**Mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation**

1. **How is the concept of the minimum core obligations of the human rights to water and sanitation translated and applied in the water and sanitation sector in the country?**
2. **Water**

Approximately 99.7% of the population of Mauritius are connected to the water supply network.

1. **Sanitation**

99.8 % of the population of Mauritius has access to sanitation facilities, either through on-site disposal such as septic tank, absorption pit, cesspit and leaching field or the national sewerage system. Presently, 27% of the population are connected to the sewerage network.

1. **What policies and programmes are in place to ensure that those obligations are always met? In case the minimum core obligations are not met, please provide information on the extenuating circumstances.**

The governing policies and programmes in the water and sanitation sectors are as follows:

1. **Water**
* To provide water supply to all households on a 24/7 basis.
* To reduce Non-Revenue Water (water losses) from 55% to 50% in 2020 and 37% by 2030.
* To protect water quality to ensure supply of safe drinking water.
* To exempt households consuming up to 6 metres cube per month from payment of water charges. (About 63,000 households mainly from low income groups which represent 20% of domestic consumers, have benefitted from this measure to date).

*Programme:*

With a view to achieving the above policy and strategic objectives, the Government of Mauritius is investing massively in water mobilization projects through dam construction and borehole drilling, upgrading of existing water treatment facilities and construction of new service reservoirs and water treatment plant.

1. **Sanitation**
* To extend the sewerage network across the country including environmentally sensitive regions, other areas near high water table that are frequently prone to waste water overflow nuisance, and the former low housing estates;
* the Government plans to provide at least 50 % of the population with sewer facilities by 2030;
* hotels with more than 50 rooms, including Integrated Resort Scheme (IRS) projects, are required to provide for a wastewater treatment plant, if they cannot be connected to the public sewer.

 *Programme:*

A Sewerage Master Plan provides an overall framework and strategy for improvements in the sanitation sector, which are underpinned by a series of projects, many of which have been and are being implemented, while others will be realized by horizon 2033.

1. **Please describe efforts made by the Government in the last few years that allowed the progressive realisation of the human rights to water and sanitation.**
2. **Water**
* Bagatelle Dam of capacity 14 Mm3 was commissioned in 2017. The Dam has allowed for significant improvement in the daily hours of water supply in the regions of Lower Plaines Wilhems and Port Louis particularly during the dry season. The total cost of the project was USD 183 million.
* From 2015 to 2019, 12 boreholes have been drilled in different regions to increase availability of groundwater for potable water supply. The total cost of the works was USD 460,000.
* The Government has commissioned the following studies: -
1. Feasibility Study to increase the capacity of La Nicolière Reservoir to meet the potable and irrigation water demand in the northern part of the island. The consultancy contract was awarded in May, 2017 and is ongoing.
2. A detailed design study of the Rivière des Anguilles dam to supply potable and irrigation water in the Southern and South Western regions of Mauritius up to2050.The consultancy contract was awarded in October, 2017 and is ongoing.
* The Government has invited bids for the appointment of a Consultant for the design review and construction supervision of the rehabilitation of La Ferme dam. The storage capacity of the dam will increase from 11.5Mm3 to 14Mm3.

Since 2015, the Government has invested about USD 169 million on the following:

(i) replacement of old water pipes;

(ii) construction of service reservoirs;

(iii) increasing the capacity of water treatment plant;

(iv) identification of new sources of water supply through borehole drilling;

(v) abstraction of water from rivers and installation of filtration plants, and

(vi) upgrading of pumping stations.

1. **Sanitation**

Households consuming up to 6 m3 per month and who are connected to the wastewater network are exempted from payment of wastewater charges. As at August 2019, 11,838 consumers benefited from this measure.

Projects involving the rehabilitation of sewerage infrastructure in low cost housing estates have been initiated and are ongoing. Some 1000 poor families have already been connected to the sewerage system.

Moreover, major wastewater works in regions, vulnerable to environmental hazards related to wastewater disposal, have been implemented since 2016.

*Major projects:*

* Grand Baie Phase 1B Sewerage Project for the construction of 80 km of street sewer, 12 km rising mains, 22 nos. pumping stations, upgrading works of the existing wastewater treatment plant, 4000 house connections and replacement of 6 km of CWA pipes in the regions of Pereybere and Cap Malheureux to the tune of USD 60 Million. The project is expected to be completed by 2023.
* An investment of USD 54 Million for Pailles Guibies Sewerage Project Phase 2 for the construction of approximately 4,050m of trunk sewer, construction of approximately 43.9 km of sewer reticulation network, construction of 3,099 house connections, replacement of 16.2 km of existing water pipes and road reinstatement and other auxiliary works
1. **Please describe how planning in the water and sanitation sector is guided by the principle of progressive realisation of the human rights to water and sanitation, and how it reconciles the two priorities – increasing levels of access to services on one hand, and reducing inequalities between different groups on the other.**
2. **Water**

Within 4 years, the Government has invested in the replacement of 457 kilometres (kms) of pipes. The replacement of 70 kms of pipes is in progress and will bring the total to 527 kms. From 2015, three service reservoirs have been built. In addition, 17 duplicate boreholes have been drilled and 7 others are being drilled. These boreholes operate whenever the main one has a failure, thus ensuring uninterrupted water supply. Moreover, 15 mobile filtration plants have been installed at river off takes and boreholes, allowing mobilisation of additional water resources to supply consumers. All these projects have led to an increase in the level of access to water services. On the other hand, to reduce inequalities between different groups, the Government has adopted the following measures:

