The Bras d’Eau National Park which has a unique combination of the three ecosystems, that is terrestrial, marine and fresh water ecosystems, was inaugurated as the second mainland national Park in Mauritius by the Prime Minister, Dr Navinchandra Ramgoolam, on 1st December in the presence of several eminent personalities. A Visitors Centre has also been set up.

At the inauguration, the Prime Minister stressed that ‘We cannot be irresponsible towards the limited natural resources that we have’. He encouraged the population to become environment friendly citizens and help in the protection of the remaining 50,000 hectares of forests left over the island for the future generations.

Dr Ramgoolam recalled that the Ferney Valley was to be erased to build a highway but he felt that doing so would be an ecological disaster. Consequently, he ensured that the infrastructural development at Ferney Valley was stopped because the place sheltered many birds and indigenous plants. He added that the protection of the biodiversity of Mauritius is imperative.

‘We should treat the country as our home and care for it’, said the Prime Minister. He also highlighted that the Maurice Ile Durable Project is
Government’s long term vision not only to promote sustainable development but also to transform the environmental, economic and social landscape of Mauritius.

The Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security, Mr Satya Veyash Faugoo, appealed to all citizens to be partners in the environmental developments taking place in the country. He enumerated on the different measures implemented by the Government to maintain the balance of the ecosystem and stressed on the importance of protecting nature and the environment.

Bras d’Eau and Mare Sarcelles Reserves were proclaimed as Bras d’Eau National Park under the Wildlife and National Parks Act, on 5 August 2011, with a view to further protecting the reserves, which are habitats of a number of species of birds, such as the cave swiflets (Petite Hirondelle), the Mauritius grey white eye birds (Picpic), and the flycatcher, a critically endangered endemic bird, and harbours a native orchid, the Onnelia Aphrodite. Situated on an area of about 497 hectares at Poste Lafayette, the Bras D’Eau National Park consists mainly of exotic plantation like mahogany, eucalyptus and araucaria.
Education remains the backbone of a good and modern society as it is the only asset in terms of resources that has made the country reach new heights, said the President of the Republic, Sir Anerood Jugnauth, in his end of year address to the nation on 25 December 2011. His message also focused on public debt, waste of public funds, fraud and corruption, drug abuse, law and order and climate change.

According to Sir Anerood Jugnauth, there is a need to adopt quality education and a lifelong learning process, which are essential for the nation’s future and the prospective development of the country. He also emphasised the need for inculcating moral values in the youth, who are the future of the country.

The President deplored the high rate of public debt, which has increased from 14 to 20 per cent in 2011. He appealed to the public to cut down on expenses owing to the difficult economic situation ahead and to act as responsible citizens.

Regarding the public service, the President stated that the laws should be consolidated to curtail waste of public funds and that those who are responsible for same should be brought to justice.

The issue of corruption was also one of main thrusts of the President’s message. On this score, he said that appropriate measures should be taken to tackle this flaw. Every single act of corruption should be reported in order to discourage malpractices, he said. He also made an appeal to the population to collaborate with the authorities to fight corruption. Regarding the issue of drug abuse which is a threat to the society at large, he underlined that everybody should work hand in hand to tackle the problem.

The President also stressed the urgent need for improvement in the law and order situation in the country. He underlined that every citizen should realise that without a safe environment the tourism industry, one of the main pillars of the Mauritian economy, would have to face much difficulty.

As regards the challenges lying ahead as a result of the climate change, Sir Anerood underscored the need for Mauritius to invest more in renewable energy. He expressed satisfaction that the population is gradually adopting the concept of green energy through the use of solar water heaters and solar panels. He also underlined the need for a clean and healthy environment.
Constitution amended to ensure a fairer representation of women at local elections

The Constitution has been amended to make way for a fairer representation of women at local elections, be it at municipality, district or village levels.

The Constitution (Amendment) Bill was passed by the National Assembly on 6 December 2011. Section 16 of the Constitution has been amended to provide for a minimum number of candidates for election to local authorities to be of a particular sex, so as to ensure adequate representation of each sex on a local authority.

This amendment is in line with Government’s commitment to increase women participation and representation in the decision making process.

‘This is a first but revolutionary step towards greater representation in terms of gender. A new chapter in the history of Mauritius is being written today, and there will be no excuses for political parties not to field more female candidates in the future. With this constitutional amendment, we are going the extra mile in order to encourage more women to stand for local elections’, the Prime Minister, Dr Navinchandra Ramgoolam, said while presenting the Bill for second reading.

