Mauritius
40 years After

New Goals,
New Challenges

... Where it all started
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Foreword

Our aim in publishing this Magazine on the occasion of 40th Anniversary of Independence is to give Mauritian an opportunity to reflect on the long, laborious journey travelled from 1968 to 2008, and also to take stock of the progress and achievements, namely in the economic, social and cultural spheres.

The country has come a long way since the national flag was hoisted for the first time on March 12, 1968. Political vision and enlightened policies, supported by the sustained efforts of all, at all rungs of the ladder, have propelled Mauritius to the rank of an upper middle income country.

Mauritius is now at a turning point. The current international conjuncture, marked by economic liberalism, especially the erosion of trade preferences, poses daunting challenges to the national economy.

This Magazine attempts to give an insight of government action to enable Mauritius to live up to these challenges and achieve its development goals.
The Editorial Committee wishes to thank all Ministries and Departments/Institutions which provided inputs for the Magazine. We would also like to place on record the valuable contributions of our guest writers, particularly their willingness to share with us their thoughts and experiences.

The Government Information Service would like to stress that the opinions expressed in the signed articles are those of the authors and do not in any way reflect the views of the government.

29 February 2008

Editorial Committee
It gives me great pleasure to be associated with the publication of this souvenir magazine on the occasion of the celebration of the 40th anniversary of our National Day.

We should all, as true patriots, be proud of being Mauritians, and belong to the land of rainbows and seven coloured earth. Our country is famous for its peaceful co-existence of different cultures, coupled with the economic progress achieved as a young independent nation. We should all join hands and continue on this path, bearing in mind the fact that we have to bequeath this land to our sons and daughters who will be the leaders of tomorrow.

I am glad that we have been able to uphold national unity over these past 40 years. We all know that our forefathers came from different parts of the world with fairly different cultures and customs to build the Mauritian nation. We have also kept alive these cultures and this credit goes to our ancestors who have with no less difficulty been able to pass them on to the onward generation.

On this occasion I heartily express the wish that we work harder to consolidate our national unity and create a truly Mauritian nation making of Mauritius a still better place to live.


The Rt. Hon. Sir Anerood Jugnauth
G.C.S.K., K.C.M.G., Q.C.
President of the Republic
It gives me great pleasure to extend to all Mauritians my greetings on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of our Independence.

The celebration of this important milestone in our country’s history is an occasion for not only rejoicing but also to take stock of our achievements and to objectively plan for the challenges ahead.

The significant economic, social and industrial development of Mauritius bears testimony to our country’s resolve and its innate aptitude to adapt to change. Our people’s resilience has been tested and we have emerged from our past trials with greater confidence. Our resolute efforts to consolidate national unity, to entrench respect for human rights and to promote equity and justice, have served our nation well.

Mauritius can further build on its success through hard work, discipline and the entrepreneurial spirit of our people.

Let us, on this special occasion, pledge to make of Mauritius a land of achievement and fulfillment.

Dr the Hon Navinchandra Ramgoolam
Prime Minister
On 12 March 1968, Mauritius became an independent and sovereign State, rested on solid principles of democracy, good governance, rule of law and respect for Human Rights. These parameters gave direction to Mauritian diplomacy and guided the efforts to carve out a foreign service committed to the promotion of our national interests, values and ideals.

Mauritius has, since independence, worked consistently towards the development of good and friendly relations with Member States of the International Community with a view to fostering the establishment of a peaceful and prosperous world. In the days following independence, the efforts of the Government were focused on nation-building and the development of a welfare state. On the diplomatic front, all resources were put to use to mobilise the support of the international community in favour of the economic trajectory devised to extricate Mauritius out of the doomsday scenario depicted by Titmus and Meade in 1968.
A policy of active involvement

Mauritius also adopted a policy of active involvement in international affairs. It became a Member of the United Nations, the Organisation of African Unity (now the African Union), the Non-Aligned Movement, the Francophonie as well as the Commonwealth. In so doing, the country adhered to the basic tenets and principles of these organisations, namely respect for sovereign equality of Member States and territorial integrity, the right to self-determination, preservation of international peace and solidarity and respect for Human Rights. Our active engagement in a number of UN specialised agencies such as UNESCO, FAO, IFAD, UNIDO, UNICEF, UNEP and WHO facilitated the development of a number of sectoral programmes. These greatly assisted Mauritius in its socio-economic development particularly as regards the provision of better health care and education and to boost industrial and agricultural development.

Shortly after independence, Prime Minister Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam and members of his Cabinet undertook a number of bilateral visits and official missions. The objective was to consolidate the already close bilateral ties with a number of countries and to seek support for the economic and social development of Mauritius. Relations with several countries, including those from which our ancestors had originated, were further intensified through the opening of diplomatic missions in the initial years, in several key capitals notably London, Paris, New Delhi, Washington, Canberra, Brussels and Cairo. This was later followed by the establishment of diplomatic representations in Islamabad, China, Geneva, Berlin and other capitals in Asia and Europe. Non-residential accreditation of ambassadors was
encouraged, as well as the appointment of honorary consuls in as large a number of countries as possible.

**The impact of economic diplomacy**

The decision of Mauritius to join the Yaoundé 1 Convention in 1972 facilitated the country’s accession to the Lomé Conventions, a major policy decision and which strongly influenced economic growth in our small island. The Sugar Protocol, to which Mauritius adhered in 1972, was to be the lynchpin of the multifunctional role played by the sugar industry in the economic life of Mauritius. Today, the Cotonou agreement, which draws on Yaoundé, continues to underpin the economic relations between Mauritius and the EU. This will be taken further forward through the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA). The signature of the EPA Interim Framework Agreement with the European Union at the end of last year is now being followed by intense negotiation with a view to finalising the EPA Agreement before 31 December 2008.

The vigour and dynamism that were put at the service of our diplomacy for the ultimate benefit of our citizens have not subsided. Mauritian diplomacy continues to pursue proactive efforts towards sustainable growth and development and the effective integration of the country in the global competitive economy. Thus, the diplomatic cadre has played an important part in the concerted efforts aimed at enhancing the visibility of Mauritius on the international scene and at positioning the island as the Centre par Excellence for doing business and for bridging the various continents. The impact of our diplomacy over the past two years alone demonstrates significant progress, whether in terms of the expansion of diplomatic ties with other countries, the choice of Mauritius as a venue for Foreign Direct Investment flows, new market openings and an increase in the number of conferences.
and meetings. Efforts to mobilise international attention on the inherent difficulties faced by Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and general advocacy in favour of SIDS and Middle Income Countries (MIC’s) are widely acknowledged.

