

**2004 SURVEY FOR REPORTING ON
NATIONAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES (NSDS)**

1 Is your country implementing an approved NSDS or its equivalent?

☐ Yes

(a) Does your country have a national body designated to implement and/ or monitor your country's NSDS (or its equivalent)?

The Ministry of Finance and Economic Development is the lead agency for the implementation of the country's NSDS and it acts as coordinating body for other Ministries implementing sustainable development strategies. In 1997, in its effort to try and avert problems which might threaten Mauritian sustainability, Government carried out a National Long-Term Perspective Study to redefine the development agenda of the country. This report, commonly known as Vision 2020 formed the basis for articulating a national vision up to year 2020 and a framework for long term socio-economic development for the country. The National Strategy for Sustainable Development provides a programme for its implementation.

Please give the year it started: 1999

Please also give the name and composition of such a body: Economic Development Division of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development.

The Division is headed by a Director General and is composed of Economists. The body is responsible for formulating sound policies for the nation's social and economic sustainable development. It coordinates the activities of sectoral Ministries and is involved in all important sectors influencing economic development such as transport, pension reform, poverty alleviation, and environment protection. In addition, it plans and coordinates all external aid and actively works towards enhancing bilateral ties with friendly countries as well as multilateral co-operation with leading international organizations, especially the World Bank, the European Union and the United Nations.

The Ministry of Environment is mandated under the Environment Protection Act (EPA) 2002 to ensure coordination and effective implementation of governmental policies in relation to environmental protection and conservation as well as in the enforcement of all provisions spelt out in the EPA. The Ministry also coordinates activities related to Agenda 21 and sustainable development with other Ministries, Parastatal bodies, Private sector and NGOs.

The National Environment Commission set up under EPA is the highest level of coordination to discuss and decide on national environmental policies and strategies. The EPA also makes provision for the compulsory consultation with various stakeholders. Furthermore the EPA 2002 provides for the setting up of a “National Network for Sustainable Development” which functions as a forum for debates and consultations among the public sector, private sector and NGOs on environmental matters and other issues related to sustainable development.

(b) **How is your NSDS (or its equivalent) being implemented? Please give specific actions/activities undertaken for its purpose:**

In order to attract domestic investment and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), Government is investing massively in infrastructure and utilities, and is conducting an aggressive campaign in service sectors like tourism and ICT. Packages involving generous incentive, a stronger regulatory and institutional framework, a permanent resident scheme and the integrated resort scheme targeted at expatriates.

Mauritius possesses a very liberal policy in respect of investment and investors can invest in all sectors of the economy through the various investment schemes. The Government of Mauritius endeavors to attract higher level of investment in the country by offering a whole gamut of incentives to investors. These are grouped under the Investment Promotion Act (2000).

Mauritius offers a number of incentive schemes, both fiscal and non-fiscal, tailored to suit the requirements of the merging sectors of the economy and ensure the sustained development of the economy. The incentives are classified by sector of activities, namely manufacturing (including agriculture) and services (including ICT and tourism).

PPP will be used as a new form for financing infrastructure projects, such as the proposed Light Railway System (LRT), Information & Communication Technology (ICT) and other major capital projects. A policy framework, including appropriate legislation has just been put in place.

Financial Services Sector

Mauritius is rapidly transforming itself into a regional financial and business center. Given the global challenges and the changes in the business economy, Mauritius has already adopted a global positioning strategy and has taken appropriate steps to strengthen its legal and institutional capacity. Several legislations have already been adopted such as, the Companies Act, Financial Services Development Act, Trust Act and Anti-money laundering and Financial Intelligence Act. New institutions have been created, namely the Financial Services Commission, The Financial Services Promotion Agency and the Financial Intelligence Unit. All these measures aim at protecting the international reputation of Mauritius with regard to anti-money laundering and combating financial trafficking.

Numerous foreign banks and international financial companies have set up branches in the country to cash in on the investment opportunities present in Mauritius and the region.

The Freeport

The Freeport aims at transforming Mauritius into a major regional distribution, transshipment and marketing center by encouraging the development of international trade.

