

REPUBLIC OF BURUNDI**PRESIDENCY OF THE REPUBLIC
Secretariat-General of the State****MEDIA RELEASE NO 21 CONSECUTIVE TO THE CABINET MEETING
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 23 JUNE 2021**

A Cabinet Meeting was held in Bujumbura on Wednesday 23rd of June 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 Monday 21 June 2021, and which was devoted to the analysis of the same items on the agenda.

Before presenting the summary of the observations of the meeting he chaired, the Prime Minister, on behalf of the Government, thanked the Head of State for the satisfaction he expressed over the commendable work accomplished during this first year of the current legislature. He said the government is starting this second year with a new twist, keeping in mind the objective of increasing revenue and decreasing public spending.

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

- 1. Draft decree establishing the multisectoral steering committee (CPM) of the Project relating to early childhood and demographic control called “Project NKURIZA”, presented by the Minister of Public Health and the Fight against AIDS.**

The Early Childhood and Demographic Control Project (NKURIZA) is a Project of the Government of the Republic of Burundi which is financed by the World Bank and whose financing agreement was signed by the two parties on 19 / 9/2020.

The objective of the Project is to extend the coverage of community nutrition interventions to women of childbearing age and children under two years of age, and the use of family planning services in its intervention areas, namely the Provinces of Bubanza, Cankuzo, Cibitoke, Kirundo, Makamba and Muyinga.

In the financing agreement, the project implementation modalities are provided for, in particular the various bodies for its implementation, including the Multisectoral Steering Committee (CPM).

This draft decree implements what is provided for in this financing agreement.

This committee is responsible for:

- Provide guidance to the technical unit of the project and facilitate dialogue with relevant stakeholders at all levels,
- Examine and validate the Project action plans and the main Project reference documents,
- Examine the progress of the execution of the Project and monitor the progress made towards achieving the objective of the Project,
- Highlight the problems that arise in the execution of the Project and decide on the necessary measures to remedy them,
- Facilitate the proper involvement of stakeholders in the Project,
- Ensure the alignment of the Project with national policies and strategies in nutrition and demography.

After discussion and debate on this project, the Council of Ministers adopted it with, among other recommendations:

- Make this text an Order of the Prime Minister instead of a decree;
- The Minister in charge of Public Health and the Fight against AIDS will be the Chairman of the Steering Committee,

- The Minister in charge of National Solidarity will be member of the Steering Committee;
- Provide for a provision in relation to the Technical Committee which will be set up by an ordinance of the Minister of Public Health and the Fight against AIDS,
- It is necessary to show the results achieved by this Project;

It was, on this occasion, reminded that the Government must participate in the development of projects financed by the partners from their conception, closely monitor their implementation and assess their impact at the development level.

2. Draft joint ministerial order fixing the salaries of permanent military teachers and honoraria for non-permanent military and civilians at ISCAM, presented by the Minister of National Defense and Veterans Affairs.

The Higher Institute of Military Cadets (ISCAM) has two categories of teachers, namely permanent military teachers on the one hand, and non-permanent military and civilian teachers on the other.

Decree No. 100/170 of 22 November 2018 on the reorganization and functioning of ISCAM provides in its article 44 that permanent military teachers assigned to ISCAM benefit from special treatment set by a specific regulatory text.

The same article provides that non-permanent teachers at ISCAM benefit from fees and supervision costs for end-of-study work set by a joint ministerial order of the Minister in charge of National Defense and the Minister in charge of Finance on proposal of the Head of the National Defense Force.

Since the signing of this decree, neither of these two implementing texts has been put in place. This draft ordinance therefore addresses this concern.

During the debate on this draft ordinance, the Council of Ministers made the following observations:

- It is necessary to verify the legal basis on which ISCAM teachers are currently treated,
- Salaries and other benefits cannot exceed those granted to teachers at the University of Burundi,
- It is difficult to superimpose two statutes, that of officers and that of teachers of public universities,
- The supervision of students is normally part of the specifications which should not be considered as an additional load requiring a special premium;
- Military teachers should be governed by the status of officers and remunerated according to their ranks and to bring them into line with the same level of remuneration as other teachers in public universities, grant them substantial bonuses,
- The credentials should be enhanced only when it is the employer who sent the person concerned for training;

3. Draft joint ministerial order on the modalities for granting supervision costs to healthcare structures and health professionals taking care of trainees from the Military Paramedical School (EPMM), presented by the Minister of National Defense and Veterans Affairs.

Burundi National Defense Force has a Military Paramedical School created by ministerial order n ° 520/1860 of 11/27/2014.

This school is recognized by the Ministry in charge of Public Health. It therefore complies with the standards of secondary paramedical schools in Burundi, as well as all other requirements of the regulations in force.

The pupils of this school do internships in health facilities and benefit from related supervision like all other students in paramedical schools. These structures and their authorized personnel receive training fees from trainees via the classic debt declaration procedure.