Dr Ramgoolam said that he was convinced that greater female involvement will improve the quality of policy decision in politics and that an enhanced participation of women in the political process will broaden the range of issues that will be debated and addressed at the level of the local authorities for the greater good of our society.

Section 111 of the Constitution has also been amended to provide for a new definition of local authority to align it with the new Local Government Act which has been passed by the National Assembly.

Education Act amended

The Education (Amendment) Bill which was voted at the National Assembly on 29 November 2011 extends the ban on additional tuition to pupils in Standards I to III in primary schools to pupils in Standard IV.

Consequently, no person shall provide to a pupil who has not reached Standard V and who is attending a school, additional tuition in a subject which is being taught at the school. This Act also empowers the relevant authorities to control the provision of additional tuition to pupils in Standards V to VI or attending a secondary school, by providing for the registration of teachers wishing to provide such additional tuition.

Thus, in the case of a pupil who is in Standard V or VI or attending a secondary school, no person shall provide the latter additional tuition unless the person providing the tuition is a teacher who is registered for that purpose in such manner and subject to such conditions as may be prescribed.

The amendment also enables the Minister of Education and Human Resources to approve the conduct of the Enhancement Programme or any other programme in schools, which aims at enhancing innovative teaching and learning experiences and promote the integral development of pupils.

It is recalled that the Enhancement Programme is an innovative programme aiming at the reinforcement of work in the following core subjects: English, French, Mathematics, Science, History and Geography and is supplemented by a variety of pedagogical practices, audio-visual support and extracurricular activities such as drama, sports, physical education, painting, sculpture and others.
As per the new legislation, local elections will be held in 2012 and thereafter every six years. Port Louis is being given the legal status of City. A Lord Mayor and a Deputy Lord Mayor, a Mayor and a Deputy Mayor, a Chairperson and a Vice-Chairperson of a District Council will remain in office for a period of two years.

No member of the National Assembly or the Rodrigues Regional Assembly will be allowed to stand as candidate for election as Municipal City Councillor, Municipal Town Councillor or Village Councillor. The same stands for a person who is a public officer or is the holder of an office of emolument in a statutory corporation/organisation wholly funded by the State.

The new Act also provides for the creation of seven District Councils, that is, one for each of the districts of Black River, Flacq, Grand Port, Moka, Pamplemousses, Rivière du Rempart, and Savanne, compared to four presently.

Another major feature of the new legislation is that any group presenting more than two candidates in an electoral ward (for a city or town) or in a village must ensure that the candidates are not all of the same sex. The objective is to ensure that more women councillors are elected.

Other provisions

- No person shall be qualified to be elected as a Municipal City Councillor, Municipal Town Councillor or Village Councillor unless he is registered as an elector in, any ward of that city or town or, that village, as the case may be.
- No person shall be registered as an elector in more than one ward of a city or town and in more than one city, town or village.
- Each ward in a city or town will elect three candidates.
- Each Village Council will consist of nine Councillors.
- Provision for the Setting up of Village Committees in Agaléga, Tromelin, Cargados Carajos and the Chagos Archipelago, including Diego Garcia, and any other island comprised in the State of Mauritius.
- A group may submit to the Electoral Supervisory Commission a list of reserve candidates for the election of Municipal City Councillors, Municipal Town Councillors or Village Councillors, for the purpose of filling any vacancy which may occur after that election and before the next general election for the election of Councillors.
- A reserve list shall contain the names of not more than six persons and not comprise more than two-thirds of persons of the same sex.
- The seat of a Councillor shall become vacant if, without the prior leave of the relevant Council, he fails throughout a period of six consecutive months to attend a meeting of that Council.
- Every local authority, other than a Village Council, shall have an Executive Committee
comprising the Lord Mayor, Mayor or Chairperson (as the case may be); the Deputy Lord Mayor, Deputy Mayor or Vice-Chairperson (as the case may be); and five other members of the Council.

- The Executive Committee will be responsible for the determination of applications for Outline Planning Permissions and Building and Land Use Permits and for the approval of the procurement of goods and services.
- The term of office of an Executive Committee will be two years.

