

SANITATION COUNTRY PROFILE

MAURITIUS

Decision-Making

- A. Basic Sanitation
- B. Solid Wastes
- C. Hazardous Wastes
- D. Radioactive Wastes

Programmes and Projects

- A. Basic Sanitation
- B. Solid Wastes
- C. Hazardous Wastes
- D. Radioactive Wastes

Status

- A. Basic Sanitation
- B. Solid Wastes
- C. Hazardous Wastes
- D. Radioactive Wastes

Capacity-building, education, training and awareness-raising

- A. Basic Sanitation
- B. Solid Wastes
- C. Hazardous Wastes
- D. Radioactive Wastes

Information

- A. Basic Sanitation
- B. Solid Wastes
- C. Hazardous Wastes
- D. Radioactive Wastes

Research and Technologies

- A. Basic Sanitation
- B. Solid Wastes
- C. Hazardous Wastes
- D. Radioactive Wastes

Financing

- A. Basic Sanitation
- B. Solid Wastes
- C. Hazardous Wastes
- D. Radioactive Wastes

Cooperation

- A. Basic Sanitation
- B. Solid Wastes
- C. Hazardous Wastes
- D. Radioactive Wastes

Decision-Making:

A. Basic Sanitation: The Ministry of Public Utilities (MPU) is the parent body for the management of water resources. This power has been delegated to the Water Resources Unit, which is responsible for the assessment, management, development and conservation of water resources. There are three subsidiary bodies for managing the available water: the Central Water Authority (CWA), responsible for potable water distribution, the Irrigation Authority, responsible for irrigation purposes and the Wastewater Management Authority (WMA), responsible for managing wastewater.

Mauritius prepared its Sewerage Master Plan in the early nineties for the better control and management of liquid waste, whether domestic and industrial. The Waste Water Authority was created with the aim to manage wastewater. Faced with more challenging problems and the demand from financing institutions the role of the authority has been given a new dimension. It is therefore logic to provide the authority with an autonomous status. The Wastewater Management Authority was proclaimed on 30th August 2001. The WMA is now called to:

- Be responsible for the wastewater sector in Mauritius and carry out, monitor, supervise, maintain, manage and control wastewater works,
- Promote the treatment and reuse of wastewater
- Conduct and undertake research and studies for the implementation and development of projects relating to the wastewater sector.
- Ensure the generation of sufficient resources from tariffs to finance the operation, maintenance and depreciation of costs of wastewater systems, sewerage and sewage treatment installations,
- Ensure the proper functioning, inspection and maintenance of house sewers and wastewater systems,
- Control and monitor pollution, private sewers and the use of equipment in relation to wastewater systems,

The duty of the WMA is now as follows:

- Under the Convention de Maîtrise d'Ouvrage Déléguée signed in September 2001 with MPU, WMA acts as consultant/contractor for the implementation of all projects.
- Take over, maintain and manage all existing public sewers and wastewater systems existing in Mauritius
- Manage and run any wastewater system including public sewers or equipment vested in the MPU by way of a "Contrat de delegation".
- Recover through tariffs user fees that may be claimed in respect of the lease of assets under a "Contract de delegation"
- Extend as far as practicable the public wastewater system so as to provide sewerage facilities to all properties, domestic, commercial or industrial,
- Undertake wastewater treatment to such predetermined quality as may be prescribed for the safe disposal of the effluent and sludge to the environment or reuse,
- Carry out or coordinate studies for the implementation of any project which may be devised for research and investigation for the economic collection, treatment and safe disposal of wastewater
- Control and monitor the pollution discharged to wastewater systems by any person
- Ensure that any storm drainage is not connected or does not get mixed up with the wastewater system,
- Regulate the construction of private sewers, enforce their maintenance according to such standards as may be prescribed and provide for their inspection
- Establish and maintain laboratories for the purpose of testing wastewater and sanitary equipment, and
- Carry out against payment of such fees as may be prescribed for and on behalf of any Authority or organisation responsible for the enforcement of wastewater laws, any wastewater analysis, which may be necessary for such enforcement.

B. Solid Wastes: The Ministry of Local Government and Rodrigues (Local Government Division) is responsible for solid waste management in Mauritius. Its objectives is to develop, implement and monitor a sustainable waste management plan encompassing environmental, social, technological and

economic criteria. A new Local Government Act (Act No. 32 of 2003) has recently been promulgated. A Solid Waste Management Bill is under preparation and will provide a comprehensive piece of legislation.

