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

**(Human Rights Division)**

**Questionnaire in relation to the UN General Assembly Resolution 69/16 on “the Implementation of activities for the International Decade for People of African Descent”**

**1. Introduction**

1.1 The State of Mauritius is recognised for its melting pot of cultures. It has succeeded in keeping the equilibrium among different religious groups and ethnic minorities through its legislations and policies which safeguard the equality of all citizens and guarantees the protection of the fundamental rights and freedoms of each and every one. The Constitution, which is the supreme law of the country, prohibits discrimination and advocates equality for all.

1.2 The State of Mauritius has acceded to the International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) on 30 May 1972 without any reservation or declaration. By acceding to the ICERD, Mauritius has taken the commitment to ensure that racial discrimination is not tolerated within its territory and measures are taken to combat all forms of such discrimination.

1.3 The 24th and 25th Combined Periodic Report of the State of Mauritius on the Implementation of the ICERD was submitted in 2021 and can be accessed on the following link: <https://humanrights.govmu.org/Documents/Convention%20Corner/CERD/24th%20and%2025th%20Combined%20Periodic%20Report%20of%20Mauritius%20to%20the%20CERD.pdf>

1.4 It is important to note that everyone is equal in the Republic of Mauritius. Special measures are implemented for all vulnerable groups irrespective of their race or ethnicity. Moreover, Mauritius does not keep disaggregated data in respect of ethnicity as it goes against National Unity.

**2. Equality and access to justice**

The Constitution of Mauritius provides an unequivocal right for every citizen to be treated equally and to live a life free from discrimination. In this vein, the State of Mauritius does not discriminate between citizens, including vulnerable and disenfranchised segments of the population.

* 1. **Legal assistance**

The Legal Aid Act, which was amended in 2012, is now known as the Legal Aid and Legal Assistance Act. It extends the provision of legal assistance and now provides, for legal assistance and legal aid to be available to a wide range of persons in need. Legal assistance in the form of free legal advice and counselling at the police enquiry stage and free legal representation at bail application is now available in prescribed circumstances.

**3. Legislation Framework**

1. **The Constitution of the Republic of Mauritius**

Chapter II of the Constitution guarantees the enjoyment of fundamental rights and freedom which include the right to life, the right to personal liberty, protection from slavery and forced labour, protection from inhumane treatment, protection from deprivation of property, protection for privacy of home and other property, freedom of conscience, freedom of expression, freedom of assembly and association, freedom of movement and protection from discrimination. It also guarantees to all citizens the right to equal protection and benefit of the law without discrimination, thus upholding and strengthening an environment conducive to equal opportunities and equality for all Mauritians.

1. **Equal Opportunities Act (EOA)**

TheEOAcame into force in 2012 and further reinforces the protection from discrimination and the right to equal opportunities in various areas of life such as employment, access to certain facilities and services (including education), by prohibiting discrimination against a person on the ground of his status. “Status” is defined as including age, caste, colour, creed, ethnic origin, impairment, marital status, place of origin, political opinion, race, sex or sexual orientation.

1. **Criminal Code**

Section 86 of the Criminal Code makes it an offence for a public officer to use any form of violence against any person and shall, according to the nature and extent of the violence used, be liable to double the punishment which would have been incurred by any other person guilty of the like crime or misdemeanor.

1. **Children’s Act 2020**

 The Children’s Act 2020, the Children’s Court Act 2020 and the Child Sex Offender Register Act 2020 were passed in the National Assembly in December 2020 with a view to harmonizing all laws relating to good development, well-being and protection of children. These Acts came into effect on 24 January 2022 and can be accessed on <https://gender.govmu.org/Pages/Legislations.aspx>.