Services (Export Service Zone)

This scheme aims at encouraging the development of marketing services and expertise in support of the manufacturing sector. Other activities include translation works and consultancy services. Qualifying activities are export oriented service companies, such as:

- Accountancy
- Law
- Medicine
- International marketing
- Quality testing
- Pre-shipment services
- Civil engineering
- Management Consultancy
- Re-insurance
- Entrepôt trade
- Transshipment

National Environment Strategy (NES)

The NES was prepared in 1999 and its goal can be summarized as follows: to follow the principles of sustainable development by providing environmental services, encouraging responsible environmental practices and enforcing appropriate environmental standards in order to safeguard the health and welfare, conserve the heritage, and enhance the quality of life of all people of Mauritius.

The second National Environmental Strategy and Action Plan (NEAP II) for the decade (2000-2010) was prepared along same line. The National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP II) is a cross sectoral action plan and covers some 72 projects all of which are geared towards achieving sustainable development in the following strategic areas:

- Environmental management
- Resource management: involving land, water resources, terrestrial biodiversity, air quality, and Integrated coastal zone Management

- Economic Sector management: Solid Waste management, Industrial management, Tourism management, Transport management

National Development Strategy (NDS)

The NDS was prepared in 2003 and it makes a number of proposals for improving the land planning services to make more judicious use of land resources which is limited in a small island like Mauritius. It has provided a number of planning guidances for all the sectors of land development. It also deals with institutional strengthening within the Government's Central and Local planning services.

Solid Waste Management Plan (SWMP)

In 1999, a further feasibility study was carried out to propose an Environmental Solid Waste Management Programme. This report assessed the problem of collection, storage, transportation of both hazardous and non-hazardous wastes in a holistic approach. Measures for waste minimization have also been addressed. In fact the overall objective of this strategy is to reduce the generation of waste and the environmental impact of all forms of waste and thereby ensure that the socio economic development, the health of the people and the quality of its environmental resources are no longer adversely affected by uncontrolled and uncoordinated waste management. Projects for composting and recycling are also being developed.

Water Resources Management

Increasing Storage

1. Construction of run-off diversion schemes and extra storage dams

Government has worked out an integral plan for harnessing additional water resources to meet the water requirements of the various sectors of the economy up to the year 2040. The Midlands Dam with a capacity of 25.5 Mm was completed in 2002. The water needs for development in the central part of the island are expected to be met with the doubling of the treatment capacity at La Marie Treatment Works. Four other storage dams are planned to be constructed by 2020 which will cater for the water needs in different regions of Mauritius

Maintenance of network

2. Rehabilitation of existing water infrastructure

Existing as storage dams, feeder canals etc have been rehabilitated. Seven dams are being rehabilitated to enhance their safety and useful life and to minimize seepage losses. The largest storage dam for drinking water was completed rehabilitated in 2000.

3. ***Replacement of old and obsolete potable water infrastructure***

Old and obsolete drinking water infrastructure is being replaced and provides more treatment capacity, a better distribution network and better water quality. Pipelines less than 30 years old are replaced if necessary old having low capacity, insufficient cover are replaced if found necessary. 83 km of pipelines is being relaid as it is at insufficient depth to withstand the present traffic load.

4. ***Reduction of Unaccounted for water***

The CWA has embarked on an aggressive project for the reduction of UFW and aims to reduce the level of non-revenue water to 25% of the volume throughput by 2007.

Research

5. ***Hydrological Studies are being undertaken to:***

- Increase development of groundwater potential
- Increase the number of boreholes to reduce the problem of areas in water stress
- To ensure the development guidelines within the vicinity of boreholes are strictly adhered so as to harness groundwater in a sustainable manner

6. ***Hydrographic Survey***

- A hydrographic survey has been undertaken of four storage reservoirs to determine their effective storage capacity and to make better use of them.

