

18.11 Way forward: The MCIA needs to play a pivotal role in providing the industry the necessary support and services to be able to sail through the difficult period. The MCIA has been in operation since March 2012 and there has not been any appraisal exercise which has been undertaken as at date. Hence the need to review and reengineer the operations of the MCIA has never been felt so strongly as in the present circumstances. Following consultations with the Ministry, the need for providing the resources has already been canvassed and this exercise should be initiated within the shortest delay.

## **19.0 Regional research avenues on new cane varieties**

19.1 The MCIA / MSIRI will look into new regional research avenues to improve cane varieties with a view to increase productivity. The JTC also took cognizance of the draft MSIRI Bill under preparation. Given that cess contribution for the Crop 2017 has been waived, it was agreed that MCA will hold fresh consultations with its members in the light of recent developments and to come forward new proposals.

## **20.0 Review the future mandate of SIFB**

20.1 The Sugarcane industry has requested for the need to review the mandate of the SIF so as to set up a dual insurance system to cater for both climatic and economic difficulties by decreasing the threshold for climatic compensation and mobilising fund for economic insurance. It was suggested that the Actuary could examine this new proposal.

20.2 The JTC has discussed on this proposal and has decided that SIFB be invited to present the findings and recommendations made by the actuary on this request. However, the future mandate of the SIF should thoroughly be discussed and planned to meet the challenges of the producers.

## **21.0 Land abandonment and land conversion tax.**

21.1 Consideration could be given to raise land conversion tax in Twelfth Schedule of the SIE Act from Rs 3.5M to Rs 5.5M per hectare to curb down land abandonment and realise targets of 55,000 ha under cane and a production of 400,000t sugar.

## **22.0 Setting up of a Sugar Based Agro-Industry Framework**

22.1 The SIE Act has been amended in 2016 to make provision for the setting up of a framework for a sugar based agro-industry. Quality sugar from local refiners and growing demand of sugar based agro products in Africa have motivated the sector to move in this direction. Equally, this move is expected to stimulate the production and use of local exotic fruits.