3.1 An array of legislations, relating to people of African descent has been enforced in the State of Mauritius and include inter alia;

1. **The Truth and Justice Commission Act (2008),** pursuant to which the President of Mauritius established a Truth and Justice Commission whose objects was to make an assessment of the consequences of slavery and indentured labour during the colonial period up to the present.
2. **The Nelson Mandela Centre for African Culture Trust Fund Act (1989) which sets up the Fund by the same name and having the following objectives:**
3. preserve and promote African arts and culture;
4. preserve and promote Creole arts and culture;
5. collect, publish and disseminate information with respect to the African and Creole arts and culture;
6. organise lectures, seminars, workshops, exhibitions and any other activities leading to the better understanding of the African and Creole arts and culture;
7. do research and reflect on the impact slavery has had in Mauritius;
8. establish useful links with organisations engaged in similar activities locally and internationally.
9. **Le Morne Heritage Trust Fund Act (2004**) which establishes a fund, the objects of which are as follows:
10. to promote Le Morne as a national, regional and international memorial site;
11. to preserve and promote the historical, cultural, environmental and ecological aspect of Le Morne;
12. to set up a museum and create public awareness in the history of Le Morne;
13. to encourage research and support projects and publications related to slavery and marronage;
14. to collect, publish and disseminate information pertaining to the history of slavery and marronage; and
15. to establish links with appropriate international organisations in line with the objects of the Act.

More generally, there are provisions in the Constitution and in other legislations as to non-discrimination and those have been described in the last report submitted by Mauritius to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

**4. National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs)**

4.1 Over the years, the State of Mauritius has established 7 NHRIs to ensure the protection of the rights of its people, namely;

1. the Office of the Ombudsman
2. the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)
3. the Ombudsperson for Children’s Office
4. the Equal Opportunities Commission
5. the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC)
6. the Ombudspersons for Sports
7. the Ombudsperson for Financial Services

**5. Measures undertaken by Mauritius**

5.1 The Government of Mauritius has taken a series of measures in respect of people of African Descent, namely:

1. The Truth and Justice Commission

The State of Mauritius established the Truth and Justice Commission under the Truth and Justice Commission Act in February-March 2009 in an attempt to examine the history of slavery and indentured labourers and their consequences. The Commission had, as its mandate, to assess consequences of slavery, indentured labour during the colonial period up to the present, for that purpose conduct an analysis on slavery, and indentured labour. The Commission was also tasked to make recommendations on measures to be taken following its assessment and its findings with a view to achieving social justice, national unity and reconciliation.

The Commission submitted its report after its tenure and same was published in 2011.The Report contained the following **main** recommendations based on principles of equality, fairness and justice:

1. memorializing slavery and slave trade in visible and strategic locations;
2. a better understanding and more inclusive, Mauritian history and culture;
3. a better and increased protection of Mauritian heritage;
4. a less racist and elitist society;
5. a more democratic public life, and;
6. empower Mauritians of African and Malagasy origin.

The Commission also submitted recommendations to increase economic and social justice, particularly related to land issues and equitable and judicious use of the environment. The Government of Mauritius has been looking into the structure that would be most appropriate to deal with cases of land dispossession and hear disputes regarding land. In this respect, a Land Research and Monitoring Unit has been set up under the aegis of the Ministry of Housing and Lands in July 2019. The Unit has taken possession of 355 files in July 2019, out of which 46 cases have already been entered in court. Further investigation and actions are required for the remaining 309 cases.

Pursuant to the recommendations of the Truth and Justice Commission, the Government of Mauritius has also set up a Land Division under the Supreme Court, which specializes in the resolution of land disputes, and hear as well as determine matters regarding ownership of land, property rights. The Land Division became operational as from January 2021 and 61 cases involving land disputes were scheduled before the Division, out of which 16 have been disposed as at end of March 2021.

1. Kreol Morisien

The Kreol Morisien is the most widely used language in Mauritius and as indicated in various fora, the use of Creole language is acceptable in the administration, judicial and education systems. An Akademi Kreol Repiblik Moris (AKRM) was set up to follow up on the development and use of the Kreol language in the Republic of Mauritius in 2019. The AKRM would have the following key objectives:

1. develop further the orthography, grammar, lexicon, usage and norms of Kreol Repiblik Moris (KRM) as the national standard language of the Republic of Mauritius;
2. develop and promote KRM as the key medium, component and expression of Mauritian heritage, culture and traditions in its unity and diversity;
3. commission and publish linguistic studies and descriptions of KRM and its usage, its varieties and registers, its evolutionary norms and standards, while assuring its development as a living and dynamic medium;
4. encourage literary, non-fiction and scientific writing and promote creative productions in audio-visual, electronic and other formats;
5. promote quality and excellence in the study, description and creative use of KRM and reward talent and achievement in KRM; and
6. advise the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research on matters related to KRM.