**New partnership agreements with emerging economies**

The difficult global economic environment has compelled Mauritius to adopt a re-invigorated foreign and trade policy. While still bent upon consolidating its position in its traditional markets, Mauritius is actively engaged in the diversification of its markets through a number of bilateral and regional initiatives. In line with Government Programme 2005-2010 to foster South-South Cooperation, Mauritius has embarked upon negotiations of a new generation of partnership agreements with several emerging economies. The country has concluded discussions on Preferential Trade Agreements with India and Pakistan. Efforts are being made to find in these new markets access for our products, especially textiles and by-products of sugar, like rum. Cooperation with China has been intensified and following the Prime Minister’s participation in the China-Africa Summit last year, a significant fallout has been the setting up of the Tianli Trade and Economic Zone in Mauritius. Mauritius is also exploring the possibility of concluding bilateral agreements with key Gulf States and countries of the Asian continent that would lay the ground for greater cooperation whether as regards market access for our exports or for sourcing the limited volumes required by a small island developing state.

**TIFA and WTO**

Similarly, the opportunities for enhanced trade and investment with the
United States are promising with the Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) entered with the US in September 2006. The TIFA will allow Mauritius to deepen its economic cooperation and to develop a more vibrant partnership with the US as both countries work cooperatively towards enhancing trade, investment and cross-border investment. The TIFA is paving the way for negotiation of a Bilateral Investment Treaty and eventually a Free Trade Agreement.

On the multilateral trade front, Mauritius continues to be actively engaged in the negotiations at the WTO. Mauritius believes in a rule-based multilateral trading system and has always maintained a high profile on the international Trade front through its participation and coalition with key alliance groups. Its stand is that the negotiations should result in a balanced, fair and equitable global trading system that can be fully accepted by all members, more particularly by small, weak and vulnerable economies like Mauritius.

**Regional Initiatives**

Regional trade and cooperation remain a key priority of Mauritian diplomacy. An active participation of all stakeholders, both within the private and public sectors for an effective representation of the interests of Mauritius within these regional organisations, has always been high on the agenda. Indeed there is an imperative need for focused actions at the level of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) to support the objective of deeper integration in a number of cross-sectoral areas, such as capacity-building, harmonisation of macro-economic policies, an enabling environment for attracting substantive FDI to the region and whilst giving equal attention to the social aspects of cooperation, investments, gender mainstreaming, acceleration of the fight against HIV/AIDS and other pandemics, development of science and technology and promotion of peace and security.

On an initiative mooted by the Prime Minister in New York in September 2005 at the First Clinton Global Initiative Meeting and announced in his Statement at the 60th Session of the UNGA, Mauritius will be hosting the SADC International Conference on Poverty and Development from 18-20 April 2008. The Summit will seek for a Strategic Dialogue between SADC Member-States and the international community on poverty and the development of specific action-oriented projects towards poverty alleviation and development in the SADC region.

**Good Governance**

Mauritius has taken a prominent role in international and regional good governance efforts. It is participating actively in the process of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development, commonly known as NEPAD. The
country attaches strong importance to the core principles of NEPAD, in particular, good governance, African ownership and leadership, regional integration, and partnership with the developed world. The Government will spare no efforts to ensure an effective implementation of the process of the NEPAD’S African Peer Review Mechanism, as a successful implementation of this process is bound to improve the relationship with international partners. Indeed, such partnerships are of utmost importance to Mauritius in its efforts to increase foreign investment, improve capacity building and strengthen our institutional framework.

**Active on numerous fronts**

Mauritius continues to play an active role in the Human Rights Council since its election in May 2006. Mauritius is committed to upholding the highest standards in the promotion and protection of human rights as borne out by our action both at domestic and international levels. Well known Mauritian personalities not only serve as members of UN Committees on Human Rights and other issues but have also been entrusted with specific UN mandates.

The active role of Mauritius at the international level is borne out by its presence in numerous international panels and committees such as the Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change which received the Nobel peace Prize last year.

**A high level of training essential**

In order to meet the challenges of sustaining a vibrant and dynamic diplomacy, it is important to equip our diplomats and other negotiators with the necessary skills and resources to advance our interests in international fora. When the scarce resources of a small island developing state are confronted with an
array of problems, capacity building takes on a new dimension. In line with the Government Programme 2005-2010, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Cooperation has been given the prime responsibility of ensuring that its diplomatic personnel be provided with the necessary high level of training and skills development to be able to advance the country's interests at all levels. The establishment of an Institute of Diplomacy and Foreign Trade must be viewed from this perspective.

The new diplomatic initiatives of Mauritius will require intensifying relations with a number of countries. Considering resource constraints, Government has recently decided to implement a new multiple accreditation policy in tune with foreign policy objectives and the trade and economic interests of Mauritius. The consolidation of relations at all levels, bilateral, regional and multilateral, with a view to facilitating the country’s new economic strategy and enhancing the welfare of the people, remains more than ever the cornerstone of our diplomatic policy.
Economy

Transforming Mauritius: An Ongoing Process

We have come a long way from those early dawning hours when the Mauritian flag was raised for the first time. In 1968, we had very little to cheer for. It appeared that Mauritius' initial conditions and endowments in the 1960s would not have seemed particularly favorable for growth. In addition to being geographically remote from the world markets, Mauritius had a small domestic market which provided little scope for economies of scale. Our main export product at the time, sugar, was not only subject to price risks on the international market but also prone to devastating cyclones locally. Moreover, the mosaic of ethnic groups making the population posed risks of social and political strife.

Our successful control over the deadly malaria had paradoxically thrown the country into the vortex of exploding demography by drastically reducing the death rate. The combination of such factors describing the harsh reality at that time prompted the famous economist and Nobel Prize winner James Meade to describe Mauritius as a strong candidate for failure, with its heavy
economic dependence on one crop, vulnerability in terms of trade shocks, rapid population growth, and potential for ethnic tensions.

These dire prognostics were, however, proved to be wrong. They had condemned us to face the Malthusian nightmare of exploding demography and that we could not escape from the grim spectre of hopelessness. Fortunately for us, the "overcrowded barracoon" that had a "reputation for reckless reproduction" was able to prove the prophets of doom wrong by casting its own mould for its economic development. Mauritius went to mark a milestone in the history of population control. It succeeded in engineering one of the fastest rates of fertility decline. Mauritius had already set out for a slow economic take-off. About forty years later, after several distinct development phases, Mauritius has successfully transformed itself from a low-income, mono-sector economy to a middle-income country with a diversified flourishing economy by carving out special niches in sugar, textile, tourism and financial services.

Mauritius now ranks among the top African performers in terms of international competitiveness. Over the last quarter of the century, the impressive annual growth rate of 5.9% was outperformed by only a few countries, namely the East Asian Tigers and Botswana.

**A trajectory shaped by various growth cycles**

Our economic trajectory has, however, not been smooth over the years. It has been shaped by various growth cycles. From a slow take off in the 1960s, the economy gathered momentum in the period 1970-77, but slowed down in 1977-84 and picked up again from 1984 to 1989. It subsequently stabilised to an annual average rate of 5.0%.

Following the recommendations of the Meade Report, Government adopted its first fully-fledged industrial policy in 1963, emphasising import substitution. Powerful fiscal incentives and import protection were provided to manufacturing firms under the Development Certificate (DC) scheme. The Development Bank of Mauritius was established in 1964 to support this industrial policy by providing subsidised long-term loans to investors in non-sugar activities.