But currently, for reasons of budgetary governance, the granting of these costs must be provided for by a regulatory text.

This led to the temporary freezing of the granting of these fees, pending the implementation of this text, which handicaps the operation of this school.

The purpose of this draft ordinance is to meet this administrative and regulatory requirement to allow the normal functioning of this school.

During the discussions, the Council of Ministers made the following observations:

- It is necessary to verify the legal basis on which these supervision costs were granted,
- The lump sum paid to hospitals hosting trainees should take into account the staff received,
- The lump sum paid quarterly to supervisors should go to the reception structure and not to individuals;
- Unpaid bills will not be regularized because they have no legal basis.

4. Draft joint order granting honoraria to civilian teachers and members of the jury at the Ecole Militaire des Métiers (EMM), presented by the Minister of National Defense and Veterans Affairs.

The National Defense Force has military and technical training units and centres. The Ecole Militaire des Métiers is one of the oldest of these units.

This school was approved by ministerial decree n ° 570/2108 of 11/21/2016 of the Minister of Public Service and Employment and therefore has the obligation to comply with all the requirements prescribed by the technical and vocational training regulations.

This School calls on teachers and civil experts who receive fees through the classic procedure of declaration of debt.

But currently, for reasons of budgetary governance, the granting of these costs is conditional on the establishment of a related regulatory text.

This led to the temporary freezing of the granting of these fees, pending the implementation of this text, which handicaps the operation of this school.

The purpose of this draft ordinance is to meet this administrative and regulatory requirement to allow the normal functioning of this school. The Council of Ministers made the following observations:

- The fees provided for civilian teachers in this school greatly exceed those granted to teachers in the national education sector;
- A member of the jury should not benefit from the fees per hour because it is part of his specifications for which he is paid.

Ultimately, the three draft ordinances will be reworked taking these observations into account and will be brought back to the Council of Ministers.

5. Concept Note on the insurance and subsidization of agricultural loans in Burundi, presented by the Minister of Environment, Agriculture and Livestock.

In order to increase agricultural production and alleviate the food deficit, the Government of Burundi has made the agricultural sector one of the basic sectors of development. The goal is that "every mouth has food and every pocket has money". In this perspective, several programs have been implemented and certain crops reorganized into sectors.

In addition to these actions, the Government has put in place mechanisms to encourage the population to invest in increasing production, in particular the granting of 10 million Fbu per cooperative, the establishment of collection mechanisms and purchase of agricultural products, etc...

The year 2020 saw the birth of a bank and an insurance company promoting agriculture, which presents opportunities to develop the agricultural sector.

For the 2020-2021 fiscal year, the Government has budgeted to finance the agricultural sector through the agricultural guarantee, as well as a Rural Security and Development Fund.

The Note proposes the ways and means for the efficient use of this budget provided for by these two mechanisms in order to face climate change, disease and pest attacks without forgetting the encouragement of banks to finance the agricultural sector, thanks to the assumption of responsibility for major agricultural risks.

There are three options to facilitate the financing of the agricultural sector. It is:

- The establishment of an agricultural guarantee fund,
- The establishment of agricultural insurance,
- The establishment of a bonus fund.

The Note offers a combination of the three options for more impact.

After analyzing the proposal as well as the advantages offered by these different options, the Council of Ministers adopted the following:

- The agricultural guarantee option was chosen,
- Farmers with at least two hectares should be supervised by granting them seeds and fertilizers on credit to repay after selling their production,
- The State will guarantee the credit and the funds will be lodged at the level of the Impulse, Guarantee and Support Fund (FIGA),
- Agricultural insurance will be taken out by the farmers themselves,
- The population should be made aware of the value of this program, the need to regroup land as well as the added value that this brings,

- Other crops, such as wheat, should be taken into account in this program,

The Ministers in charge of Agriculture and Finance will refine the design and implementation of this program

6. Bill on the ratification by the Republic of Burundi of grant agreement no. TF0B5320 for additional financing for the landscape restoration and resilience project between the Republic of Burundi and the International Development Association, signed in Bujumbura May 24, 2021, presented by the Minister of the Environment, Agriculture and Livestock.

The Burundi Landscape Restoration and Resilience Project for an amount of thirty million US dollars was approved in 2018 with the objective of "restoring land productivity in targeted degraded landscapes and, in the event of a crisis or 'an eligible emergency situation, to provide an immediate and effective response".

The Project intervention area is made up of the Buhinyuza Communes in Muyinga and Isale in Bujumbura Province, and three protected areas, namely the Ruvubu Park, part of the Kibira National Park and the Bururi forest reserve.

This additional funding amounting to US \$ 6 million will help finance the extension of the activities of the initial Project to an additional Province in this case Kayanza, Commune Matongo, with degraded landscapes. In particular, it will promote activities that reduce forest degradation due to encroachment within the Kibira

With this additional funding, the Parent Project will extend the closing date by one year to March 14, 2024 instead of March 14, 2023.

