**Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade**

**(Human Rights Division)**

**Materials for the report on Human Rights, Transformative Actions and the UN Sustainable Development Goals**

# **What transformative actions would be required, given the national context of your State, to achieve SDGs directly linked to environment sustainability (SDGs 2, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15)? Transformative actions can be understood as “bold and transformative steps which are urgently needed to shift the world on to a sustainable and resilient path”**

The transformative actions that would be required include:

1. recycling – citizens and enterprises in Mauritius should be sensitized and empowered to engage in recycling activities in line with Government’s vision of implementing a circular economy;
2. sustainable agriculture whereby farmers and Agricultural Cooperatives should be encouraged to engage in bio/organic farming;
3. greening of activities whereby green practices should be adopted in all spheres;
4. policies should be devised in respect of clean energy for the production of electricity using renewable sources and accordingly actions to be initiated.

**SDG 11 and 13:**

As a small island development state, Mauritius is highly vulnerable to the relative impacts of climate change and is one of the most exposed countries to natural hazards in view of its geographical location in the Indian Ocean. The country is experiencing inherent flash floods with material losses. In line with SDG 11 and its indicators, there is an urgent need to adopt and implement land drainage policies and infrastructure and also revisit the local and national land use plans to effectively address disaster risk management and climate change issues.

**SDG 12:**

In Mauritius, waste is collected by the 12 Local Authorities and 100% of the island is covered. The collected wasted unsorted waste is sent to the sanitary landfill which started operations in 1997 and about more than 8 million tonnes of solid wastes has been landfilled. With over 97% of the solid wastes generated on the island being landfilled, this does not represent a sustainable approach, albeit that the Mare Chicose landfill is a sanitary site.

While the landfill has been ensuring the environmentally sound management of wastes over the years, this is not a sustainable approach. In this context, the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change is now shifting from a linear approach to a circular economy model by privileging resource recovery and recycling through the setting-up of regional composting plants and sorting units. Additional information on the circular economy model and measures taken by Mauritius can be found at ***Annex.***

**SDG 14:**

With regard to SDG 14 - life below water, actions that would be required include:

1. the designation of additional Marine Protected Areas to protect the marine ecosystem;
2. promotion of public-private partnership in restorative marine biodiversity projects;
3. encouraging community involvement (fishermen) in restoration projects implemented by the Government and NGOs;
4. promoting building capacity of the coastal communities in rehabilitation techniques. Such projects will empower artisanal fishermen to engage in alternate economic activities such as coral farming;
5. strengthening maritime surveillance to prevent illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUU); and
6. eco labelling of seafood to allow consumers to make safe and sustainable seafood choices.

# **What steps has your State taken to accelerate progress towards fulfilling the eight SDGs that have the most direct environmental linkages (SDGs 2,6,7,11,12,13,14,15)?**

The SDG mapping exercise was conducted in 2016 and the exercise identified 222 indicators which have already been integrated in the national policies of Mauritius. Additionally, the National Review Report of Mauritius was published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade in 2019 and can be accessed on [VNR Draft -18.06.19-page.indd (govmu.org)](https://foreign.govmu.org/Documents/2020%20-%20migrated%20data/VNR%20REPORT/Mauritius%20VNR%20Report%202019(2).pdf).

**SDG 2 and SDG 12:**

Measures undertaken by Mauritius include:

1. sustainable fishing and conservation and protection of marine ecosystem; and
2. healthy food production.

Additional information on these measures can be found at ***Annex.***

**SDG 6:**

In general, 99.6 % of the population has access to potable water supply. With regards to sanitation, 28.04% of population as at May 2021 was connected to the wastewater network. The Government through the Wastewater Management Authority (WMA) is aiming to connect by the year 2030, 50% of the population to the public sewer. The remaining population have access to adequate sanitation through onsite disposal system (improved pit/septic tanks).

Social housing units are provided with all necessary amenities such as water, adequate sewage disposal systems (Septic tanks or Sewerage Treatment Plant), power supply, storm water evacuation systems, parking facilities, road infrastructure and refuse collection facilities.

**SDG 7:**

A Renewable Energy Roadmap 2030 for the Electricity Sector was launched by the Government in 2019. The objectives of the Roadmap are essentially geared towards enabling the optimum production of energy from renewable resources and ensuring a transition towards greener and cleaner energy. The Renewable Energy Roadmap for the Electricity Sector 2030, however, is currently under review. Additional information on same can be found at ***Annex.***

**SDG 11:**

Pursuant to the Budget for the Financial Year 2020/21, the Government announced the construction of a further 12,000 residential units over the next 3 years for Mauritian families with a revised monthly income of up to Rs 60,000. In order to accelerate the construction of the housing units and meet the demand, a new company - the “New Social Living Development Ltd (NSLD Ltd)” has been set up as the implementing agency for the construction of the 12,000 housing units. These housing units will be provided with all necessary infrastructure and amenities. The project is expected to be completed by end of June 2024.