By the late 1960s, however, the import substitution strategy failed to deliver the goods. The contribution of the industries to employment creation was
insignificant, enterprises were capital-intensive and operated under excess capacity, the small size of the Mauritian market and the inability of Development Certificate firms to compete in export markets due to high rate of effective protection prevented firms from reaping economies of scale. Value added was also low owing to the lack of local input contents. The import substitution strategy, nonetheless, helped a new breed of domestic entrepreneur to rapidly emerge and exposed the labour force to an industrial work environment. During the 1960s, however, a factory set up by a Swiss expatriate, “MicroJewels” had achieved success exporting small manufactures to Switzerland. This had an important demonstration effect. The business community began to promote the idea of special duty-free zones.

Policy orientation was, therefore, fine-tuned towards a two-pronged strategy, favouring import substitution in the home market in tandem with expansion of exports. In December 1970, the Export Processing Zone Act was passed, providing the legal framework for the setting up of an export-processing zone in view to create jobs, provide opportunities for local capital and promote economic development in general. Fiscal concessions and other incentives were offered to attract foreign investors.

The early 1970s appeared to herald a new era of prosperity. Sugar experienced a quadrupling in its international price in 1972-74. The sugar boom propelled the savings and investment rates to high levels. At the same time, foreign investment began to flow to the newly established export-processing zone (EPZ), where employment expanded rapidly. The number of EPZ enterprises, value added growth, EPZ exports were all on the rise. Mauritius enjoyed an economic boom, with GDP growing at an average of 8.2 % per year between 1971 and 1977. This
period witnessed the fastest growth in our economic history.

The good time, however, was short-lived. Overspending of the sugar boom proceeds on public sector projects, generous wage awards, social transfers and subsidies on the local front, coupled with a world economic slowdown, weakening of the sugar market and oil price hikes on the international front culminated into a crisis. Trade balance switched from a surplus to a soaring deficit, budget deficit climbed to its highest level for the decade, while unemployment and inflation figures flashed red.

**IMF and World Bank step in**

The country could not wait any longer. Urgent radical economic measures had to be taken. The IMF and the World Bank were called in. A first stand-by agreement was made with the IMF in 1978. Following the unsuccessful attempt to contain import demand, a second agreement was negotiated in 1979. A series of measures in respect of fiscal stabilisation, exchange rate re-alignment, incomes policy, trade liberalisation and financial consolidation were prescribed. The tax structure was reformed with a shift from direct to indirect taxation, VAT and sales tax were introduced and the tax base was broadened. The rupee was subject to two major devaluations in 1979 and 1981, interest rate raised, food subsidies reduced and wage increases held below the rate of inflation. Quantitative restrictions on imports were replaced by tariffs. The supply-side policies were also strengthened. The export-led strategy was made more aggressive in order to boost the export sector. The sugar industry was restructured, agricultural diversification encouraged and tourism policies readjusted.

**1984-1988 : An important economic turnaround**

The bold and decisive measures taken to steer the economy back on track were fruitful. The 1984-1988 period marked an important economic turnaround, with average real output growing by 7%. The engine of growth started rapidly in the EPZ Sector after 1983 and shifted to the service sector during the late 1980s. The EPZ sector experienced an investment and employment boom, the immediate source of which was a shift of female labour from unemployment to that sector. Growth in the services started around 1986 arising mainly from greater demand for non-traded services due to higher income overall, linkages from the EPZ boom to service sectors such as transportation and financial services and growth of services such as tourism.

Mauritius seemed to have hit on a winning combination of high growth, low unemployment and low budget deficit. Improvements in human development indicators were equally impressive. Life expectancy at birth increased from 61 years in 1965 to 70 years in 1994. There was a significant dent on income inequality: the Gini coefficient declined...
from 0.5 in 1962 to 0.42 in 1975 and to 0.37 in 1991-92. The lenses of growth theory provide a valuable interpretation of the sustained 5.6% growth of this development phase. It was driven more by factor accumulation which accounted for more than 90% of total output growth while total factor productivity accounted for less than 10%. Thus, most of the growth pattern has been from sheer perspiration, more brawn than brains.

This crucial phase in our economic development marked a watershed in national economic management, which exerted a considerable influence on the economic fortunes of the country. Much of the remarkable Mauritian development experience has been attributed to its openness strategy. The issue has, however, triggered ample debate among the economic thinkers. While some have classified Mauritius as open in the broad sense, almost a showpiece for the prescription associated with the Bretton Woods Institutions, others claim that it has not been the poster boy for the Washington Consensus as it had a highly restrictive trade regime.

At another length, Mauritius appeared to follow a dirigiste approach, similar to that adopted by Korea, Taiwan and Japan rather than that of Singapore and Hong Kong. In an interesting IMF working paper by Arvind Subramanian and Devesh Roy dated July 2001 and titled "Who can explain the Mauritian miracle: Meade, Romer, Sachs or Rodrik?", one concluding observation is that Mauritius adopted a distinctive approach to openness. It intervened heavily to promote the export sectors while retaining a highly restrictive trade regime to protect local import competing industries.

**Neutrality of incentives between the export and import sectors**

Through a policy of heterodox opening, we managed to maintain neutrality of incentives between the export and import competing sectors by injecting a high dose of intervention on both imports and exports. While imports were restricted through high trade barriers, extensive and selective intervention occurred on the export side. The policies of our trading partners, conferring preferential access to their markets, further enhanced and ensured the profitability of our export sector. It is estimated that rents accruing from preferential access in sugar and clothing together amounted to 7% of GDP in the 1980s and 4.5% of GDP in the 1990s.

It was the judicious use of home-bred policy prescriptions, the special Mauritian touch, with proper dosage and sequencing and relentless commitment towards policy continuity in policy reforms that nurtured the gradual emergence of the “African cub-tiger”. But perhaps the single-most important factor explaining the economic success of Mauritius is the achievement of a national consensus on the need to pursue a continuous process of structural adjustment.
At the cusp of the millennium, the appearances of important growth blockages and bottlenecks were the early warning signals that the reform programmes had ran out of steam. Mauritius was till recently a well-cocooned economy where the economic agents have not learnt all the tricks of competitive trade and business practices. In terms of openness, as measured by the ratio of trade to GDP, Mauritius still lagged behind the fast growing Asian Economies which have a ratio of 180% compared to our ratio of 125%. Its education system was no longer responsive to the needs of the population. The over-burdened bloated public sector, with its whole gamut of social welfare programmes was collapsing under its own weight and no longer reached the people they were meant for. The multitude of incentives for different sectors was working at cross-purposes and important rigidities were present in the labour and capital markets.

These were some of the early warning signals of the growth blockages and bottlenecks reflecting to some extent the fact that our socio-economic setup was already out of tune with the new global trading and business environment. The phasing out of the Multi-Fibre Agreement, and the erosion of our trade preferences, underpinned by macroeconomic and international financial volatility, demand the necessary reforms that can turn these short-term challenges into long-term successes.