Increase efficiency of use

7. ***Better irrigation Techniques***

- More efficient methods of irrigation are now being adopted
- Area under surface irrigation and overhead irrigation are being greatly reduced by using overhead and drip irrigation respectively
- The present area under irrigation is about 21,000 ha and same is expected to increase to about 33,000 in 2050. However, the total water requirement is expected to remain the same as being presently utilized with the introduction of more efficient methods of irrigation.

8. ***Water metres and charges***

- Metering water has been started in Mauritius but covers only 50% of the water in the public sector. Water sources on private land is not controlled centrally. A programme to increase water metering is under way. This will span over five financial years starting 2004 through 2008, when non revenue water will be brought down from the present 50% and 25%.

Energy Resources Programme

In view of the particular conditions of Mauritius as an insular country with no potential for interconnection, it is Government's policy to encourage greater use of local and renewable energy sources for electricity generation.

The Government and the Central Electricity Board have embarked on the Bagasse Energy Development Programme to encourage the use of bagasse, a local renewable fuel, in electricity production. Ethanol production is also being encouraged as another source of renewable energy.

National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP)

Mauritius has already produced a draft National Biodiversity Strategy Plan which includes the following thematic sectors:

- Forest Biodiversity
- Terrestrial Biodiversity
- Agro Biodiversity
- Freshwater, Coastal and Marine Aquatic Biodiversity
- Biotechnology
- Sustainable ecotourism

The strategic goal of the terrestrial biodiversity programme is to “ensure that native Mauritian biodiversity survives flourishes and retains its genetic diversity and its components are optimally utilized for the continued progress and socio economic growth of the country”

Various projects have been implemented by the National Parks and Conservation Service of the Ministry of Agriculture in collaboration with the Mauritian Wildlife Fund, and the Forestry Service since 1994 to honour the obligations of the Barbados Programme of Action Plan.

The Plants Act (1976) is also being amended to enable Mauritius to honour its obligation under the WTO, CBD and the multilateral access and benefit sharing of the Plant Genetic Resources for food and agriculture in accordance with International Treaty on PGR for Food and Agriculture (2001).

Transport Strategy

In January 2000, Government of Mauritius commissioned the ‘Integrated National Transport Strategy Study’ to undertake a global review of the transport sector and to come out with an integrated development plan with particular focus on the legal, institutional, economic, administrative and structural aspects to cope with the problems associated with rapid motorization.

In the last twenty years Port Louis has been transformed by the provision of container facilities increasing the capacity and productivity of the harbour. The container terminal covers 26 hectares with three ship-to-shore post panamax gantry cranes.

The customs systems have been reformed with increased security and probity in their operations. With competitive tariffs, smooth industrial relations, high security and ease of access for refueling and supplies, the capital port attracts regional as well as local business, for freight and as a cruise destination for liners. Smaller craft use the adjacent marina for ocean going yachts, which is becoming a fresh aspect of the Caudan water front development.

The capital port has installed security systems to comply with international standards including a Safety, Health and Environment System.

Mauritius now operates its own air-traffic control system with satellite technology within an airspace of 9 million square km. The control system is part of the latest development by the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) and the Communication and Surveillance/Air Traffic Management (CNS/ATM). This enables Mauritius to operate with its own fleet, of 15 aircraft, through Air Mauritius, with flights to 26 destinations in 4 continents.

National Tourism

The overall strategic objective of Government is to promote Mauritius worldwide as a prime holiday island and to main the island as an attractive and desirable tourist destination; Government has formulated a number of policies and key strategic objectives to promote namely:

- Selective and up-market tourism based on the concept of ‘quality tourism’
- Eco-tourism where the environmental impact of tourism will be accounted for in the promotion of the industry

A series of incentives for the development of the tourism industry through the Development Incentives Act and the Hotel Management Act have also been granted by Government. Two Tourism Master Plans-one for the island of Mauritius and one for Rodrigues have been prepared and the Association des Hoteliers et Restaurateurs de l’Ile Maurice (AHRIM) has developed a Tourism Environment Charter which was partly financed by the National Environment Fund and the UNDP.

(c) How is your NSDS (or its equivalent) being monitored and evaluated?