Solid waste collection is undertaken by the local authorities in areas under their respective jurisdiction and disposed of at Mare Chicose landfill or via transfer stations, managed and maintained by the Government through private contractors. Around 80% of wastes collected are compacted at the transfer stations before going to Mare Chicose.

C. Hazardous Wastes: Under the present EPA 2002, the Ministry of Local Government and Rodrigues is the enforcing agency for hazardous wastes. The Environment Protection (Standards for hazardous wastes) Regulations 2001, aiming at defining hazardous waste, minimizing its generation, banning importation and controlling exportation of such wastes have been promulgated under the Environment Protection Act (EPA) 1991 and has come into force on 01 April 2002.

As far as the use and handling of chemicals is concerned, this issue is being dealt in The Dangerous Chemicals Control Bill which is being prepared by the Ministry of Health and Quality of life.

D. Radioactive Wastes: Under the EPA 2002, the Ministry of Local Government and Rodrigues is the Enforcing Agency for radioactive waste. The Radiation Protection Board and the Physics Department of the Ministry of Health are in charge of matters of radioactivity. The Radiation Protection Bill 2003 aims at regulating the use of radioactive materials in the country as well as radioactive waste management. The Act calls for the setting up of a Radiation Protection Authority. Upon proclamation of the Act, all licensees would be required to have the necessary infrastructure for waste management. As regard sealed sources, contractual provisions would have to be made by licensees for the return of used sealed sources to the supplier/ manufacturer.

Programs and Projects:

A. Basic Sanitation: In 1993, a National Sewerage Master Plan (NSMP) was completed, The aim of the plan is to provide public sewerage coverage mainly in the urban areas to about 50 % of the population by 2010 and 80 % by the year 2020. The NSMP target a 100% connection to the sewerage system by the year 2030. The master plan provides for a comprehensive national assessment of sewerage needs, sets standards of future provision and outlines plans for increased connections to the network and provision of more treatment plants. This plan lays down the strategies, policies and measures which need to be implemented both in the short term, medium term and long term. Presently, around 22% of the population is connected to the sewer network. The implementation of the NSMP will reduce pressure resulting from disposal of untreated wastewater into the coastal zone. The implementation of the National Development Strategy will help to control development occurring along the coastal zone.

Since the year 1994, the Government has started implementing the plan and has been organising the financing of the following projects:

- The Sewerage Master Plan Urgent Works for the construction and rehabilitation of sewage works at the two urban areas of Port-Louis and Plaine-Wilhems.
- Improvement of sewage treatment works of St Martin for Plaine Wilhems area.
- Construction of sewage facilities for a tourist resource area in Grand Baie.
- Construction of sewage facilities for the Northern area of Port-Louis (Baie du Tombeau Project)
- Preparation of studies for the implementation of sewage facilities for Port-Louis South (Montagne Jacquot Project).

The table below gives a resume of the projects:

Year	Project	Completion Schedule/	Project	Value
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		Completed on	Estimates (Rs. M)
1990-91	CHA Phase I	1995	50
1991	Sewerage Master Plan	1991	EIP II
1995	Urgent Works	1998	160
2000	Baie du Tombeau	2005	988
2001	G. Bay Sewerage	2004	995
2001	Mt. Jacquot Sanitation Project	2005	1900
2001	St. Martin Treatment Plant	2004	920
2001	Study Pailles/Guibies & Implementation	2007	500
2002	Study Western Coast & Implementation	-	500
2001	Plaines Wilhems Reticulation, House Connection and Trunk Sewer	2008	3700
2001	CHA Phase II, Extension Phase II and CHA Phase III	2004/2006	835
			10548

Plaines Wilhems Sewerage Network: The Plains Wilhems Sewerage Network was constructed in 1960s. The existing network of sewers cannot cope with the present flow, especially during heavy rainfall. The Master Plan recommended providing a new trunk sewer by early 2006 at a cost of Rs 3.6 billion and directing all the flow into one large treatment plant at St Martin.

Baie du Tombeau Sewerage Project The Baie du Tombeau Sewerage Project area includes the northern Port Louis and Baie du Tombeau area. The project consists in rehabilitating the existing northern works, collection of wastewater from the area including 2100 house connections and pumping the sewage flows into the new wastewater treatment plant. Treated water will be discharged into a new long sea outfall.