A new challenging and difficult environment

Mauritius now finds itself in a new era where the protected environment in which it had been evolving so far is withering away. The country is steering in high and rough seas, in the midst of a new challenging and unusually difficult environment characterised by triple shocks that come on top of the sustained long term adverse trends in competitiveness -
the 36% cut in sugar export prices, erosion of our textile markets and soaring energy costs. Our terms of trade have deteriorated by about 15 percent over the past three years, equivalent to a massive income loss of 10%.

The cut in sugar prices will further deteriorate the terms of trade by 9%, impacting negatively on GDP by around a cumulative 3 percentage points. Growth has slumped to an average rate of only 3.9% over the past 5 years, nearly a two percentage points below the heady historical trend. The investment rate has fallen by six percentage points since 1999, and we are receiving only 1.4% of GDP as FDI inflows whereas other economies receive 10 times more FDI as a share of their GDP.

On the external front, growth in exports of goods declined in 2006 to about 4% from 13% in 2001, a clear warning that the country is participating less in export expansion with the role of trade in its economy declining. The current account deficit reached 5.4% of GDP in 2005 after three consecutive years of surpluses. The budget deficit and public debt had reached unsustainable levels. 9.8% of the working population is still without jobs. This disgraceful number illustrates the real barrier to the country’s competitiveness - it is about a labour market that favours those in jobs at the expense of those without them.

The Achilles heel of Mauritian economic performance in recent years has been weak productivity growth, a disconcerting development. Overall competitiveness has been negatively affected as productivity of capital and labour has been falling steadily since 2000. Mauritius has been relegated from the top position among African countries in the Growth Competitiveness Index in 1999 to the present 4th position and we risk being downgraded further. This dwindling competitiveness means lower living standards, lower prosperity and a lower quality of life for all Mauritians.

Competitiveness is an imperative not an option in today’s global economy. This Government has taken the commitment on lifting Mauritius’ competitiveness and prosperity, and addressing the macro- and micro-economic causes of declining competitiveness as a critical first step to letting the country and its deserving citizens partake fully in the growth experience.

A new strategy centred on global competitiveness

A new development strategy centred on global competitiveness to return to higher growth paths and full employment is being implemented. This involves a transition from the obsolete and even counterproductive preference based development model to one that can succeed in an environment of fully liberalised trade where no activities, be it for export or for import, are shielded from international competition.
this transition, the 2006/07 Budget announced 40 fundamental reforms in the areas of economic restructuring, investment and business environment, fiscal stewardship and social justice and equity. These reforms are being undertaken within the context of a ten year plan to restructure the economy and to strengthen the social fabrics and will cost around Rs 160 billion. Implementation of these reforms will have to be concentrated over the next five years for maximum impact and results.

With every turn in today's unpredictable business environment comes another challenge - the challenge to remain competitive, to build robustness to overcome vulnerability and weaknesses, and to seek new opportunities for growth. Government is committed to the pro-growth reforms of post-preference era, initiated with the 2006/07 budget, to introduce greater flexibility and agility in every sector of the Mauritian economy. It means the pursuance of prudent macroeconomic policies which will enable us to achieve higher levels of growth with low levels of inflation, increase the efficiency of public expenditures, ensure that subsidies are well targeted and that an enabling environment is created for public as well as private investment. It will also help us to reconfigure ourselves quickly and appropriately in response to the opportunities and challenges of a more uncertain, dynamic and connected economy.

Government is also promoting inclusive growth by ensuring that workers and the disadvantaged are beneficiaries of development outcomes and empowering them as stakeholders in the country's future. A fundamental plank of the social cohesion and poverty alleviation strategy is to reduce poverty by facilitating greater involvement in productive activities through better access to education and finance.

Opportunities are there for the taking but Government is aware that it has to continue developing the appropriate globalisation strategy, acquiring the crucial market knowledge, building the contacts and insightful information and leads, and positioning the country for advantage. Indeed, the diamond of competitiveness is determined not within the borders of a nation state but by the dynamism generated by regional and international exchanges in a borderless and connected world.
Manufacturing

A Key Role in the Transformation of the Economy

Manufacturing has emerged as a vital pillar of the economy, with significant contribution to GDP, total employment and foreign exchange earnings. Over the years, this sector has played an important role in the structural transformation of the economy and in propelling Mauritius to the rank of a middle income country.

In 2006, manufacturing accounted for 19.6% of GDP, 23% of total employment and 63% of total domestic exports. In contrast, the sector accounted for 6% of the GDP, 6% of total employment and around 0.7% of total exports in 1968. GDP per capita has increased from $200 in 1968 to $5300 in 2006. Manufacturing has, no doubt, made a tremendous contribution to raise the standard of living in the country.

Import Substitution Strategy

Deliberate attempt to stimulate industrial development dates back to the early 60s when Mauritius adopted an import substitution strategy to combat rising unemployment. Incentives such as tariffs
protection, tax holidays and concessionary finance were introduced to spur potential entrepreneurs to establish manufacturing enterprises. This led to the production of a wide range of products for the domestic market. However, the import substitution strategy had shown its limitation in generating growth, raising income and creating adequate number of jobs to combat rising unemployment.

On accession to independence in 1968, the two major problems confronting the country were virtual stagnation of the economy and the high unemployment rate, with a rising number of young people entering the labour market. Over the couple of decades before independence in 1968, Mauritius had witnessed modest economic growth. The country had obviously all the characteristics of a developing economy. Sugar, which was the mainstay of the economy, had reached its technical limits of production and output could not be significantly increased. Agriculture accounted for 23% of GDP, 45% of total employment and 97% of total exports.

Export-Oriented Strategy

The real push to manufacturing was given in the early 1970s. The search for alternatives models of development led us to have a closer look at small island economies, like Hong Kong and Singapore, which have witnessed remarkable economic progress. These countries had adopted an export-oriented strategy in view of the inherent weaknesses related to the small size of their economy.

There was no doubt that Mauritius had to adopt a similar strategy and rely on international trade for its development. Inspired by the experience of some of the East Asian countries, therefore, the post-independence Government enacted the Export Processing Zone Act in 1970, which converted the whole island into an export processing zone and provided a range of incentives to promote the development of export processing activities.

The establishment of the export processing zone is considered to be a milestone in the economic development of the country. A number of strengths could be leveraged to attract foreign investment and spur the development of the manufacturing sector and the country, such as:

- a democratic set-up, with rule of law and profound respect for the constitution
- political and social stability, with elections held at least every five years
preferential market access to the European Common Market
a literate and adaptable workforce
a bilingual population
relatively low cost of labour
a business friendly environment
good infrastructure
a well developed banking system
a dynamic local business sector

The policy-mix put in place to support the export oriented strategy included the grant of fiscal incentives, through tax holidays and duty-free imports of machinery and equipment and raw materials, the free repatriation of capital and profits and export and investment promotion. These measures were complemented by the development of infrastructure, with investment in ports, telecommunications and industrial estates and provision of concessionary finance through the Development Bank and the commercial banking sector. Trade initiatives were also taken to accede to the Yaoundé Convention that provided preferential access to our manufactured products to the European Common Market.