Moreover, the Kreol Maurisien is now a subject in itself in both primary and secondary cycle and necessary arrangements are being made to explore the possibility of extending it to upper secondary level.

1. The Intercontinental Slavery Museum

The Intercontinental Slavery Museum (ISM) was officially launched on 20 October 2020 together with an inaugural exhibition entitled “Breaking the Silence”. Its setting up was one of the various proposals made by the Truth and Justice Commission. This project is geared towards remembering the sufferings, resilience and struggle for freedom of our forefathers. It was also initiated to give more visibility to slavery and the slave trade in the Indian Ocean, promote slave history, and emphasise the contribution of the African Diaspora in the world development, and would link countries (e.g. Mauritius, Mozambique, Madagascar) which formed part of the slave trade network in the 18th and 19th centuries

The ISM is a ‘Site of Conscience’ to honour our interculturality and promote remembrance and reconciliation. It also contributes towards promoting respect for African peoples, recognise their contribution to Mauritius and empower Creoles of African descent in line with the United Nations Decade of People of African Descent (2015-2024). The creation of the Museum itself is part of concrete measures to promote the full inclusion of people of African descent and to combat all forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

The ISM is also a regional player while encouraging the construction of satellite slavery museums in regions that were part of this colonial slave-trading network. It thus contributes towards the promotion of cultural exchanges, a culture of peace and union among peoples of several continents.

1. The Nelson Mandela Centre for African Culture

The Nelson Mandela Centre for African Culture was set up in 1989 through an act of Parliament with as main objectives to inter-alia preserve and promote African arts and culture; preserve and promote Creole arts and culture; collect, publish and disseminate information with respect to the African and Creole arts and culture; organize lectures, seminars, workshops, exhibitions and any other activities leading to the better understanding of the African and Creole arts and culture; do research and to reflect on the impact slavery has had in Mauritius and establish useful links with organizations engaged in similar activities locally and internationally.

1. The Genealogy Project

One recommendation of the Truth and Justice Commission was the creation of a National Genealogy Centre to assist Mauritian families, many of whom are descendants of slaves and indentured labourers, in their quest for identity, to reconstruct their family tree. The aim was also to provide Mauritians with all the data required, free of charge, to reconstruct this family tree in recognition of the numerous difficulties faced by ordinary Mauritians to collect relevant data.

Data on genealogy are indeed made available free of charge to Mauritians for them to be able to reconstruct their family tree. The Nelson Mandela Centre for African Culture assists Mauritians of African Origin to trace back their genealogy. Moreover, the information is available online on the website of the Centre so that researchers and the general public from any part of the world can access to this information. Up to now, several hundreds of researchers have consulted our website and have also called in person at the Office.

1. Commemoration of contribution of people with African Descent

The State of Mauritius acknowledges the need to commemorate the dark era of colonial period and the contribution of the slaves and indentured labourers through the creation of memorials, monuments, musuems, arts, artifacts and other relevant ways. A list of the measures taken by the State of Mauritius as is as follows:

