

Explanatory Notes for Proposed amendments to the Small Farmers Welfare Fund Act through Finance Bill 2020

1. Section 2 –

(i) To broaden the definitions of:

- (i) **small planters** to include aquaponics in the definition of small farmers as aquaponics which has been introduced in Mauritius and is deemed to be a sustainable method of raising both fish and vegetables in an integrated system which is becoming more and more popular around the world and can contribute to chemical free food and to national food security;
- (ii) **small farmers**, to include the grouping of farmers having an annual turnover not exceeding 10 million rupees, in view of Government's policy to encourage farmers to regroup themselves so as to benefit from economies of scale

2. New section 5 –

This new provision will, amongst others:

- (i) enable a formal description of the Registration exercise at the SFWF, which amongst others, will enable the SFWF collecting correct information from the farmers.
- (ii) allow the judicious use of public funding as all assistance from the SFWF will be provided only to the list of bonafide registered farmers, who are effectively qualified for such support;
- (iii) allow the further gathering of accurate and intelligent information on the sector (demographic, economic, social, etc) to be used for informed decision making (e.g economic and social planning); and
- (iv) enable the traceability of food from farm to market and eliminate the sales of stolen agricultural products, hence also ensuring safe food for customers, by allowing only registered farmers to have access to formal markets.

3. New section 15

- (i) To allow officers to conduct their duties effectively and to gather accurate and intelligent information on fields and farms for the purpose of operating the Fund's Schemes.

4. Amendment of Schedule

- (i) Since the poultry sector is considered as essential, specially due to its competitive advantage to boost local production of food post-Covid 19, to amend the definition of small poultry breeders by increasing the maximum number of poultry head from 5,000 to 25,000 so that the Fund can extend its welfare programme to these operators also.