Monitored on a regular basis
Not monitored on a regular basis
Has been evaluated
Has not yet been evaluated

6. **If your country has developed Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) but not a NSDS**

Does your country's PRS incorporate and integrate environmental, economic and social aspects of development?

Yes

No

7. **If your Country has developed both NSDS and PRS, is the PRS linked to the NSDS?**

Yes

No

8. **Does your Country's PRS or NSDS address the Millenium Development Goals (MDGS)?**

Yes

No

Comments

The Government of Mauritius is deeply concerned about the social and economic inequality and potential risk of social explosion in the country. Accordingly, various poverty alleviation programmes have been put in place. A greater emphasis is placed on participatory approaches and community involvement in order to strengthen the capabilities of the poorest segments of the population by providing resources, credit, training and empowerment.

These programmes include the following:

Poverty Alleviation

A. Trust Fund for the Social Integration of Vulnerable groups (Ministry of Finance)

The Trust Fund for the Social Integration of Vulnerable Groups, set up in 1999, established an Action Plan in 2001 with overall vision to achieve 'social cohesion and integration in poverty free Mauritius'. It aims at financing community development projects, micro credit schemes and loans to needy students.

This action Plan lays emphasis on empowerment of the poor to be involved in productive activities through better access to education and credit facilities. Some of the activities of the Plan are highlighted such as:

- The training facilities;

- Provision of additional low-cost housing schemes for the very poor citizens and homeless;
- Streamlining of social aid programmes to ensure efficient use of government resources;
- Provision of free meals in some very poor deprived areas
- Setting up of a Coordinating Committee; and
- Expansion of Micro Credit Schemes

B. A Nou Diboute Ensam (financed by European Union)

The EU-funded Micro Project Programme for Poverty Alleviation – A Nou Diboute Ensam (ANDE) – to the tune of Rs 100m, initially scheduled for a period of three years from September 1999 to August 2002 has been extended for two more years up to August 2004. A Project Management Unit, under the aegis of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development has been set up to implement This Programme. This project aims at Supplementing government's effort where possible and of intervening in those areas where government cannot intervene. The ANDE Programme has been focusing on social infrastructural, income-generating and technical assistance projects. The scope of its intervention will now be widened to include provision of free meals to the poorest primary school students. Individual assistance in the form of equipment and necessary tools will also provided to the inhabitants of these regions for the development of small poultry farming unit/gardening. One hundred and three (103) projects have been approved since the inception of the programme. Among these, sixteen projects concern Rodrigues and one the island of Agalega. At the completion of the programme in 2004, the European Union has agreed to disburse Rs 175m on another project, but this time based on Decentralised Cooperation.

C. Rural Diversification (financed by IFAD)

The IFAD Rural Diversification Programme, for the sum of Rs 142m, comprising two main components “Micro-Enterprises and Micro-Finance Development” and “Community Development in priority rural areas” was initiated in 2000.

D. Leve Deboute (UNDO)

The specifically-designed programme “Fight Against Exclusion” –Lévé Déboute- in Rodrigues utilizing a “Revolving Fund” approach and comprising a Community Development” component was launched in March 1999. This Programme, for the sum Rs 10m has been implemented successfully and came to its end in March 2002.

E. Committee on Poverty

Another major initiative is the setting up in 1997 of the Committee on Poverty under the Chairmanship of the President of the Republic with a view to bolster the efforts of voluntary work and coordinates activities of major stakeholders. The aim of the Committee is to alleviate poverty through educational projects.

F. Ministry of Women's Rights, Child Development and Family Welfare

Besides, the Ministry of Women's Rights, Child Development and Family Welfare, in collaboration with the trust Fund for the Social Integration of Vulnerable Groups and the "A Nou Diboute Ensam" Programme provides assistance to projects initiated by poor women from various deprived areas.

G. National Solidarity Fund

The Ministry of Social Security and National Solidarity has been implementing a series of measures to enhance the quality of life of the elderly.

In addition, the Ministry provides financial assistance to fire victims, patients needing urgent medical treatment abroad, dialysis treatment etc. through the National Solidarity Fund . The Fund also provides direct financial assistance to individuals who have undergone severe personal hardship, like loss of their house and belongings in fires.