1. Households consuming up to 6m3 per month are being exempted from their bill payment; and
2. A Water Tank grant scheme is in place to enable consumers to increase their water storage capacity and ultimately to benefit from 24-hours water supply.
3. **Waste water**

Projects involving the rehabilitation of sewerage infrastructure in low cost housing estates have been initiated since 2016. Some 1000 poor families have already been connected to the sewerage system

Whilst piped potable water supply to individual households has almost reached 100% coverage in Mauritius, the low-income group is exempted from wastewater charges for the first 6m3 of water consumed per month. Moreover, budgetary provisions are included every year for the rehabilitation/provision of wastewater infrastructure on housing estates for the low-income group.

1. **Please describe methods of budgeting and budgetary planning which aims to ensure that the maximum available resources are utilised for the realisation of the human rights to water and sanitation for all. Please include the process of allocating budget as well as the output achieved by the utilisation of the budget.**

The initial processes for budget preparation start in January, that is six months prior to the presentation of the budget. A top-down approach is used for budget formulation with clear macro fiscal rules.

The budget process includes the review of policies, preparation of the Macro-Fiscal Framework and the issue of budget circular by the Ministry of Finance, Economic Development and Planning (MOFEPD) containing necessary instructions and guidelines to concerned Ministries and Departments. Thereafter, Ministries/Departments will submit their Expenditure Proposals to MOFEPD with details of actual expenditure already incurred and realistic revised estimates for the current financial year, expected receipts of the department, if any, for the current fiscal year and financial requirements for the forthcoming year based on current and new policies.

Ministries/Departments are also requested to describe current status of implementation of projects and strategies on how they intend to contribute towards meeting objectives set in their Performance Agreements. These details are included in the Strategic Overview of each Ministry and Department where targets to be achieved are measured through Key Actions and Key Performance Indicators. Achievements on the set objectives are presented in respective Annual Reports on Performance.

MOFEPD then examines the budget proposals and correlates the financial requirements with the macro fiscal framework. Priority is given to on-going programs and projects where commitments have been taken. Proposals for new projects are considered on basis of strategic objectives and goals as per the Sector Strategic Plan and the Government Program, affordability and readiness of the concerned Ministries to implement new projects.

An Estimates Committee is held in the budget process at the MOFEPD with the Accounting Officers of the respective Ministries and Departments to review the expenditure bid and agree on the proposed estimates for the fiscal year and two subsequent years, in line with the list of priority projects set in the budget circular. However, policy issues, if any are discussed at higher levels between the Minister of Finance and his colleagues Ministers. The estimates are then finalized based on the outcome of the various discussions mentioned above for inclusion in the budget document.

In regard to budget allocation for the realization of the human rights to water and sanitation for all, the strategic objectives and targets are determined by the Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities (MEPU) in consultation with the concerned entities responsible for water and sanitation, that is the Central Water Authority, the Water Resources Unit and the Wastewater Management Authority. The key projects to be implemented to achieve these objectives are prioritized by the MEPU based on the expenditure limit for the utility sector.

Furthermore, the Strategic Overview of the MEPU in the Budget Estimates details the main strategy in the allocation of funds appropriated and enablers with regard to increasing water mobilisation and improving efficiency of distribution, along with reduction of water losses. For instance, the target to be achieved for the next three years are measured through the following KPIs:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Key Performance Indicator | Actual 2019/20 (Prov.) | Target 2020/21 | Target 2021/22 | Target 2022/23 |
| Volume of water treated (Mm3 /year) | **307** | **324** | **331** | **332** |
| Additional length of water pipes replaced (km) | **90** | **100** | **100** | **100** |
| Percentage of non-revenue water | **55** | **50** | **48** | **45** |
| Number of premises connected to the sewerage network (Cumulative) | **92,512** | **93,700** | **97,000** | **103,600** |

It is to be noted that achievements on Key Actions and KPIs mentioned in the Budget Estimates are published in the Statement DA of the Annual Report of the Accountant-General. In addition, MEPU includes the budget measures and achievements, through the utilization of the budget, for the Ministry in their Annual Reports on Performance.

1. **Please describe how non-financial resources have been utilised to progressively realise the human rights to water and sanitation including the process of utilisation and the output.**

Utilization of water resources such as rivers and ground water have been maximised for supply of potable and re-use of treated effluent for irrigation is practised wherever feasible.

The Government is responsible for policies in the water and sanitation sector. The Water Resources Unit a public institution is responsible for the mobilisation of surface and groundwater resources, whereas the Central Water Authority a parastatal body is responsible for the treatment and distribution of potable water. The Wastewater Management Authority another parastatal body is responsible for the waste water sector. The three institutions operate under the aegis of the Ministry of Public Energy and Utilities and have the necessary administrative and technical staff to ensure a high level of services to the population.

1. **In case where trade-offs with resources usage on other national agenda and implementation of other rights were required, please provide the circumstances and the decision taken as well as reasoning behind the decision.**

During dry periods irrigation water is often diverted for potable use. Such decisions are made with the consensus of the water rights holders with a view to ensuring that water supply to the population is affected the least possible, while water resources for agricultural production is minimally affected.

**31 July 2020.**