Montagne Jacquot Sewerage Project: The Montagne Jacquot Sewerage Project consists in transportation, treatment and disposal of 48,000 m³ per day of wastewater from the areas of Southern Port Louis, lower Beau Bassin and Coromandel, including the industrial areas of Plaine Lauzun, Coromandel, La Tour Koenig and Pailles.

Proper sanitation is a guarantee for tourism industry sustainability, as it contributes to provide a safe and attracting environment for prospective tourists (coast, lagoon, rivers, public health), allowing the marketing of Mauritius as an eco-tourism, environmentally friendly destination. There are two main projects concerning directly tourist areas:

- The Grand Baie Sewerage Project

The Grand Baie Sewerage Project presently being implemented aims at providing sewerage facilities in the Northern Tourist Zone (from Trou aux Biches to Cap Malheureux). The project will cover an area of 575 hectares representing 74 km of sewer network.

- West Coast (Flic en Flac) project actually in study phase.

Reuse of treated waste water: Reuse of treated waste water has been investigated in detail by various consulting firms as one of the disposal options. Based on the technical feasibility and the financial

viability, the new wastewater treatment plant at St Martin and Grand Baie plans to use treated wastewater for irrigation. These wastewater treatment plants would generate about 73,000 m³ per day by the year 2004 for the irrigation of sugar cane crops in the western coast and northern coast of Mauritius. Studies are also being carried out by local authorities for the use of treated sludge as a fertilizer for sugar cane crop and ultimately for other agricultural crops. All hotels with more than 75 rooms are required to have a sewage treatment plant. These large hotels have mainly the extended aeration activated sludge type of treatment plants.

B. Solid Wastes: The first National Solid Waste Management Plan (NSWMP) was produced in 1994. This was to form a basis for future planning and action. The main priority of the projects undertaken under the plan has been the elimination of haphazard, uncontrolled waste disposal indulged a decade ago. One sanitary landfill has been designed and constructed. It is operational since September 1997. Furthermore, four new transfer stations have been constructed. This programme has led to the closing up of all the dumping ground. Feasibility studies are being conducted for the rehabilitation of some of the closed dumping grounds. These studies will provide the government with analyses, options, recommendations, design plans and proposals to achieve a sound basis for a decision on final design, project implementation, cost forecasting, operation and management, monitoring programmes, to ensure safe containment of the solid waste masses and to minimise the impacts of the closed dumps on the local environment.

Government policy is to promote waste reduction and minimise its generation, and whenever possible promote the adoption of environmentally sound methods of resource recovery by direct use, alternative use, reclamation or recycling, reuse and recycling of wastes. Consequently Government has recently adopted a new Solid Waste Management Strategy, whereby greater emphasis be given as a matter of priority to waste minimisation (Composting/Recycling) in order to decrease the amount of wastes to be disposed of, thereby reducing the pressure on the landfill. The Solid Waste Management Strategy aims at preserving the existing resources of Mauritius and consolidating its physical environment. New policies have been designed and objectives set which also include the security of the citizens throughout the Municipal/District Council area, the elimination of health hazards, improvement in mobility and the upgrading of human settlements.

Over the past years, several composting projects have been carried out at the University of Mauritius with the aim to assess the composting potential of different types of waste in both large scale and small scale systems. Moreover, a Completed Compost Market Study established that in the Northern part of the island, compost would have a much sizeable market size and composting of yard waste could be carried out. The construction and operation of composting plants are actually being worked out.

The Municipal/District Councils cater for the needs and welfare of their inhabitants. With the rapid changes in standard of living that have taken place both at national and international levels and the challenges brought with them, considerable efforts have been made by the councils to offer the best services in terms of waste collection and disposal, road infrastructure, lighting, sanitation and welfare and recreational activities to improve the quality of life of the inhabitants. Efforts are also directed towards the change in behavioural patterns and achievement of responsible attitude towards the environment. The objectives of the Municipal Council are to continuously deploy effort to control waste collection. Thus, scavenging services are now provided in almost all regions on a regular basis and green spaces are being provided in a large number of areas. In certain Council areas refuse bins have been distributed to both the households and the trades. One Council has an in-house team for rodents control.