The co-existence of the import substitution strategy and the export-oriented strategy, as a two-pronged approach, met with considerable success over three decades in diversifying the economy, promoting an industrial culture, generating exports, creating employment and driving economic growth. However, propelled by the EPZ, manufacturing has gone through different phases of development.

Phases of Development

The establishment of the EPZ coincided with a time when the world economy was buoyant. On the other hand, the accession of Mauritius to the Yaoundé Convention enhanced the situation of Mauritius as a base for export-oriented
manufacturing. Government initiatives coupled with the external factors triggered the development of export processing activities. The EPZ attracted foreign investment, particularly from Hong Kong, France, the UK, the USA, and India. Mauritian investors hitherto in sugar, domestic manufacturing and trade, diversified to establish export processing activities.

The EPZ recorded impressive growth during 1971 to 1976. An increasing number of foreign enterprises and joint ventures were established, as a result of which employment and exports increased. Thus, by 1976, manufactured goods accounted for 19% of total domestic exports, and manufacturing accounted for 18% of the GDP and around 16% of total employment.

However, between 1977 and 1982 the sector suffered a setback as a result of difficult external and internal circumstances. World recession, high unemployment in our main buying countries and increasing oil prices created a volatile situation which took its toll on the sector. On the domestic front, the wave of industrial unrest which broke out in 1979 affected the image of the sector.

In view of the worsening balance of payment situation, Government had to stabilise the economy through the devaluation and readjustment of the rupee in 1979 and 1981, respectively. With the assistance of the IMF and the World Bank a Structural Adjustment Programme was put in place in 1980 to reduce public and private expenditure, redirect investment to productive sectors, restrain wage increase, control imports, restrict credit expansion and promote exports on manufactured products. In 1984 the Mauritius Export Development and Investment Authority (MEDIA) was established to vigorously promote investment and exports.
The implementation of these measures contributed to restore the growth of manufacturing. Growth picked up again in 1983 and by late 80s, the sector contributed to achieve quasi-full employment in the country. During this period investment increased from the Far East, the number of enterprises rose, employment shot up and exports expanded.

As a result of tariffs protection and fuelled by rising level of incomes, the import substitution sector also had over the years expanded with the manufacture of an impressive range of products. A number of enterprises had been successful in breaking into the regional markets. But the value of products exported remained low. In 1990, the sector accounted for 13% of the GDP, compared to around 11% for the EPZ. However, the EPZ was the largest employer and exporter.

**New changes on the domestic and external front**

From around 1990, the EPZ sector was confronted with new challenges, arising out of changes in both the domestic and external front. Shortage of labour as well as lack of skilled labour led to increase in wages and thereby cost of production. The relatively cheap labour factor could no longer be effectively used to attract foreign investment. The emergence in East Asia of low cost producers which adopted export oriented strategies to promote the development of textile and clothing industry increased competition in the market place.

As a result of this situation, employment stagnated and exports and growth were lower than in the previous years. It became increasingly clear that labour intensive operations were no longer viable and enterprises had to shift from basic garments to high value added garments. To assist enterprises to enhance their competitiveness and move up the market the Export Processing Zone Development Authority (EPZDA) was established in 1994.

The liberalisation of trade in textile and clothing during a ten-year period (through the phasing out of the Multi-Fibre Agreement - MFA) as from 1995 did not have any adverse impact on textile and clothing in the initial years, as the major importing countries in Europe and North America liberalised imports which represented no export interests to major suppliers in Asia.

However, the adherence of China to WTO in 2002, the grant of preferences to LDCs by the EU and the impending liberalisation of trade in textile and clothing in 2005 took its toll on the textile and clothing sector. Most of the enterprises established by investors from Hong Kong ceased operation to relocate elsewhere. As some enterprises closed down and others laid off workers, the sector contracted, employment declined, exports slumped and growth was negative during four consecutive years as from 2002. The Textile Emergency Support Team (TEST), comprising representatives of the public and private sectors, was
established in 2003 to assist the textile and clothing enterprises to restructure their operations.

In 2003, a thorough review of the institutional support framework was undertaken by an international consultant. The review revealed a number of weaknesses in the institutions and confirmed that the existing institutional framework is not able to effectively respond to the needs of the sector, which had to confront new challenges. It was, therefore, decided to revamp the existing institutional framework and establish a new integrated institution, with a different organisation structure, strategic focus and mode of delivery of services.

Enterprise Mauritius was thus established, as a joint public-private venture, to deliver seamless, flexible and responsive services to manufacturing enterprises. This new vehicle to support enterprises is based on the New Zealand model, which had proved effective in assisting enterprises to improve their international competitiveness.

The Current Situation

Manufacturing consistently registered average annual growth rates of over 5% during 1990 and 2000. Growth, however, petered out thereafter till 2005. This was essentially due to the poor performance of the EPZ, which was hit by liberalisation of trade in textile and clothing. Never had the EPZ witnessed negative growth rates for four consecutive years, with -6% in 2002, -6% in 2003, -6.8% in 2004 and -12.3% in 2005. During the period 2001 to 2005 the EPZ lost 21 000 jobs and exports contracted by 14%. In some quarters people started raising doubts about the future of the sector.

Government in 2005 and 2006 took a number of measures to revitalise the sector. The Enterprise Development Fund was established to provide matching grants to eligible enterprises to restructure and to raise their level of competitiveness. A Forum on the Textile and Clothing and the Way Forward was organised to come up with a three-year Action Plan to re-engineer the sector. The Textile and Clothing Action Plan thus formulated is being implemented to accelerate the development of capability within enterprises to improve their international competitiveness. This plan comprises a number of key components related to building the export capability of enterprises and enabling them to penetrate new markets and increase their share in the traditional markets.

Actions taken by enterprises to face a fiercely competitive environment and the support of Government enabled the EPZ to bounce back. In 2006, the value of EPZ exports increased by 16% and growth was positive at 4.7%. In 2007, exports were expected to reach Rs 40 billion and growth estimated to be 7.5%. Investment in the sector in 2007 is estimated at Rs 5.5 billion. These figures clearly indicate that there is a renewed
confidence in the sector and that it is on a higher growth path.

As a relatively high-cost producer it is evident that Mauritius has to move up the value chain and focus on high fashion products for niche markets. Mauritius cannot be in the league of countries producing basic products. In fact the Textile and Clothing Forum has confirmed that we have to shift from a textile and clothing industry to a fashion industry. Stimulating creativity and innovation through training in fashion and design is an essential step to assist our enterprises to migrate to the higher market segment.

The Challenges

Mauritius is facing a sharp transition from dependence on trade preferences and tariffs protection to open competition in the global economy. The
phasing out of the Multi-fibre Agreement has substantially eroded the margin of preference Mauritius had been enjoying over its traditional competitors. The export-oriented enterprises have thus been hit by fierce competition in the marketplace from low-cost producing countries.