**SDG 12:**

Measures undertaken by the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change include, inter alia:

1. the preparation of a new National Solid Waste Management Strategy in 2021;
2. setting up and operation of the Interim Storage Facility for Hazardous Wastes at La Chaumière;
3. a Bio-Gas plant is being implemented on a pilot basis at the Richelieu Open Prison, followed by the installation of a larger plant at the New Wing Prison; and
4. adoption of the Environment Protection (Banning of Plastic Bags) Regulations 2015 which came effective as from 01 January 2016. Additional plastic bags have been banned under the Environment Protection (Banning of Plastic Bags) Regulations 2020. Accordingly, as from **01 March 2021**, no individual shall possess, use, sell, distribute, import, export or manufacture the non-biodegradable plastic bags.

Other measures implemented by Mauritius can be found at ***Annex.***

**SDG 13:**

A Climate Change Division has been set up under the aegis of the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change in March 2010 to lead efforts in response to the ​​challenges of climate change faced by the country. Through its work, the Division aspires to enhance the country’s resilience to climate change. ​Some of the notable works undertaken by the Division can be accessed on: [Climate Change Division (govmu.org)](https://environment.govmu.org/Pages/Climate-Change-Division.aspx)

The State has demonstrated its serious commitment and has already implemented a series of measures on climate change adaptation and mitigation actions within its national development objectives. They relate, amongst others, to the promotion of renewable energy technologies such as the solar water heaters and photovoltaic, development of a Road map on Renewable Energy, development of a Road map on Electric Integration Vehicles, implementation of an alternative mode of mass transport system, development of a strategy to promote “circular economy” in the waste sector, national tree planting campaigns, the implementation of coastal rehabilitation works, rain water harvesting schemes, land drainage management, and disaster risk reduction.

The Government has come up with a series of legislation to support climate change mainstreaming across key sectors and this culminated into the adoption of a Climate Change Act 2020. Moreover, the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change is currently finalising its Master Plan on the Environment for Mauritius (2020 – 2030) whose primary purpose is to establish the foundations to support the *“transition écologique*” for Mauritius and Rodrigues by 2030 while allowing Mauritius to become *“an inclusive, high income and green society forging ahead together*”.

Additional measures undertaken can be found at ***Annex.***

**SDG 14:**

With regard to SDG 14, measures undertaken by Mauritius include, inter alia:

1. a Monitoring Control and Surveillance (MCS) Unit which has been established to ensure control over local and foreign fishing vessels, with a view to promote sustainable exploitation of fishery resources;
2. a comprehensive legislative and institutional framework which is in place to promote ocean and fisheries governance; and
3. nearly 400,000 mangroves have been planted to date and cover almost 20 hectares of coastal area.

Other measures implemented can be found at ***Annex.***

**SDG 15:**

Measures adopted in respect of SDG 15 include, amongst others:

1. the development and promotion of soil conservation practices in vulnerable areas to limit land degradation and improve the livelihoods of small farmers. Use of light farm machinery e.g. power tillers to reduce the impact of soil compaction leading to soil degradation;
2. the [Commission for Environment, Forestry, Tourism, Marine parks and Fisheries](http://environment.rra.govmu.org/English/Pages/default.aspx) is presently implementing an agro-forestry scheme in Rodrigues with the objectives of solving the problems of soil erosion, land degradation and Alien Invasive Species;
3. the extension of the Biosphere Reserve in Mauritius. It is important to note that the Black River Gorges Bel Ombre Biosphere Reserve has been nominated as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve to reconcile people with nature while the St Martin –Bel Ombre village is a UNESCO site; and
4. a Forests and Reserves Bill is under preparation to provide for the protection, conservation and sustainable management of forests, reserves and related areas in the Republic of Mauritius for present and future generations.

# **What specific actions is your State taking to fulfil the commitments to “leave no one behind” and to prioritise actions “to reach the furthest behind first” in terms of achieving SDGs 2,6, 7, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15?**

Sensitization campaigns are continuously carried out in different regions, targeting vulnerable section of the population with a view to encouraging them to set up cooperatives for income-generating activities and also to set up cooperative credit union to inculcate a culture of saving and to have access to loan with low rate of interest. The Government of Mauritius has put in place financial/non-financial support (for e.g the Boost to Local Production for Cooperative Societies) to cooperatives to consolidate their business activities following COVID-19.

**SDG 11:**

With regards to SDG 11, the Ministry of Housing and Land Use Planning is actively promoting equity and inclusiveness in providing sustainable housing for the vulnerable groups (elderly person, disabled and single parents’ households). Housing construction caters for appropriate ramps to be provided based on a Technical sheet of the Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) to ease the mobility of the disabled ones while accessing their housing units. During allocation of housing units, elderly and disabled persons are given preference for ground floor accommodation. Additionally, it is ensured that ramps are provided in housing units allocated to disabled and/or elderly persons.