1. Abolition of Slavery is a public holiday celebrated in Mauritius on February 1st to commemorate the end of slavery in Mauritius.
2. the Le Morne Heritage Trust Fund was established on 28th May 2004 to promote Le Morne as a national, regional and international memorial site to preserve and promote the historical, cultural, environmental and ecological aspects of Le Morne, to set up a museum and create public awareness in the history of Le Morne, amongst others;
3. the Le Morne Cultural Landscape which, is an exceptional testimony to maroonage and resistance to slavery in terms of the mountain being used as a fortress to shelter escaped slaves and the Le Morne, has been recognized by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site and is viewed as a symbol of the slaves’ fight for freedom, their suffering and their sacrifice;
4. the International Slave Route Monument at the foot of Le Morne Brabant Mountain was inaugurated on 1st February 2009, to highlight the importance of the country in the Slave Trade at the regional level;
5. a replica of the Ancient Village of “Trou Chenille” which was opened on 1st February 2020 as an emblematic historical site that safeguards the memories of slavery in Mauritius and houses replicas of plants, utensils amongst others of that period;
6. the National Heritage Fund (NHF), which was set up in 1997, has been actively promoting our tangible and intangible heritage. Following the ratification of the Convention on the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage and in its endeavour to safeguard the Intangible Cultural Heritage, the NHF has initiated research to inventory and document its Intangible Cultural Heritage. A list of the various Intangible Cultural Heritage inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity is as follows:
	1. The ‘Sega Tipik’ which was inscribed in December 2014. It comes mainly from the Creole community of African descent whose ancestors had been slaves on the Island of Mauritius and is a way of promoting and preserving our cultural rights.
	2. The ‘Sega Tambour’ of Rodrigues which was inscribed on 07 December 2017.
	3. The ‘Sega Tambour Chagos’ with origins of the Chagos Archipelagos was inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding in December 2019.
	4. The enlistment of these Intangible Cultural Heritage entails several obligations to ensure that necessary measures are taken for the safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage present in its territory and this should be done with the participation of communities, groups and relevant NGOs.
7. International Decade for People of African Descent

Every year, the Nelson Mandela Centre for African Culture conducts research, publishes and disseminates information with respect to all aspects of slavery and slave trade. Exhibitions are also organized to pay tribute to the heroes of African descent – who, during the slavery era made an incredible contribution to the development of Mauritius. They also aim at creating an awareness among people of what slavery was about and the great contribution that slaves and their descendants have brought to the country through the discovery of various ‘*Lieux de Memoire*’ associated with slavery.

**6. Activities on the occasion of The International Decade for the People of African Descent**

The International Decade for the People of African Descent - 1 January 2015 to 31 December 2024 back up the main activities and commemorative dates of the Calendar of Activities of the Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage which are inter alia:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| January to March | Black History months. |
| 1st February | Abolition of Slavery |
| 25th May | Africa Day |
| 16th June | Day of African Child |
| 18th July | Nelson Mandela Day |
| 17th August | SADC Day |
| 28th August | International Day for the Remembrance of Slave Trade and its Abolition |
| 7th November | African Writers Day |
| December | Nelson Mandela Memorial Lecture |

Other activities organised from May 2021 to date to commemorate The International Decade for the People of African Descent is found at *Annex*.

6.1 **Recognition of the Contribution of the African /Kreol Slaves**

People of African descent have a common shared history of resistance and resilience born out of slavery and maroonage.  In the context of the 187th Anniversary of the Abolition of Slavery, the Nelson Mandela Centre for African Culture Trust Fund (NMCACTF) in collaboration with the National Art Gallery has presented an exhibition cum sale of artworks entitled: ‘Nou Listwar, Nou Leritaz’, Our History, Our Heritage. This exhibition brought together the original works of some 30 Mauritian artists presenting sculptures, paintings, videos, photography and public installations.

These contemporary Mauritian artists have chosen to use emotions to make a visual comment about some concept of this monumental subject, slavery. The outcomes are powerful and potent and manage to stir both our conscious and unconscious thoughts and feelings. Some works are brutal in their honesty, some have taken a spiritual aspect, some demand an intellectual response, some are carved from a deep, inherited consciousness and some are just the outcome of a sense of outrage.

**6.2 Making history of people of African descent better known to children**

The NMCACTF is working towards a better memorialisation of the economic contribution of the slaves to Mauritius through exhibitions and talks which are periodically organized at the seat of the Centre. Our main beneficiaries are students, researchers and the general public. Moreover, outreach programmes are conducted throughout the year around the island, in schools and community centres. Talks were also delivered in Reunion Island on our common and shared heritage. Each year the NMCACTF conducts research, publish and disseminate information with respect to all aspects of slavery and slave trade. Up to now we have conducted research and published on ‘Liberated Africans’, Maroonage, Slavery, Slave Trade, Creole culinary art, great Creole figures like Ti-frer, traditional sega music.