Our domestic enterprises are confronted with the threat of tariff liberalisation under the WTO Non-Agricultural Market Access (NAMA) negotiations. Also, the post-Cotonou phase, after 2008, will entail an Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with the EU, thereby requiring reciprocal trade relations. In this context, Mauritius will have to liberalise its tariff regime. This will, no doubt, put considerable pressure on our domestic enterprises to compete with EU imports. On the other hand the proposed changes in the rules of origin for textiles and clothing have also implications for the export enterprises.

The domestic enterprises have also to endure harsher competition from trade liberalisation at the regional level. The COMESA has set zero tariff levels and already some 11 countries, including Mauritius, have established a free trade regime. The gradual lifting of tariffs within the SADC, where South Africa is a major exporter in the region, also involves fiercer competition for the domestic enterprises. Besides, the Government has also envisaged making Mauritius a duty free island with complete tariff liberalisation on all imported products. Tariffs cuts on import-competing products have already initiated as part of tariffs reform programme.

**Responding to the Challenges**

A number of initiatives have been taken to respond to the challenges and enable the sector to consolidate, diversify, modernise and improve its competitiveness for sustained growth.

Major ones include:

- Introduction of new financial schemes to improve access to finance
- Establishment of a Design and Fashion Institute to promote creativity and innovation and assist the textile and clothing sector to migrate to the upper segment of the market
- Implementation of the Enterprise Development Fund (EDF), providing matching grants for improved competitiveness
- Implementation of the ITC programme to improve capability in material sourcing and marketing
- Action plans for the textile and clothing sector and the printing and publishing sector

Other measures relate to product visibility and sales and outreach programmes for existing and potential small and medium entrepreneurs.
SMEs Development

SMEs have emerged as an important part of our economic landscape. They contribute significantly to employment, output and entrepreneurship development. The last Census of Economic Activities made by the CSO has revealed that 75,000 SMEs employed 176,000 persons and accounted for 13% of the GDP. The Government has, in its programme, announced its commitment to mobilise all creative energies towards the establishment of a modern, innovative and entrepreneurial society. Indeed, the development of a country, as shown by experience, hinges on the entrepreneurial culture of its people.

SMEs development is central to Government’s drive to face the oncoming challenges, reverse the recent socio-economic decline and promote economic efficiency, equity and social justice. Fostering entrepreneurship entails broadening the circle of business opportunities. Access to productive resources will play a fundamental role in this regard. A number of initiatives have been taken to develop the productive capability of SMEs, improve access to finance, provide industrial space, facilitate obtention of licences and permits and improve the delivery of services of SEHDA.

Development of new Growth Poles

The development of new growth poles and consolidation of certain existing sub-sectors will pave the way for industrial diversification and will focus on sectors with high growth potential that can have a substantial impact on the economy. Market surveys and other exercises have identified the following sub-sectors where sustainable growth can be achieved:
- Non-Sugar High Value-Added Agro-Processing
- Land-Based Oceanic Industry
- Sea-Food Processing from EEZ
- Marine Aquaculture
- Pharmaceuticals/Phyto-pharmaceuticals
- Clinical Trial Outsourcing/clinical data management;
- Marine Industry
- Development of Branded Rum for Export
- Printing and Publishing
- Jewellery

On the right track

Manufacturing has to urgently adapt to an environment characterised by trade liberalisation and globalisation. Over the years, the development of the sector has been favoured by trade preferences and tariffs protection. It is clear that with erosion of preferences and elimination of tariffs protection, the sector has to stand on its own feet.

Aware of the challenges the manufacturing sector is facing, the Government is fully committed to sustaining its development. It has already taken a series of support measures to
reverse the declining trends and revitalise the sector. These focus on improving the business climate and creating a really enabling environment, facilitating access to finance, improving market access, export development, restructuring production processes, enhancing quality, capacity building, design and creativity and attracting FDI. The broad objectives are to strengthen the sector, enable it to cope with a more open trading environment and assist it to smoothly integrate into the global economy.

The performance of the sector in 2006 and the trends witnessed since last year indicate that we are on the right track. Efforts will be pursued to create a strong, diversified and competitive manufacturing sector.
ICT : Intelligent Cultural Tool

There will be a time… when using ICT tools at home or at the workplace in Mauritius will be part of the popular culture and of office habits, across all age groups, as is zapping channels on TV and dialling phone numbers. A time when ICT operations, ICT-based services and ancillary activities will be the major engine of growth in the Republic of Mauritius. When ICT will be synonymous to Intelligent Cultural Tool rather than to “Information and Communication Technology”. The latter will then only be an essential but invisible factor; a glue putting together the pieces of the Tool.

No fairy tale. The time is tomorrow, for sure. But how long that tomorrow takes to become today depends on us. Tremendous progress has already been made in availability and adoption of state-of-the-art technology in our country. Latest computer hardware and software is in use in the corporate world and in some homes. The island is connected at high bandwidth through the SAFE optical fibre cable and Internet users can connect through ADSL. Mobile phones are in almost every hand - some of those devices being
hooked to 3G networks - while WiMAX and WiFi provide other wireless connections to Mauritians and visitors alike in selected spots.

However, there is still ample room for improvement, particularly in democratising access to computers and to Internet in all Mauritian homes and to have the critical mass of cyber-savvy users that can fuel the engine of our 'cyberisland' dream.

The issue here is not technological. It is cultural, social and ultimately, economic. Appraising the future of Information and Communication Technologies in Mauritius - or elsewhere, for the sake of it - means considering ICTs for what they are: not an end in themselves but tools permeating all walks of life, in addition to being the building blocks of an economic sector.

In this regard, mobile telephony is a good illustration of the impact of accessibility (though of course it cannot be considered as the universal benchmark for the breakthrough of ICT in the Mauritian context). The evolution and strong influence of this telecommunication tool are a showcase for the social and cultural impact of technology, once the latter is available for the masses.

Mobidensity in Mauritius has been above the 60% mark since 2006. From 2000 to 2007, the number of subscribers to mobile telephony has increased almost fivefold - with the launch of cellular services in Rodrigues adding to the figures in recent years. Mobile networks now provide coverage on 98% of Mauritius. From kids to grannies, almost everyone can talk and SMS. Some users can email and surf the Web from any corner of the island, thanks to a cellular phone. The impact on social interaction, on personal and professional life and on popular culture is obvious. Furthermore, mobile phone usage on such a scale shows that interaction with an ICT tool through the typical interfaces that are the screen and keypad or touchpad, is quickly mastered whatever the age and socio-economic group of users.

Transposing this proficiency to more complex and content-rich tools should not be an issue once access is facilitated. The issue is, actually, access. The PC is still, and will remain for some time, the privileged tool for using ICT content. Yet, PC penetration in Mauritius is low and though government’s efforts to bring access to schools and post offices are to be commended, adoption of ICT and development of ICT culture in the whole population would ideally be reached by making real the 'One home-one PC-one Internet connection' formula.