After discussion and debate, the project was adopted.

The Council recommended that this project should have the objective of protecting Burundian waters so that they remain clean as well as our soil, by evaluating each step taken and the new actions that can be initiated.

7. Information Note on the second batch of the Project "Access to satellite television in 10,000 African villages", presented by the Minister of Communication, Information Technologies and Media.

The Access to Satellite Television Project was launched in 2015 at the China-Africa Summit in Johannesburg. The objective of the Project was to equip some 10,000 African villages in rural areas. It is in this context that in Burundi, 300 villages have benefited from satellite television sets.

The number of 300 villages remains insufficient and Burundians still need to follow National Television programs in order to benefit from development news or programs.

It is within this framework that the Burundian Government made a request to China for the extension of the Project in 200 additional villages.

The purpose of the Note was to inform the Council of Ministers on the modalities of implementation of this additional Project which will be executed by the company StarTimes Burundi.

After discussion on the Note, the Council of Ministers adopted it with the following recommendations:

- Ensure that Burundian technicians are trained to ensure the maintenance of equipment,
- Ensure that the national channel is permanent even without payment of subscription fees,
- In receiving donations by ministers, take their value into account and, if necessary, be represented;
- Check whether the televisions that were awarded in the first batch have not been diverted and collect them from irregular holders.

8. Draft memorandum of understanding between the Republic of Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo concerning the joint development project of the standard gauge railway (SGR) Uvinza –Musongati-Gitega -Uvira-Kindu section Gitega-Bujumbura / Uvira –Kindu, presented by the Minister of Transport, Trade, Industry and Tourism

The Governments of Burundi, the United Republic of Tanzania and the Democratic Republic of Congo, keen to develop the rail transport sector, have initiated Uvinza – Musongati-Gitega / Bujumbura -Uvira-Kindu railway project. This railway project is the result of the tripartite Memorandum of Understanding between the three countries.

This rail line which will connect to the existing rail line (Dar-Es-Salam -Uvinza) will provide Burundi and other border countries with accessibility to the Port of Dar-Es-Salaam and facilitate their imports and exports of goods.

This draft memorandum of understanding covering the Gitega-Bujumbura / Uvira – Kindu section has been drawn up by Burundian and Congolese experts under the coordination of the Executive Secretariat of the Central Corridor.

The objective of this Memorandum is to define the cooperation and collaboration mechanisms for the implementation of this Project.

After discussion and debate, the project was adopted with the recommendation to specify that the Memorandum is drafted in French.

The Council of Ministers took the opportunity to recommend the relaunch of the bridge rehabilitation project linking Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo from Kaburantwa.

9. Any Other Business

- The Minister of Infrastructure, Equipment and Social Housing informed the Council of Ministers on the public lighting of the section of the RN5, Chanic-Melchior NDADAYE International Airport. The Note presented concerned the change of the type of public lighting on this section, after analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the type of lighting previously agreed and included in the Project. The option is to install on this section of road the traditional lighting system of Regideso instead of a mixed lighting system combining solar energy and the current of the Regideso.

In addition, the candelabras will be located in the berms instead of the central median. The Council of Ministers recommended drawing up a much more complete Note which will be placed on the agenda of the Council of Ministers to analyze all the contours of this dossier.

- The Minister of National Solidarity, Social Affairs, Human Rights and Gender presented a Note relating to the program for the withdrawal of children in street situations and other groups of people who practice begging in Burundi.

The Ministry has set itself the general objective of eradicating the phenomenon of "street children" and begging observed in urban centres, with a view to their reintegration and community reintegration.

The note calls for the involvement of all stakeholders to achieve this goal.

The note indicates the actions to be carried out as well as the institutional framework for the implementation of this program.

Given the importance of this phenomenon, the Council of Ministers recommended to develop a strategic plan to resolve this problem, by first identifying the causes of the phenomenon, the strategy to be implemented, the actions to be carried out, the stakeholders as well as the necessary resources.

- His Excellency the President of the Republic asked members of the Government to closely monitor the sectors under their responsibility in order to have all the necessary information at all times. He called on them to take the necessary action against the failing state officials. We must not wait for the initiative to be taken by the hierarchical authority.

Good governance and sound financial management must be emphasized during this second year of the current legislature. He recommended that public-private partnership contracts especially in the areas of public works, energy and mines which contain irregularities be revisited. The same is true of the justice sector where unfair trials are observed.

He further called on members of the Government to always keep in mind that they are at the service of the people and that they should work for the benefit of the people only. Finally, he asked them to make good planning for this coming year, so that at the end of it, the results show that the Government has really succeeded in the goal it has set itself in terms of increasing revenue and reduction in expenses.

Finally, he asked that the pending files for the past year and which are ready to be analyzed by the Council of Ministers be closed with the month of July 2021.

Done at Bujumbura, June 24th, 2021

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