### MUNICIPAL CITY COUNCIL/MUNICIPAL COUNCILS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Council</th>
<th>No. of Councillors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Port Louis (8 wards)</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beau Bassin-Rose Hill (6 wards)</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curepipe (5 wards)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quatre Bornes (5 wards)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacoas-Phoenix (6 wards)</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### DISTRICT COUNCILS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Council</th>
<th>No. of Councillors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black River</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flacq</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Port</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moka</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pamplemousses</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rivière du Rempart</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Savanne</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ESA-EU
Negotiations for a full Economic Partnership Agreement held in Mauritius

Around 40 delegates from the Eastern and Southern African Group (ESA) region and the European Union (EU) participated in the latest round of negotiations for a full Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) between the ESA and the EU which were held in Mauritius at La Plantation Hotel, Balaclava during the last week of November 2011.

These negotiations were preceded by the ESA Technical Meeting on Rules of Origin, and that of all clusters, that is, development, trade in goods, services, agriculture, dispute avoidance and trade-related issues. A joint EPA draft text containing proposals by the EU and the ESA group constituted the basis for the negotiations.

The interim EPA for the ESA region has now come into force in all four signatory States, except in Zimbabwe where the process of ratification is underway. According to informed sources, the procedure is ongoing there and very near to reaching a successful outcome. This constitutes a major progress which will further boost negotiations for a full EPA.

It is recalled that an Interim EPA was signed in Mauritius in August 2009 covering trade in goods, development cooperation and fisheries. The Interim EPA was crucial to safeguard Mauritius’ preferential access on the European market in traditional sectors such as sugar, textiles and fish and fish products in the light of the expiry of the World Trade Organisation’s waiver for the Cotonou Trade Provisions in December 2007.

Negotiations are now being pursued to conclude a full EPA which will encompass other areas, including trade in services and trade-related issues such as investment, competition policy and trade facilitation.

In addition to Mauritius, three other countries have already signed an interim EPA with the EU, namely Madagascar, Seychelles and Zimbabwe.

Mauritius-China: Signature of Agreement totalling around Rs 3.2 billion

Five Agreements totalling 665 million yuan, that is around Rs 3.2 billion, for the financing of various projects were signed by the Mauritian and Chinese Governments on 28 November 2011 at Le Maritim Hotel, Balaclava.

The Agreements were signed by the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Mr Xavier-Luc Duval, for the Mauritian side and the Vice-Minister of Commerce, Mr Jiang Yaoping, on behalf of the People’s Republic of China.

These Agreements represent Chinese financial aid to Mauritius for the financing of various projects and include a loan of Rs 3 billion at 2% interest rate for the construction of the Bagatelle Dam.

A working session was held between the two parties prior to the signature ceremony. Discussions focused on the re-boosting of the Jin Fei project and the possibility to enhance air access between China and Mauritius and using Mauritius as a hub to facilitate air access between China and Africa. Other avenues of cooperation were also examined.

The Chinese Vice-Minister of Commerce led a delegation comprising around ten officials as well as twenty businessmen. During the four-day visit, Mr Yaoping met the Prime Minister, other Ministers and members of the private sector. The Chinese delegation also participated in a China-Mauritius Trade and Investment Cooperation Forum organised by the Board of Investment, in collaboration with the China Chamber of Commerce for Import and Export of Machinery and Electronic Products.
IOC-UNCTAD
Expert Group Meeting focuses on vulnerabilities of SIDS

Addressing the vulnerabilities of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) more effectively was the central theme upon which a two-day expert group meeting focused on 5 December 2011 at La Pirogue Hotel in Flic en Flac. Some 50 participants attended this meeting organised jointly by the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

The meeting provided an opportunity for the IOC and the UNCTAD to enrich the international debate on possible steps and measures, within and outside the United Nations (UN) system, to support the resilience-building efforts of SIDS more effectively.

SIDS affected with the advent of several mutations and challenges globally, says Minister

In his opening address, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, Dr Arvin Boolell, said that SIDS are being greatly affected with the advent of several mutations and challenges globally. According to him, efforts have to be intensified so that a specific treatment is given to SIDS. Mauritius, stated Dr Boolell, supports the official recognition of the SIDS status within the UN as a category in its own right with particular needs. This much awaited recognition is all the more necessary given the current global climate punctuated by successive economic and financial crises exacerbating the vulnerabilities of SIDS, added the Minister.

‘As small islands far from the incessant interaction taking place on continents, we rely less on our own natural resources and we import ecological notions and tools which we can ourselves create’, noted Dr Boolell. It is therefore necessary to evaluate the advantages, the risks and the challenges associated to the transformation towards a green economy and elaborate a coordinated approach to find sustainable financing which will support such a transformation, he stated, adding that this will imply a reorientation of economic growth towards an efficient, sustainable and more integrated development model.