H. Zone d'Education Prioritaire

Poverty alleviation calls for action on several fronts, beginning with education. The Poverty alleviation calls for action on several fronts, beginning with education. The Ministry of Education and Scientific Research runs a special programme called the Zone d'Education Prioritaire (ZEP), which gives special support and compensatory education to pupils attending low performing primary schools. The ZEPs are found in the most deprived localities.

I. Ministry of Environment

The Ministry of Environment is also involved in caring for the vulnerable groups. In several deprived areas, the Ministry has upgraded the living environment so as to make it more conducive to social development. It has also developed landscaping projects and provided certain infrastructure like health tracks and recreational parks.

Education

Mauritius is one of the few developing countries where education is provided free from pre-primary to tertiary level. However, at each level, given the democratic nature of our economy, private institutions are also allowed to operate. The Gross Enrolment Ratio in 2002 was 95%, 103% and 64% in pre-primary, primary and secondary levels respectively. The literacy rate of the population aged 12 years and above improved from 80.8% in 1990 to 85% in 2000. For males, the rate improved from 85.6% to 88.7% and for females from 76.1% to 81.5%.

A totally new system of education has now been set up in Mauritius, through the Educational Reforms. The aim is to universalize our education to all and to produce a new generation of

Mauritians who will realize their full potential and will be creative, imaginative and enterprising. An intensive programme of extension, renovation and construction of secondary schools is being carried out. Over the last eight years, attempts have also been made by Government to upgrade the performance level of low achieving schools. Emphasis was placed upon improving the overall school infrastructure and to a limited extent on pedagogical innovations with a view to raise the level of achievements, reduce school inequalities and, in a broader perspective, to combat social inequalities by providing equal opportunities to all primary school children of the Republic of Mauritius.

Besides, government has already announced its intention to initiate programmes for reform of the pre-primary sector. It will focus on quality enhancement, training, career development and provision of a new regulatory framework.

Government has also set up an Inter-Ministerial Committee on Information and Communication Technology (ICT) under the Chairmanship of the Prime Minister since 2000 with the aim of converting Mauritius into a Cyber-Island so as to harness the enormous potential of communication technologies to the developmental needs of the country. The priority is to have an education relevant to the needs of the country in a work where new Information Technology (IT) based skills are fast replacing the traditional skills and to make our children responsible citizens. This is why the primary school curriculum has been reviewed to give to the children a broad-based education that will promote their mental, physical, aesthetic, spiritual and cultural development and will prepare them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experience of life.

Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women

The Government of Mauritius, through the Ministry of Women's Rights, Child Development and Family Welfare, has demonstrated its commitment to improve the role and involvement of women in society.

A Women's Unit has been set up to serve as focal point for women issues. It functions through a networking of 15 Women's Centres and about 1000 Women's Associations. The aim of this unit is to strengthen gender mainstreaming taking into account the reproductive, productive and social roles of women, with a view to ensuring positive discrimination and eliminating all forms of negative discrimination against women. The Unit works in collaboration with other government institutions, NGO's and implements policy and projects related to women through national, bilateral and multilateral funding.

The National Women Entrepreneur Council (NVEC) was also set up in 1999 through an Act of Parliament with the objective of encouraging women to engage in income generating activities through assistance at grassroots level for starting small enterprises.

A Community Development Programme financed by IFAD supports the Government in reversing the emergence of social exclusion and potential marginalization pertaining to young women-headed households. It also redresses the income imbalances that exist in rural and urban peripheries and complement efforts of other programmes.

Infant Mortality

High Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) continues to be a major concern in Mauritius. The IMR, after having reached 18.0 per thousand in 1994, has been going up and reached 22.2 in 1996 due largely to the frequency of neonatal deaths within the first week of life. However, it fell to 15.8 in 2000, 13.9 in 2001 but rose to 14.2 in 2002. Another concern is the high proportion of low birth weight babies (<2500 grms) in total birth. This proportion has been rising, and was 14.4% in 1999 compared to 9.5% in 1991.