Looking at the purely economic and quantifiable aspect of ICT in the Mauritian context, latest official figures available from the Central Statistical Office (CSO) for the contribution of ICT to GDP provide good indication of the road travelled so far: it was 5.8% in 2006.
compared to 4.3% in 2000. Imports of ICT goods (indicative of the trend in development of infrastructure and in demand for hardware and software in this field) increased from Rs 3.4 billion in 2002 to Rs 13.6 billion in 2006, representing an increase of about 300%. At the same time, imports of ICT services declined by 23.1% to Rs 1.0 billion from Rs 1.3 billion. Concurrently, exports of ICT services increased by 36.4% from Rs 1.1 billion in 2002 to Rs 1.5 billion in 2006.

Such figures regarding import and export of ICT services are not surprising. The Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) / IT-Enabled Services (ITES) sector has been booming in Mauritius for the last four years, in tune with the powerful growth in outsourcing worldwide. Estimates put the 2007 global outsourcing market at US $297 billion, with forecasts at US $450 billion by 2010. Depending on its ability to develop capacity, Mauritius will go on reaping the fruits of its drive in providing offshore outsourcing solutions. A slice of that enormous worldwide market will be our country’s. Furthermore, by surfing on its edge in the French-speaking call centre sector, Mauritius could provide part of the 200 000 plus tele-operator seats needed by France in outsourcing during the next five years. Number of BPO/ITES companies in Mauritius grew from 90 in September 2005 to nearly 200 at the end of year 2007; employment is reckoned to have reached the 10 000 mark at the beginning of 2008, compared to 3 800 in September 2005.

Building Mauritius as an ICT hub however demands more than providing outsourced services, even if the latter get geared more effectively to high value-added activities such as software development and legal or financial consultancy. Local expertise already provides consultancy, development and implementation in ICT,
for core activities in technology or for support in other fields. Making of ICT the fifth pillar of the Mauritian economy will also depend on our country's goodwill as an “intelligence hub” in the technological field.

The roadmap can already be identified to have our country emerge - making due allowances in this regard, of course - as the Silicon Valley of the region. A three-pronged approach, with links between each component and leading ultimately to integration of all components, can be proposed.

First: Outsourcing is the field in which Mauritius can have an edge - as well as quick and growing returns - on the international ICT market. On the macro economic level, Europe and the USA need to outsource more and more of their services, as they did some twenty years ago for manufactured goods. Call centres, BPO, KPO and ITO operators need to position themselves on this market, as is indicated above.

Second: ‘ICT Mauritius’ and Mauritius itself, as a country, need some serious branding. Our achievements in tourism pave the way for this. To be reliable as an ICT hub, Mauritius needs to attract the right people (or corporations) and house the right activities in the field. Training and applied research can be the launching pads for such an action which will have a snowballing effect. European academia and laboratories need funds to fuel their research. Mauritius benefits from funds for research from the European Union that are not tapped. Solving that mismatch can lead to a fruitful equation, with applied research finding the right place to bloom in Mauritius on one side, and our country benefiting from the prestige and attractiveness of such research on the other side - with opportunities for actual production of the end results of such research.

Third: Training. Including training on cutting edge technology by prominent institutions - attracted to our country - for Mauritians and for students from abroad. Transformation of Ebène as a national and regional Knowledge Hub, helped by the presence of prestigious ICT and technology institutions and corporations such as those providing certified engineers qualifications or renowned ‘Écoles d’ingénieurs’, would boost the visibility of Mauritius.

In this regard, those three components should not be considered in
isolation. Each one contributes to the dynamics of 'ICT Mauritius', in a virtuous circle. Bringing more prestigious institutions and people in training and research to Mauritius would have a snowballing effect. It could promote capacity building to the direct benefit of the industry, including big international players who would find the right resources to address their needs and those of their markets. The presence of such corporations in Mauritius would add to the attractiveness of our destination, hence bringing in still other players in value-added activities, including Research and Development. The Made in Mauritius brand would ultimately be a reference, motivating technology corporations to have facilities in Mauritius in order to benefit from this label for their own branding.

In parallel, training facilities and employment opportunities in various aspects of the technological field, as
described above, would motivate students, researchers and qualified personnel alike to come to Mauritius. Hence contributing to a cosmopolitan brain gain added to local and foreign investment; all of this creating a virtuous circle of teaching, mentoring, research and work, with a direct effect on knowledge diffusion and technology transfer, and a cascading effect on democratisation of technological tools and ICT culture as well as on development of local content.

Such benefits would of course also trickle to the outsourcing sector and contribute to the continuation of its high Human Resource intake and to the development of still higher value-added activities in that sector.

But then again, such virtuous, snowballing and rippling effects should not be restricted to labs, campuses, corporations and elite circles. Such gains should also flow out to the whole population. Only by rippling out will they become that economic and cultural key factor that will influence a whole society, which will in turn feed and sustain the ICT virtuous circle. Because, though we tend to overlook it, at the heart of ICT as Technology or as Cultural Tool, is one factor of utmost importance: the human being.

By Mr Jean Suzanne
Senior Adviser (ICT)
Prime Minister’s Office
Whenever we talk about agriculture in Mauritius the first thing that comes to mind is the vast fields of sugar cane covering the island and the sugar mills with their big chimneys cutting across the landscape. Agriculture has always had a preponderant role not only on the economic level but also at the social level. For a very long time agriculture has been the backbone of the economy but in the recent years this pillar of the economy has been losing ground.

At the dawn of the 21st century, the sector is facing daunting challenges mostly due to the cut in the sugar price by 36% imposed by the European Union. A Roadmap for the Mauritius sugar cane industry along with a Multi-Annual Adaptation Strategy (MAAS) Action plan 2006- 2015 has already been prepared and parts of it already implemented. The country is moving from a sugar based industry to a cane industry.

Cane Industry

The scope and nature of benefits arising from sugar cultivation are wide and
varied. They range from tangible elements such as soil preservation, employment, net export earnings, quasi Foreign Direct Investment flows, foreign exchange availability, avoidance of import fossil fuels, carbon sequestration, assignments for the service industry, electricity for the economy, lower levels of pollution load and budget savings, to very qualitative elements such as broadening of ownership, social stability and greenery for the tourism sector. The multitude of benefits, secured through what is known as the multifunctional role of sugar underpins the stability of the Mauritian society.

Sugar cane was introduced in Mauritius in 1639 by the Dutch colonisers to produce artisanal rum. The first sugar mill was set up at Villebague in 1745. Subsequent colonial powers (France and then Great Britain) used the slave trade and the indentured labour system to expand and consolidate the industry. At its peak, there were 259 sugar mills in 1838 in Mauritius.

Sugar has been traded under the Commonwealth Sugar Agreement since 1951 and under the Sugar Protocol since 1975. Mauritius has made constant efforts to improve and maintain economic viability of this industry which has been the very lifeblood of our economy, as indicated by the following:

- Sugar Industry Efficiency Study of 1988
- Bagasse Energy Development Programme of 1991
- Blueprint on Centralisation of Milling Operations in Mauritius of 1997
- Sugar Sector Strategic Plan 2001-2005

To benefit from economies of scale, sugar mills have regrouped and modernised. Today, there are 11 sugar factories with an estimated production of 575 000 tonnes of sugar annually. Ten of the factories use bagasse or bagasse and coal to produce electricity, which is sold under contractual arrangements to the Central Electricity Board.