C. Hazardous Wastes: An interim storage facility will be constructed to store wastes, which cannot be treated on the island. In the Solid Waste Management Plan, provisions have been made to construct pre-treatment and incinerator facilities. Government is presently gathering information and planning remedial actions regarding disposal of asbestos, which are already present in some work places and buildings constructed in the past twenty or more years. A policy for the environmentally sound

management of asbestos has been prepared by the Ministry of Environment in 2003. Information and data on the generators of hazardous wastes (both solid and liquid) has been collected in order to develop and implement an efficient hazardous waste management. Emphasis will be laid on development of environmentally-sound management of hazardous wastes.

Control programs: The Ministry of Commerce has an established plan of action to help in the management of wastes:

- A control is being already exercised on the importation of scrap metals with a view to ensuring that each and every consignment is free of hazardous wastes and materials and complies with the provisions of the Basel Convention. Each and every consignment is covered by a certificate from a recognised organisation of the exporting country attesting that the scrap metals are in conformity with the provisions of the Basel Convention and are free from any hazardous substance.
- The Consumer Protection (Control of Imports) Regulations 1999 are being amended to limit or prohibit the importation of non-biodegradable product (e.g plastic toys and other toxic and hazardous materials)

D. Radioactive Wastes: Mauritius, through the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life, is participating in a project RAF/4/015 –Strengthening Waste Management Infrastructure. Moreover, further assistance from the International Atomic Energy Agency is being obtained under the project RAF/9/027 – Strengthening the National Regulatory Control and Occupational Radiation Protection Programmes in which the Ministry of Public Utilities is participating.

Status: The issues of water quality are closely tied up with the management of the coastal zone and fisheries since they are all part of a symbiotic system. There is awareness of potential water contaminants and an aggressive programme to stop pollution at its source, caused by both industrial and non-point source pollution, has been set up. The Ministry of Environment and National Development Unit has promulgated various standards for the control of waste water disposal. Monitoring is conducted on surface, ground and lagoon water, and special attention is paid to effluents from industrial dyeing and washing activities. Pesticide use, agricultural chemicals and haphazard disposal of waste may have caused water contamination. The sugar mills have pre-treatment facilities for waste water, with some of the treated effluent being used for irrigation purposes; nevertheless any wastewater discharged into the rivers inevitably ends up in the lagoon. Deforestation on the steep slopes in the central region erodes topsoil and causes siltation of the river basins, ultimately ending up in the coastal zone.

A. Basic Sanitation: The recommendations of the Sewerage Master Plan are being implemented. As stated above the major projects that needed urgent attention have been implemented or are being implemented. Being given that sewerage projects require enormous investment, the implementation of the measures cannot be effected in one stretch. Presently, around twenty per cent (20%) of the population are connected to the sewerage network. After completion of the projects listed above, at least fifty per cent (50%) of the population will be connected by the year 2010. The ultimate aim is to cover the island with a sewerage network.

Constraints

- Lack of expertise in defining the maximum permissible limits for pollutants
- The high cost for treatment of effluent
- Optimum permissible limits for pollutants have to be worked out to ensure that Mauritius can afford to preserve its environment whilst ensuring that the various manufacturing sectors remain competitive.

B. Solid Wastes: A Compost market study for the northern part of the island has been completed and it was established that compost would have a much sizeable market. It is expected that a compost plant of 20,000 tonnes per annum for green and park waste will be constructed and operated by year

2005. The plant will be extended to handle approximately 40,000 tonnes of green and organic waste per year will help to achieve a sustainable waste management system.

It is expected that the existing landfill will be closed by the year 2007 and a new disposal site will take the lead. Rehabilitation works for a closed dumping ground will start shortly.

As regards collection of wastes, most of the populated areas are served by regular services. Furthermore, to encourage proper waste storage bins have been distributed to household units in a wide number of areas. Most of the public beaches are serviced regularly. Bins and other wastes disposal/removal facilities are provided, to minimize physical damage to the beach environments.

Landfilling alone therefore is no longer a viable solution for the future. Recycling of paper and cardboard and composting of sorted municipal wastes have therefore been under consideration. The design and implementation of a financially sound waste management become efficient only if the latter is backed by an efficient recovery mechanism. This has been a major constraint in further development in recycling, composting and incineration. In the long run, a phased implementation of user charges, billing and revenue collection could be possible when waste management services will have the same status as other public service systems, such as electricity, water and sewage. A comprehensive Solid Waste Management Act legislation will also be drafted.

