agriculture as well as the Bank of the Republic of Burundi have been appointed to jointly study the modalities for the realization of this project.

It will be necessary to think of external financing for equipment that requires foreign currency, and to resort to domestic financing for what can be financed in local currency.

SOSUMO will have to draw up a detailed roadmap for the implementation of this project.

8. Any Other Business.

- The Minister of the Interior, Community Development and Public Security presented the report on the progress of municipal revenue collection during the test period organized by the Ministry.

In ten pilot municipalities, it appears that the amount collected during the period from January 25 to 31, 2021 was 115,073,550 Fbu while that which had been collected during the week of January 18 to 24, 2021 totaled only an amount of 49,724. 275 BIF, an increase of 131%.

In all the municipalities of the country, the receipts which were collected during the month of March 2021 are estimated at 3,269,260,814 Fbu against 1,475,982,701 Fbu for the month of March 2020, an increase of 121.5%.

The Council of Ministers appreciated the work that has been carried out because it will allow considering the reform of the municipal revenue collection system.

It will be necessary to ensure that the sums collected are not allocated to activities other than those provided for in the Communal Development Plan.

Members of the Government were also urged to follow up on the activities under their jurisdiction which are carried out in the Communes.

- The Minister of National Solidarity, Social Affairs, Human Rights and Gender noted the needs for emergency humanitarian assistance and an additional budgetary allocation.

Indeed, the observation is that climatic hazards constitute a recurring threat and their negative impact is manifested by the deterioration of the living conditions of the populations.

Torrential rains destroy food crops resulting in food insecurity, strong winds destroy homes causing internal displacement of populations who have become homeless, schools and other public infrastructure.

As the challenge of the ministry in charge of social affairs remains the absence of a strategic stock that can cover emergency interventions, the note requested a budgetary supplement in order to reconstitute the strategic stock and thus meet the urgent needs for the neediest people.

The Council of Ministers observed that disasters are unforeseeable events and that it is difficult to determine the means to deal with them.

The Government will nevertheless be able to see to the extent of its possibilities the means that may be made available. Moreover, in case of extreme necessity, recourse should be made to national solidarity.

However, the Council of Ministers recalled the need to draw up lists of the indigent, hill by hill, in order to facilitate State intervention in case of need.

- The Minister of Environment, Agriculture and Livestock presented a note on material and financial needs for the collection, purchase and management of maize production.

This Note indicates the maize collection plan, the schedule of operations, and the material and equipment requirements necessary for the purchase of the production.

It is expected that the purchase of production will start on April 12, 2021, and this requires a special exemption to purchase the material and equipment of the hangars directly from the local or regional market, without going through lengthy public procurement procedures.

The Council of Ministers recommended the involvement of everyone so that the operation to purchase the production goes as planned so as not to disappoint the producers.

Done at Bujumbura, April 8th, 2021

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