For his part, the Chairperson of the Council of the IOC and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Seychelles, Mr Jean-Paul Adam, stated that ‘we have been toiling hard for a long time to improve the development context of SIDS.’ In Rio in 1992, the specific vulnerabilities and development needs of SIDS were recognised and today, we are still trying to address these vulnerabilities, he observed. ‘SIDS’, he said, ‘can often be considered the barometers for the world economy as they are the first to feel the shocks of the global system’. ‘SIDS are more often than not seen as development success stories but all SIDS are faced with the challenge of ‘where to now?’, said the Minister. ‘The fact that we are still trying to find solutions to the specific development concerns of SIDS displays a wider inability to properly address sustainable development at the global level’, he added.

Signature of a partnership agreement

The first day of the expert group meeting was followed by a signature ceremony of a partnership agreement to the tune of 10 million Euros between the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the EU Delegation for a project aiming at reducing the vulnerabilities of SIDS and supporting efficiently efforts in decreasing small islands’ vulnerabilities by reinforcing their resilience.
Equal Opportunities Act amended to provide for Equal Opportunities Commission

The Equal Opportunities Act has been amended on 29 November 2011 in order to provide for the establishment of an Equal Opportunities Commission, and for related matters.

The Commission will be a fully fledged independent body. It will replace the Equal Opportunities Division provided for in the Equal Opportunities Bill of 2008 which has not yet been proclaimed.

The main mandate of the Commission will be to ensure that no person is placed, or finds himself or herself, at a disadvantage, by reason of his or her status, namely, his or her “age, caste, colour, creed, ethnic origin, impairment, marital status, political opinion, race, sex or sexual orientation”.

The Equal Opportunities Commission will consist of a Chairperson and three other members. The Chairperson shall be a person who has been –

(i) a Judge; or
(ii) a Magistrate for not less than 10 years; or
(iii) a law practitioner for not less than 10 years; or
(iv) a Magistrate and a law practitioner for an aggregate period of not less than 10 years.

One of the members shall be a person who has been a law practitioner for not less than 5 years. The other members shall be persons having knowledge and experience in the field of law, employment, industrial relations, sociology or administration.

The members will be appointed by the President of the Republic, acting on the advice of the Prime Minister after consultation with the Leader of the Opposition. The term of office will be four years and members will be eligible for reappointment.

Another amendment to the Equal Opportunities Act relates the Equal Opportunities Tribunal provided for in the Act. Thus, a complaint will only be heard and determined by the Tribunal if the person making the complaint has waived his right to initiate civil proceedings before any Court in Mauritius in respect of the facts that form the subject matter of the same complaint.

A person not satisfied with the order of the Tribunal will be able to appeal before the Supreme Court.

HR Excellence Awards 2011

The HR Excellence Awards 2011, an initiative of the Human Resource Development Council (HRDC), was held on 1st December 2011 at the Intercontinental Hotel, Balaclava.

Rogers & Co Ltd and The Mauritius Commercial Bank Ltd were the winners of the HR Excellence Awards 2011 - Organisations, while the Mauritius Revenue Authority bagged the Special Jury HR Excellence Award.

The HR Excellence Awards is the most prestigious award to be presented to HR firms in acknowledgement of their excellent achievement, dedication and commitment towards sound HR practices. Launched in May 2011, it is the first of its kind in Mauritius to recognise leading organisations and HR professionals that have played an instrumental role in achieving excellence in the sphere of human resource. It aims at raising awareness among employers on the importance of developing and retaining their most valuable asset: their people.

World Telugu Conference 2011

Mauritius hosted the fourth World Telugu Conference from 8 to 10 December 2011. The theme for this year’s conference was Challenges facing the Telugu People living outside Andhra Pradesh.

Bringing together the Telugu Diaspora from across the world to discuss means and ways to promote the Telugu culture was the main objective of the Conference. Participants attending the conference were from South Africa, India, Malaysia, Mauritius, USA, UK, Canada, Australia, Singapore and Sri Lanka.
The Piracy and Maritime Violence Bill

The Piracy and Maritime Violence Bill, which provides for a comprehensive framework for prosecuting in Mauritius persons suspected of having committed piracy and related offences, was passed by the National Assembly on 13 December 2011.