C. **Hazardous Wastes:** Mauritius has a landfill with a provision for cells to accommodate solid hazardous wastes.

D. Radioactive Wastes: Under the RAF/4/015 project, used sealed sources of the Ministry of Health and other orphan sealed sources, comprising essentially of Radium-226 and Caesium-137, have been conditioned with the assistance of the IAEA and are presently safely stored.

A list of radioactive sources has been compiled by the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life and needs to be updated. With the setting up of the Radiation Protection Authority under the aegis of the Ministry of Public Utilities, the Authority will be responsible for keeping an up-to-date inventory of such sources.

Capacity-building, education, training and awareness-raising:

A. Basic Sanitation: The Wastewater Management Authority is deemed to function as a body corporate. It has presently a structured organization comprising of four distinct units viz.: The Pollution Control Unit, the Project Management Unit, The Operation and Maintenance Unit and The House Connection Unit. The Wastewater Laboratory provides backup support in monitoring effluent quality of the sewer users. The Corporate Plan redefining the roles and attributes of the WMA has been completed and is under the implementation phase.

B. Solid Wastes: The Government agencies have together with the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, Mauritius College of the Air and Mauritius Institute of Education produced a number of programmes for education, sensitisation and awareness. The University of Mauritius in collaboration with the Ministry of Local Government has recently launched a Certificate Course in Waste Management. This Course aims at increasing professional competency and knowledge for the Local Authorities Health inspectors and private operators.

In December 2003, the Ministry of Local Government and Rodrigues in collaboration with the Local authorities has launched a 'bulky waste collection campaign' during two consecutive weekends with a view to familiarise people with the habit of separating recyclable wastes (e.g metallic wastes) from non-recyclable wastes.

Regular activities are organised to sensitise various groups on environmental issues, starting from garbage collection at home to cleaning public beaches.

The Government through the Department of Environment is active in mounting various campaigns over the whole island and especially in schools to raise public awareness of the importance of a clean environment including proper management of waste.

The objective of the Municipal/District Council is to have a trained and motivated staff to meet the challenges in providing the proper socio-economic services to the inhabitants. It is proposed to establish a comprehensive training programme could be planned and implemented to cater for staffs' skills development in every local authority. During the past years, some councils have been providing training to employees in the fields of solid waste management, food sanitation, construction, customer care, Town and Country Planning etc.

C. Hazardous Wastes: There is a long-term plan to train the staff of the Department of Environment and the Ministry of Local Government and other agencies. A workshop has been organised to inform all stakeholders on the provisions of the hazardous wastes regulations and also the methods of effecting inventory.

D. Radioactive Wastes: Training of the staff of the Radiation Protection Authority will be provided by the IAEA. To the extent possible, the Radiation Protection Authority will provide necessary training to users/potential users in radiation safety related, amongst others, to waste management. This will also include awareness raising among users and the public in general.

Information:

A. Basic Sanitation: Up to now the WMA has been participating in national activities such as World Environment Day, World Water Day and the like. The need and benefits of the sewer system has been aired to the public at large through video clips and adverts on the television. Pamphlets have been prepared and distributed to the general public. Officers from the Authority are also invited to give talks on wastewater issues to schools, industrialists and other private bodies.

B. Solid Wastes: The weighing of incoming wastes to and outgoing wastes from the four transfer stations are recorded by means of weighbridges and computer facilities. The wastes carried to the disposal site are noted in the same manner as above. The data is sent back to the Ministry of Local Government and Rodrigues on a monthly basis for processing.

On line information on the role of the Ministry of Local Government and Rodrigues and the responsibilities of the Solid Waste Management Unit as well as the Beach Authority are available at the following website: <http://ncb.intnet.mu/mlge/index.htm>

C. Hazardous Wastes: The Environment Protection (Standards for hazardous wastes) Regulations 2001 (Government notice 157 of 2001) are effective as from 01 April 2002.

Under the regulations provision has been made for the submission to the enforcing agency on a quarterly basis an inventory of the hazardous waste generated, stored and disposed of by the generators. Relevant information will be widely disseminated.

These regulations empower the enforcing agency to require hazardous wastes generators, wastes carriers and operators of hazardous wastes disposal facilities to document the type, quantity, treatment and disposal of hazardous wastes.