**SDG 12:**

Projects supporting the Circular Economy approach include construction of a network of Civic Amenity Centres and drafting of Waste management Bill to put obligations for source segregation of wastes at source at household and by economic operators. Other projects include:

1. setting-up of civic amenity centres;
2. home composting scheme;
3. incentives on exportation/recycling of PET bottles;
4. refund for used tyres recycling;
5. tipping fee for recycling of wastes;
6. Industrial Symbiosis Project;
7. implementation of an extended producer responsibility mechanism for electrical and electronic equipment and post-consumer beverage containers;
8. feasibility study on scrapyard facility for end-of-life vehicles;
9. feasibility study on anaerobic digestion of organic wastes in Mauritius; and
10. hazardous waste management

Additional information on the above mentioned projects can be found at ***Annex.***

**SDG 14:**

As far as SDG 14 is concerned, actions being implemented by Mauritius include, inter alia:

1. the setting up of the Fishermen Welfare Fund, a specific instrument to provide for the welfare, needs and development of the fishermen community;
2. grants and loan facilities are provided to fishermen for the purchase of more robust boats to venture in off-lagoon fishing for better catch and increase revenue;
3. the Government provided the necessary assistance and support to fishers in the areas affected by the Wakashio oil spill. Fishers directly affected by the oil spill had benefitted from bad weather allowance and an allowance from the solidarity grant; and
4. implementation of a fishing project to identify untapped resources for the establishment of new fisheries thus providing new fishing opportunities to local fishermen.

Additional measures implemented can be found at ***Annex.***

# **Are there any good practices that you would like to highlight?**

**SDG 11:**

The Ministry of Housing and Land Use Planning has as mission to create access to decent, safe, affordable and ecological residential units within green conscious communities. As far as possible, sites for housing projects are identified close to built-up areas and close to amenities such as schools, police station and health care centres. Social and recreational amenities, such as, onsite leisure and recreational amenities, children’s playground, green space, parking and landscaping are provided wherever required.

**SDG 12:**

The actions taken and mentioned in Question 3 (SDG 12) are new to Mauritius and it is only after implementing these measures that we will be able to establish the good practices.

With respect to hazardous waste management, full compliance and good practices in line with Basel convention is still a challenge and there has been a change in mindset of hazardous waste generators to start separating their wastes.

Some sustainable activities undertaken by Mauritius include:

1. recycling of glass bottles;
2. use of transformed palm leaves in hotels to replace plates;
3. solar energy is being used in the Biosphere Reserve;
4. cooperatives are based on the values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity, and solidarity; and
5. cooperative members believe in the ethical values of honesty, openness, social responsibility and caring for others, especially during the sanitary crisis (COVID-19) where cooperatives have demonstrated their solidarity for their members and the general public.

**SDG 14:**

Good practices in relation to SDG 14 include, inter alia:

1. marine ecosystem based management through the establishment Marine Protected Areas and the development of Marine Spatial Planning;
2. development of offshore fishery (FADs) to preserve lagoon resources; and
3. limited entry system and quota system exist for capture fisheries.

Other initiatives adopted by Mauritius can be found at ***Annex.***

# **How much budget has your State invested, since 2015, on actions to fulfil the eight SDGs that have the most direct environmental linkages (SDGs 2, 6, 7, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15)?**

**SDG 6 &11:**

The Government has invested some MUR 900 Million since 2015in major rehabilitation works of social housing units which cannot be undertaken by the residents or the syndic alone. The Government has disbursed some MUR 5.9 Billion since 2015 for the construction of new housing units.

**SDG 11:**

The Government encourages self-help construction of housing units by very low to low income families who already own a plot of land and are having difficulties to construct a concrete housing unit. These families are financially assisted through a grant scheme either for the casting of roof slabs to complete their construction or for the purchase of building materials to start their construction. Some MUR 709 Million has been disbursed since Year 2015 which has targeted 10,194 families.

**SDG 12:**

The State invests more than MUR 1.6 Billion annuallyin the management of waste and hazardous wastes. With regard to SDG 12.4, total payment of USD 3.3 Million has been effected the operation and management of the Interim Storage Facility for Hazardous Wastes, inspection at generators’ premises, testing and collection of hazardous wastes, transportation, repackaging, interim storage, shipment and recovery and disposal of hazardous chemical wastes for the period January 2017 to August 2021.