The main provisions of the Bill relate to:

(a) the prosecution of piracy and related offences pursuant to the obligations of Mauritius under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 1982;

(b) the handing over to Mauritius of persons suspected of having committed acts of piracy, maritime attack and related offences, pursuant to agreements or arrangements with the European Union or other States, for the purposes of investigation and prosecution;

(c) admissibility of an out of Court statement in criminal proceedings under this Act, where the maker of the statement is not available to give evidence; and

(d) the repatriation of non-citizens suspected of having committed offences, or the transfer of persons convicted of offences, under this Act.

The Piracy and Maritime Violence Bill has been drafted in close collaboration with the European Union and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). Commending the Bill to the House, the Prime Minister, Dr Navinchandra Ramgoolam, spoke of the destabilising role that piracy plays in the region, disrupting international trade, threatening security and the region’s economy and endangering social development. ‘Through this piece of legislation, we are sending a strong message to the international community that Mauritius is ready and willing to play its role and to respond robustly and comprehensively to the threat from piracy’, the Prime Minister said.

‘The rising cost of insurance premiums, hiring of private security guards and the long detour of ships to avoid piracy attacks have contributed to the increase in cost of the transport of goods to Mauritius, and ultimately the increased costs are passed to the taxpayer and the consumer’ the Prime Minister added.

In October 2010, Mauritius, in collaboration with the EU, COMESA and the Indian Ocean Commission, hosted the Second Regional Ministerial Conference on Maritime Piracy. The Conference adopted a regional strategy and an action plan setting out short-term, medium-term and long-term measures to fight piracy and promote maritime security in the eastern Africa and Indian Ocean region.

The focus is now on the implementation of the regional strategy and the plan of action extending over a period of 15 years. The estimated cost of the project is around Euros 25 million and it will be implemented jointly by the Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD), the COMESA, the East African Community, the Indian Ocean Commission and the Eastern and Southern African Indian Ocean Member States working together with the SADC.

Statistics released by the International Maritime Bureau indicate a total of 230 incidents involving pirates operating from Somalia in 2011, from January to 01 December, with a total of 26 hijacks in which 450 hostages were taken in custody by the pirates.
The Mauritius Cane Industry Authority Act 2011 to take the industry forward

The Mauritius Cane Industry Authority Act 2011 setting up the Mauritius Cane Industry Authority was voted in the National Assembly on 13 December 2011.

The Authority will have general responsibility for exercising the powers and performing the functions of the Cane Planters and Millers Arbitration and Control Board, the Farmers’ Service Corporation, the Mauritius Sugar Authority, the Mauritius Sugar Industry Research Institute, the Mauritius Sugar Terminal Corporation and the Sugar Planters Mechanical Pool Corporation.

The Mauritius Cane Industry Authority’s mandate will be to monitor, oversee and coordinate all activities relating to, and ensure a fair, efficient and effective administration and operation of the cane industry. The Authority will also promote and support the sustainable development, efficiency and viability of the cane industry as well as formulate and implement policies, strategies, plans, programmes and schemes in relation to the cane industry.

Promoting and facilitating the sustainable development of the cane cluster in Mauritius and in the region will be the objective of the Authority which will also be called upon to ensure the technical progress and efficiency of the cane industry by means of research and investigation. As part of its other responsibilities, the Mauritius Cane Industry Authority will monitor and coordinate the activities of the cane industry, including planting, milling, processing, transport, bulk handling and marketing, over and above coordinating the activities of organisations concerned with the cane industry in the private and public sectors.

Under this Act, the Mauritius Cane Industry Authority has the license to resolve disputes between planters, millers and middlemen, facilitate the participation of employees and planters in the cane industry, promote the setting up of cane nurseries and the supply of cane setts to planters, and facilitate the adoption of modern and efficient agricultural practices by planters.

Furthermore, the Authority will provide technical advice, assistance and training to planters on cane cultivation, harvesting and transport of canes and post harvest operations. It will also manage agricultural land and, in particular, abandoned fields in Field Operations Regrouping and Irrigation Project (FORIP) or such other similar projects.

The Mauritius Cane Industry Authority may also enter into management contracts on behalf of planters, devise agricultural credit schemes in consultation with financing agencies and ensure that arrangements are made so that canes of small planters are harvested at their optimal sucrose content.