6.3  **African /Kreol figures**

Great Black figures are commemorated each year and this year a television programme on Martin Luther King Jr was recorded and broadcast on the MBC in collaboration with the US Embassy. This programme was organized in the context of the Black History Month. As for the dissemination of information for several years, the NMCACTF has contributed to the broadcasting of a heritage documentary on the MBC Channel and the Senn Kreol. Themes like Genealogy, Maroonage, Abolition of Slavery have already been broadcasted. Moreover, data on genealogy are also made available free of charge to Mauritians for them to be able to reconstruct their family tree. The Centre assists Mauritians of African Origin to trace back their genealogy. Moreover, the information is available online on the website of the Centre so that researchers and the general public from any part of the world can access to this information.

7. **Education**

7.1 Access to education for all

The Republic of Mauritius recognises the right of everyone to education and has been providing free, universal, primary education. In line with internationally accepted best practices, Section 37 of the Education Act provides for education to be mandatory for all children up to age of 16. Education is also free up to tertiary level in all public higher education institutions.

Mauritius also caters for learners with special education needs. The Special Education Needs (SEN) sector under the Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology ensures that no learner be left outside the education system on the basis of his/her disability.

The State of Mauritius is one amongst the rare countries where a common curriculum is taught to all, irrespective of gender, religion or belief in all educational institutions at pre-primary, primary, secondary and tertiary levels. A conducive environment is provided to all learners, which ensures equal access to relevant and quality education and training.

The Kreol Maurisien which is the most widely used language in Mauritius is now a subject in itself in both primary and secondary cycle and necessary arrangements are being made to explore the possibility of extending it to upper secondary level.

The school curricula at the primary and secondary levels have been elaborated so as to encourage not only the cognitive but also the holistic development of all learners. Aspects of Human Rights are included in the primary and secondary curriculum.

Values and Citizenship Education are also provided to students, amongst others, to ensure that they:

1. understand the importance of preserving and national and cultural heritage;
2. demonstrate tolerance and live in harmony with others and understand, accept and respect uniqueness of other pupils;
3. demonstrate awareness of rights and responsibilities of self and others; and
4. respect cultural and national heritage.

Furthermore, textbooks are reviewed regularly and efforts are made to eliminate all stereotypes in terms of ethnicity as well as gender. Instead, images, references, names and opinions which convey the message of the inherent dignity of all human beings and their equality in the enjoyment of human rights are incorporated.

8. **Equal participation in cultural activities**

The Government provides religious subsidies to religious bodies, and infrastructural facilities during all religious festivals celebrated in Mauritius. There also exist in Mauritius, several Trust Funds, Cultural Centres, Speaking Unions and Heritage Funds for the preservation of our rich and diverse cultural heritage and for the promotion of languages. Consequently, Mauritians of all cultural backgrounds have the opportunity to participate in religious and cultural activities of their choice and to foster harmony and mutual respect.

Since all cultures and religions live together, the Government adapts the calendar each year in order to share equitably the public holiday which are proclaimed based on the religion and culture of the citizens.

The Government also provides financial and institutional support to ensure that all aspects of arts and culture in Mauritius are preserved and promoted. Workshops, exhibitions, cultural programmes, concerts and plays in different languages are also organized by the Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage on a regular basis. Financial and other support are provided to artists and groups of artists to encourage artistic creation. The Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage has two theatre halls which are put at the disposal of the artist community at a reduced rate with a view to promoting arts and culture and encouraging the Mauritian public to attend cultural events.

**9.** **Health**

The State of Mauritius, being a welfare state, provides free primary, secondary and specialized medical treatment in public medical institutions. The right to health is guaranteed without discrimination to all citizens, including new-born, children, adolescents, women, and elderly.

The State acknowledges the Right to Health as a basic human right. The overall policy objective of Government is to achieve the highest attainable level of health regardless of gender, age, disability, geographical location, social status and ability to pay.

The national healthcare system in Mauritius is supported by the public and private sectors. Around 73% of the healthcare needs of the population are managed, free of any user cost, at the point of use, in the public sector. The remaining 27% of healthcare needs are dealt with in the private sector, on a fee basis, either through out-of-pocket payments, including deductibles or payments made by private health insurers. The free of charge health services in public health institutions are provided to all citizens.