**SDG 14:**

A breakdown of the budget allocated in respect of activities aiming at achieving the targets under Goal 14 can be found at ***Annex.***

# **What are the main barriers to progress towards achieving the relevant SDGs?**

The main barriers to progress towards achieving the relevant SDGs include:

1. SDG 11 – related to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services in Mauritius:
2. scarcity of suitable land, buildable sites close to built-up areas with available utilities network and close to amenities such as schools, police station and health care centres;
3. lengthy procedures for the identification and acquisition of land suitable for housing projects;
4. devising appropriate funding mechanisms to ensure that targeted groups have access to affordable housing; and
5. coping with the increase in construction costs.
6. SDG 12:
7. challenges which are common to SIDS – insufficient recyclable wastes to have a local recycling sector, market for recycled products, high costs of shipments, remoteness from main economies;
8. access to funds to construct infrastructures, supply of bins;
9. access to technology;
10. access to green funds;
11. unwillingness to cooperate on source segregation. Sensitisation and education remains a challenge; and
12. the hazardous waste generators’ unwillingness to pay for the high cost of exportation and treatment of the hazardous wastes. The relatively low amount of hazardous generated does not favour local treatment.

1. SDG 14:
2. vulnerability of small Island States having specific social, economic and environmental characteristics;
3. Illegal, Unreported andUnregulated (IUU) fishing;
4. natural and anthropogenic effects of Climate Change;
5. the availability and reliability of comprehensive data;
6. technical know-how; and
7. inadequate mechanisms, structures to recognise financial opportunities and access available financial resources.
8. Other challenges encountered:
9. decreasing membership of the cooperative movement;
10. lack of interest on the part of young people to join cooperatives;
11. lack of finance to invest in income-generating activities; and
12. new and emerging sectors need to be tapped to sustain the cooperative movement.

# **How can steps taken by your State to implement the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment (recognised in A/HCR/RES/48/13) serve as a catalyst for making more rapid progress towards SDGs 2, 6, 7, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15?**

Cooperatives are democratic organizations that are managed and operated by their members based on cooperative principles and values. The cooperative model of business is open to all people indiscriminately (men/women/disabled persons) and the rights of members are respected and promoted. The cooperative model of doing business should therefore be encouraged among all sections of the population

With regard to SDG 6, it is important to note that all the 12 Local Authorities in Mauritius provide scavenging services to the inhabitants in their Council areas regularly to have a clean and sustainable environment.

In order to achieve SDG 12, the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change considers the steps taken in line with the precepts of Circular Economy are the right steps to ensure sustainability in waste and hazardous waste management. Moreover, the steps taken for the management of hazardous wastes directly contribute to achieving SDG 12.4.

As far as SDG 14 is concerned, the steps taken by the Government include promotion of social inclusion and adoption and implementation of international ocean governance instruments (UNCLOS, IMO conventions) to combat IUU fishing and fishery related crimes and ensure maritime safety. Additional information on same can be found at ***Annex.***

# **How could increasing gender equality contribute to more rapid progress towards SDGs 2, 6, 7, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15?**

Practicing a policy of gender equality contributes towards an equitable society with equal opportunities in all fields of socio-economic development. An equitable distribution of human resources increases productivity/ output/efficiency. Gender equality will also lead to more female staffs gaining access to scientific or technical posts.

A special focus on women entrepreneurship development is made at the level of the Ministry of Industrial Development, SMEs and Cooperatives by encouraging women to set up cooperatives and the provision of financial/non-financial support/advice/training.

With regard to SDG 14, the contribution of women to implementing many of the fishery management measures and restoration programmes has been attributed to their participation and leadership at the community levels, and also to their local knowledge, skills and experiences.

For instance, 15% of the registered candidates under a “Coral Culture Training Programme (CCTP)” [project “Promoting coral culture as an alternative livelihood for fisherman and coastal communities for conservation of marine biodiversity] comprised of women. These trainees are trained in set-up, maintenance, monitoring and management of DEMO sea-based coral farms and coral gardens. Increasing the proportion of women in such programmes will contribute towards achieving SDG Target 14.2.

Moreover, increasing the representation of women in ocean science and governance will contribute towards progress in terms of increase scientific knowledge, developing research capacity and transferring marine technology (Target 14.a)

# **How can business contribute to transformative actions and accelerating progress to achieve SDGs 2, 6, 7, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15?**

Steps that businesses could take to contribute to transformative actions and accelerate progress to achieve the relevant SDGs include:

1. using recyclable materials in the production line of goods;
2. adapting sustainable agricultural practices like using bio fertilizers instead of hazardous chemicals;
3. take recourse to renewable and efficient energy and adopt sustainable business models by engaging in recycling, circular economy; and
4. setting of standards and providing certification for sustainable fish-farming practices to reduce the negative impacts of fish farming. Aquaculture businesses can use science-based indicators to prevent negative impacts on aquatic environments and ensure that fish-based feed is used efficiently and comes from sustainable source.

Additional measures can be found at ***Annex.***

**18.05.2022**