The Authority will be administered by a Board, to be known as the Mauritius Cane Industry Board, which shall consist of a Chairperson, a representative of the Ministry, a representative of the Ministry responsible for the subject of finance, two representatives of millers, one of whom may be a representative of the Mauritius Sugar Producers’ Association, two representatives of planters, one of whom shall be a representative of small planters, one representative of employees, and two independent members having wide experience in the field of agro-industry.
Truth and Justice Commission Report

High-Powered Committee set up to look into implementation

A High-Powered Committee has been set up under the chairmanship of the Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Mr Xavier-Luc Duval, to look into the implementation of the recommendations of the report of the Truth and Justice Commission which was submitted to the President of the Republic on 25 November 2011.

The Committee which comprises the Minister of Housing and Lands; the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions; the Minister of Education and Human Resources; the Minister of Fisheries and Rodrigues; the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands; the Minister of Arts and Culture; the Attorney-General; the Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment; and the Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare held its first meeting on 15 December 2011.

In view of the thickness of the Report and the far reaching implications of the recommendations, the Committee has agreed to focus on the recommendations that could generate quick wins. Furthermore, the relevant ministries have been requested to set up a dedicated unit to look into the recommendations of the Report and to come up with concrete proposals.

Main recommendations of the Report

After several hearings, representations and comments by citizens, the Commission has presented a number of recommendations in view of establishing the truth about the history of slavery and indentured labour and their descendants so as to foster social justice, reconciliation and national unity.

The Commission recommends the immediate proclamation and implementation of the Equal Opportunities Act which will help in creating a more just society for all citizens, irrespective of race, ethnic/religion, caste, religions, culture and social background.

Several cases regarding those who have been unjustly dispossessed of their lands have been registered at the Commission. To that end, it recommends that a Land Monitoring and Research Unit be established so that it can assist citizens to establish the facts concerning their search for land which they believe is rightly theirs. Furthermore, the Commission recommends that the State considers granting small parcels of land to deserving cases.

Other recommendations pertain to the setting up of a Slave Museum, creation of a National Genealogy Centre, auditing of existing housing estates and increasing Old Age Pension for those who are above 70, amongst others.
Participants from 15 African countries attend training workshop

Around 20 participants from 15 African countries participated in a training workshop on ‘Nuclear cardiology, targeted therapy and infection’ from 5 to 9 December 2011 at Gold Crest Hotel in Quatre Bornes.

The workshop organised jointly by the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) aimed at familiarising participants with the modern evidence-based applications of nuclear medicine techniques, particularly in the field of non-invasive application of diagnostic and nuclear medicine in cardiology. Two experts from the IAEA, namely, Prof. Sarah Eddine Bouyocef and Prof. R.A Dierckx conducted the workshop.

The regional training course was supported by IAEA, under the technical and financial assistance programme for Africa in the field of nuclear medicine, that is, the African Regional Cooperative Agreement (AFRA). AFRA is an intergovernmental agreement established in 1990 by the IAEA and African Member States to further strengthen and enlarge the contribution of nuclear science and technology to socioeconomic development of the African continent.

In his opening address, the Minister of Health and Quality of Life, Mr Lormus Bundhoo, recalled that the course is in line with Government’s policy to promote quality health care in Mauritius through capacity-building of health personnel as well as to enhance the visibility of the African region on the medical scene.

The Minister added that nuclear medicine is a high-tech medicine which is well-established in Mauritius, adding that a Nuclear Medicine Unit is operational at Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital at Rose Belle since 2001 with the assistance of the IAEA. Mauritius is privileged to have a department of nuclear medicine whereas other countries bigger than Mauritius do not have such facility, he pointed out.

For his part, the IAEACoordinator, Dr John Zaknun, said that the Agency is very committed to education, continuous training and capacity building in nuclear medicine, with 50% of its budget spent on training of professionals. He said that nuclear medicine plays an increasingly important role in the diagnosis of diseases such as cancer and cardiovascular diseases, adding that it is one of the specialties that helps to support and guide patient management.

**Nuclear Medicine in Mauritius**

Mauritius has benefitted from the assistance of the IAEA in terms of nuclear medicine since 2001. The Nuclear Medicine Unit, which was set up in June 2001 at Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital, comprises two radiologists, a physician and four technicians. It is equipped with gamma cameras and carries out several types of investigations such as bone scan, cardiac imaging, gastrointestinal imaging, thyroid scan, salivary gland scan, kidney studies, lung studies and testicular scan, amongst others. Each year around 1 000 cases referred by the five major hospitals are treated through the use of nuclear medicine techniques.