The services provided in public health institutions include:

1. Maternal and Child Health services in clinics;
2. vaccination in clinics for babies;
3. family planning;
4. antenatal and postnatal Domiciliary visits by midwife/nurses;
5. growth monitoring for children;
6. expanded programme on immunisation targeting babies, pregnant women, school children;
7. sensitisation campaigns on sexual, emotional and reproductive health;
8. early detection of cancers for women and girls;
9. HPV vaccination among adolescent girls; and
10. HIV and AIDS related services.

The State of Mauritius has developed the Health Sector Strategic Plan 2020-2024, which provides concrete strategies and interventions to address major health challenges in the country and peoples’ expectations for an enhanced quality of services across their lifespan. It also provides a coherent framework that will guide policymakers, stakeholders and partners, in health development, over the next five years. The document can be accessed on the following link:

<https://health.govmu.org/Documents/Main%20Page/Communique/HSSP%20Final%2004%20March%202021.pdf>

**10.** **The COVID-19 pandemic**

The State of Mauritius was hit by the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020. Since the first three cases were confirmed, the Government of Mauritius took a series of bold measures to protect the population while formulating appropriate national development policies that aim at the constant improvement of the well-being of the entire population and of all individuals, on the basis of their active, free and meaningful participation in development and in the fair distribution of the benefits resulting therefrom.

During the COVID-19 crisis, Mauritius has tightened its measures through procedures, guidelines and laws and regulations to avoid unfairness. A high-level committee on COVID-19 chaired by the Prime Minister was instituted on 31 January 2020 to monitor both local and international epidemiological situations and for rapid sharing of key information among the different ministries. Measures adopted by Mauritius include, *inter alia*:

Vaccination

Mauritius started, and is effectively implementing, its national vaccination campaign against COVID-19 since 26 January 2021. The aim is to achieve herd immunity to minimise the transmission of the virus in the community. As at 19 May 2022, it was noted that 1009025 people have received their 1st Dose of vaccine, 975,896 people were fully vaccinated and 633,740 people were recipient of the Booster Dose.

**11. Employment**

Workers’ Rights Act (WRA)

The WRA was enacted to reiterate the principle that all citizens of Mauritius are entitled with the same rights in respect to access to income generating opportunities and terms and conditions of employment. The WRA provides that no worker shall be treated in a discriminatory manner by his employer in his employment or occupation and no person shall be treated in a discriminatory manner by a prospective employer in respect of access to employment or occupation.

Discrimination, in relation to the above provisions, includes affording different treatment to “different workers attributable, wholly or mainly, to their respective description by age, race, colour, caste, creed, sex, sexual orientation, HIV status, impairment, marital or family status, pregnancy, religion, political opinion, place of origin, national extraction or social origin, which has the effect of nullifying or impairing equality of opportunity or treatment in employment or occupation; (…)”

Moreover, section 64(1) of the WRA provides for the protection against termination of agreement by an employer by reason of inter alia a worker’s race, colour, caste, national extraction, social origin, place of his origin, age, pregnancy, religion, political opinion, sex, sexual orientation, HIV status, impairment, marital status or family responsibilities.

12. **Social Assistance**

The Ministry of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity empowers and supports the vulnerable groups registered and eligible under the Social Register of Mauritius (SRM). The aim is to mainstream the vulnerable groups in society and to enhance their quality of life by providing an effective and efficient service delivery based on the principles of equity, fairness and impartiality. A list of Schemes provided by the above-mentioned Ministry can accessed on: <https://socialintegration.govmu.org/Pages/About%20Us/Schemes.aspx>

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in enormous levels of empathy, generosity and support by communities to the most vulnerable members in their midst. Along with maintaining the existing income and empowerment support to all beneficiaries to allow them to continue securing their basic incomes and supports during the outbreak, the Ministry of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity has embarked on a free distribution of food packs and facemasks to vulnerable families in 2020.