D. Radioactive Wastes: *Procedure for Disposal of Hazardous Wastes*: As per the Hazardous Wastes Regulations(2001), the Ministry of Local Government and Rodrigues is the Enforcing Agency for Hazardous Wastes. The public is advised to consult these regulations for the identification of wastes classified as hazardous. The advice of the Ministry of Local Government and Rodrigues is to be sought with regards to disposal according to an already established procedure.

The Radiation Protection Authority will be responsible for keeping an up-to-date inventory of all radioactive sources in the country as well as a list of all licensees. The latter would be responsible for declaring their existing radioactive sources within a specified time frame.

Research and technologies:

A. Basic Sanitation: The WMA has not extensively launched research studies. However, it has given its support to institutions, or persons who have shown interest in research works in the treatment of wastewater. There is presently a research cum pilot project on the reuse of sewage sludge into compost. This study is conducted in conjunction with the MSIRI. The compost so obtained will be applied to sugarcane plantations. A similar exercise is being executed by the AREU but the application of the compost will be on agricultural farms. The University of Mauritius has been engaged on major projects related to the environment. Thus, the management of industrial wastewater, solid waste and ground water has been studied fairly extensively at the Faculty of Engineering of the University of Mauritius.

B. Solid Wastes: Several experiments on composting locally available wastes such as market waste, scum, bagasse, sawdust, chicken waste and vegetable waste, paper have been carried out successfully in the laboratory at the University of Mauritius over the past 7 years. Projects on automation of the composting process, aerated static pile composting and design of optimum household composter for Mauritius are still ongoing.

C. Hazardous Wastes: With the collaboration of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), AREU is developing integrated plant nutrient system for major cropping system in order to limit leaching of agro chemicals, while at the same time to study the fate of nitrate in the soil/ plant/ water system under intensive vegetable production. Improvement in the vegetable legumes/ Rhizobium symbiosis is also being studied with a view to diminish fertilizer N input in crop production. Emphasis is being laid on organic farming. To this end, crops that could be produced organically are being tested and the techniques of organic production system are being evaluated. Another project undertaken in line with sustainable agriculture is the use of leguminous cover crops for soil, water and fertility conservation. Waste recycling is also being given much attention as organic waste can help cut down on inorganic fertilizer input.

D. Radioactive Wastes: Local expertise is unavailable for the conditioning of radioactive wastes. Moreover, the limited use of radioactive materials in the country does not warrant research studies locally on the subject matter. Nevertheless, necessary assistance is extended by the IAEA for capacity building through participation in regional projects of the Agency.

Financing:

A. Basic Sanitation: The financing of projects cannot be wholly met from the national budget. Funds are either sought from financing agencies or obtained as grants. Some of the financing agencies/communities are the World Bank, European Union, BADEA, AFDB, KfW, NIB, OECF, EDF, EIB, EXIM, ADB and Kuwait Fund. However, in all projects the Government of Mauritius is bound to contribute partly in the financing.

B. Solid Wastes: The collection, transport and disposal of Municipal Solid wastes are mostly financed by the state.

C. Hazardous Wastes: The collection, transport and disposal of the hazardous wastes are mainly financed by the State.

D. Radioactive Wastes: Licensees would be responsible for storing their radioactive wastes and for managing same, hence the question of financing will not arise for the Radiation Protection Authority, save for services it may be called upon to provide.

Cooperation:

A. Basic Sanitation: Co-operation has been limited to the national context only. Technical expertise has been provided to both public and private sectors in the domain of wastewater. There have not been many co-operations in the regional context being given the local urgent needs. The Authority is now looking forward to open avenues of co-operation in the island of Rodrigues.

B. Solid Wastes: Inter-ministerial committee is presently looking into this issue.

C. Hazardous Wastes: The IAEA co-operates in funding and providing technical assistance and training in a project that require nuclear techniques to study the soil - plant relationship and the fate of nitrate in soil, water and plant.

Mauritius has acceded to the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal on 24 November 1992. Mauritius has also signed the Bamako Convention aimed at banning all radioactive and hazardous waste imports into the African continent. Mauritius has worked in areas such as training on regulations for hazardous waste and medical waste with the Regional Centres for Training and Technology of South Africa established under the Basel Convention.

D. Radioactive Wastes: The IAEA co-operates fully in providing necessary assistance regarding radiation protection in the country. Assistance is also obtained at the regional level through AFRA and some work is ongoing to find a suitable means and site for final disposal of conditioned radioactive sources of the region.

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