13.  **Pensions**

 The State of Mauritius through its Ministry of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity provides, pursuant to the National Pensions Act, fair, equitable and responsive social protection in a sustainable manner to its citizens with special attention to senior citizens, persons with disabilities as well as vulnerable persons (widows and orphans) and reinforce national solidarity. A range of services are provided and include, inter alia, Contributory Pensions, Non-contributory Pensions, Industrial Injuries Allowances under the National Pensions Scheme.

The Government of Mauritius provides for a universal non-contributory Basic Pension for retired persons, widows, orphans, guardians, children, persons with disabilities and carers. Furthermore, the Social Aid Act provides financial assistance to any person who is temporarily or permanently incapable of earning adequately his livelihood due to any physical or mental disability and as well as to vulnerable group.

**Under the National Pensions Act, the prescribed rates of basic pensions, allowances and minimum contributory retirement pension are as follows:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | **Rate per month (Rs)** |
| **1.** | **Basic retirement pension for a person -** |  |
|  | * 1. Aged 60 and below 90
 | 9,000 |
|  | * 1. Aged 90 and below 100
 | 16,710 |
|  | * 1. Aged 100 and over
 | 21,710 |
|  |
| **2.** | **Widow’s basic pension** | 9,000 |
|  |
| **3.** | **Orphan’s pension -** |  |
|  | 1. Aged up to 15, not full-time education
 | 5,000 |
|  | 1. Aged between 3 and 20, in full-time education
 | 7,000 |
|  |
| **4.** | **Guardian’s Allowance** | 1,100 |
|  |
| **5.** | **Child’s allowance -** |  |
|  | 1. Under the age of 10
 | 1,600 |
|  | 1. Aged 10 and above
 | 1,700 |
|  |
| **6.** | **Invalid’s basic pension** | 9,000 |
|  |
| **7.** | **Carer’s allowance for a beneficiary of an invalid’s basic pension, who needs constant care and attention of another person.** | 3,500 |
|  |
| **8.** | **Minimum contributory retirement pension** | 605 |

Social Aid is also provided by the Ministry of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity also include allowances for dentures, income support, funeral grants, grant for the purchase of medicine and all persons who are bedridden or severely disabled and in receipt of carer’s allowance benefit from medial domiciliary visits.

**14. Housing**

Housing forms part of the basic social conditions that determine the quality of life and welfare of people. Social housing is one area where much is done to eradicate absolute poverty, economically empower vulnerable low-income families, including women headed households, and foster their social inclusion to encourage their participation in the structural, economic, social and spatial development of the country.

The State of Mauritius has adopted and implemented a Marshall Plan against Poverty which has a dual objective of eliminating absolute poverty and encouraging change among vulnerable populations and service providers that would lead to economic empowerment, social inclusion and overall improved well-being of the disadvantaged groups.

To that respect, eligible households on the SRM, who have signed a Marshall Plan Social Contract, are eligible to have access to affordable social housing units in a sustainable living environment provided through the following schemes:

1. The construction of fully Concrete Housing units of at least 50 m2 to families, who have been found to be living in absolute poverty and are owners of a plot of land but do not have the means to build a housing unit.
2. The provision of 10% of all new housing units constructed by the National Housing Development Corporation earmarked for landless beneficiaries of the SRM to facilitate their integration in the mainstream society.
3. An Upgrading Housing Scheme to cater for minor renovation works, provision of toilet and bathroom amenities, and replacement of roof, partitioning, extension and repairs to Corrugated Iron Sheet housing units, and plastering and flooring.

These schemes allow beneficiaries to benefit from a subsidized cost of 80% from Government and to repay only 20% of the total cost of a housing unit over a repayment period of 15 to 35 years.

14.1 For an applicant to be eligible for a housing unit, he/she should: -

1. not be owner of a house (including NHDC or CHA house);
2. not own a residential plot of land;
3. not hold a residential plot of State land by lease;
4. not have been granted any Government Sponsored Loan by the Mauritius Housing Company Ltd (MHC Ltd);
5. not have benefited from any Government grant for the casting of a roof slabs; and
6. not have received any financial assistance from Government for the purchase of construction materials.

**02.06.2022**