The corporate sector of the industry has played a major part over the years to rationalise and modernise sugar activities in Mauritius. Growing companies have made substantial investments in factory centralisation, in field operations through derocking, land preparation and mechanised harvesting in order to increase overall productivity and efficiency.

**Small planters**

There were small 21 000 registered planters in 2007. Their contribution to the industry over the years cannot be overlooked. With the support of the government, they have managed to come through in sometimes not so ideal conditions. They have been accompanied throughout by such institutions like the Irrigation Authority, the Sugar Planters
Mechanical Pool Corporation, the Farmers Service Centres, the Mauritius Sugar Industry Research Institute and the Mauritius Sugar Authority. These institutions have brought valuable assistance and support to small planters by providing know-how, expertise and various facilities.

However, the cut in price of sugar by the European Union is proving to be a major threat to them, as they do not possess the same resources as the corporate sector and are much less equipped. Sensitive to this issue, Government has reviewed its policy so as to ensure their survival in the 21st Century.

Small planters have been encouraged to regroup themselves so as to facilitate land preparation, derocking, mechanisation and irrigation for their own use and benefit. A flexible form of regrouping has already been engaged.
through a process of continued dialogue and consultation. It is planned that an area of 30,000 arpents should be completed for land preparation over the period 2006-2011.

Planters who are regrouped in units would be provided concessionary finance in terms of grants or soft loans and lower sugar insurance fund premiums. New machinery adapted to smaller scale operations would be introduced. In order to prevent abandonment of land, legal and administrative measures would be taken to ensure that the land is used for sugar cane production whilst ensuring that the owner preserves his/her ownership rights.

The functioning and role of Planter’s Funds would be reviewed to ensure that the various sums of money are credited in time and are being used rationally and judiciously with a view to enhance the productivity and competitiveness of small planters. The possibility of merging the administration of such funds with the Small Planters’ Welfare Fund would be examined on a priority basis.

**Voluntary Retirement Scheme for employees**

In the wake of centralisation, a Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS) was introduced in 2001 and some 8,200 employees of the sugar industry opted for voluntary retirement. The intent now is to encourage younger employees to accept the VRS offer. In this context, some modifications have been made to what is now termed VRS 1, to come up with VRS 2. The age limit to benefit from a two-month per year service compensation is being brought from 50 years for women and 55 years for men to 45 and 50 years respectively.

The implementation of this scheme will facilitate the right-sizing of the labour force in order to reduce labour costs, especially in the estate sector, and create a more flexible labour force that will enable estates to accelerate mechanisation of field operations.

**Transforming the present threats into opportunities**

As a small vulnerable economy which has to operate in a globalised environment, a roadmap for the 21st century has been established for the sugarcane industry, that will allow Mauritius to preserve this sector and its multiple benefits and to transform the present threats into opportunities. The roadmap addresses the following challenges:

- Preserve and consolidate the foreign exchange earnings from the sector to ensure a stable and predictable revenue for our food imports
- Preserve the livelihood of small planters and employees and their families who depend directly on the sugarcane sector
- Optimise value-added of sugar and its co-products
- Maintain social cohesion, which is the foundation of our peaceful and stable democracy
- Preserve and protect our environment: it is agreed that without the sugarcane plantations, which both bind the soil and act as carbon dioxide sink, our soils would degrade very fast, the lagoons would silt up and the air quality degrade, with adverse effects on tourism and fishing
- Optimise the production of environment friendly sources of energy, electricity from bagasse and ethanol from molasses
- Ensure that the corporate sector is pro-active, with a leaner and more efficient organisation which will allow it to meet the challenges of decreasing sugar prices

Sugar cane, through its considerable resistance and resilience to drought and more particularly to cyclones, has been the crop which has proved beyond doubt its capacity to be a viable product on a long term commercial basis. Many other crops have been tried over time, through specific and often costly research and field testing programmes, but none has been able to adapt itself to Mauritian conditions. While diversifying its economy through the judicious use of the secure and predictable earnings derived from the Sugar Protocol, Mauritius has also adopted a diversification within such approach which is the optimisation of the use of by-products; the production, to the extent possible, of value added sugars; food crops in cane interlines and cane rotational land. In fact, food crop production has been successful in these cane lands.

Sugar cane is more than a cash crop in Mauritius. In fact its multifunctional role in Mauritius is such that the country has no other alternative but to continue the cultivation of this crop.
The non-sugar sector

The non-sugar sector comprises of horticulture, livestock and agro-industry. Food crop production in Mauritius is dominated by small scale farming with an average holding of 0.25 hectare and a few large farms that are greater than 10 hectares. A wide range of crops are cultivated including potatoes, onions, tomatoes, chilies, garlic and ginger. Fruits other than banana and pineapple mainly come from backyard production. The main constraints for increasing food crop production over the years are availability of land and labour, irrigation facilities, increasing cost of energy, while pest and disease needs to be controlled.

The non-sugar sector in Mauritius is faced with several challenges and to address these, a Strategic Options in Crop Diversification and Livestock Sector (2007-2015) is being finalized. The focus will be on assisting entrepreneurs in improving their productivity, quality and output; assisting agro-producers in marketing their products; assisting stakeholders in an export oriented agro-production, including conservation techniques and market research and access; and making land accessible for the farming community and agro-entrepreneurs.

The backdrop for this exercise is the need to review the Non-Sugar Sector Strategic Plan (NSSSP) 2003-2007 and to redefine new strategies for the food crop and fruit sector, but also to develop promising crops such as aloe vera, aromatic herbs, palm shoot production and pitaya.

The way ahead for the non-sugar sector implies development programmes for a number of sectors. These include: Ornamentals; Sustainable agriculture; Organic agriculture; Good agricultural practices; Plant protection; Planting material; and Livestock.
Since its setting up, the Agricultural Research and Extension Unit (AREU) has brought about novel techniques of crop production and the most successful one is undoubtedly Hydroponics. In 1996, AREU started research work in hydroponics and since then substantial development has occurred in terms of research and advisory support in the sector. Starting from 6 promoters and 25 hydroponics units in 1999, the number has increased to 179 hydroponics promoters exploiting about 300 greenhouses over an area of 11.56 hectares.

The Mauritian floriculture industry exists since 1960 but has been largely dominated by anthurium export. Over the recent years, on account of the aggressive diversification programmes led by AREU, there has been a shift from the traditional open field flower production to protected cultivation under plastic tunnel. A wide range of ornamental species is now being grown.

Over the past decade, an organised fruit export industry has gradually developed in the country. From a zero export in 1968, Mauritius is now exporting 600 tonnes of pineapple and 200 tonnes of litchis annually. This has been possible due to significant improvement in cultural practices and post harvest handling of pineapple and litchi.

Strawberry which was quasi inexistent on the local market is readily available due to the introduction of locally adapted varieties and modern production techniques. Banana and mango productions have evolved from backyard activities to commercial enterprise with high yielding varieties and better orchard management. Many fruits and their hybrids have established themselves as highly appreciated fruits in hotels and high value markets.

Village Laitier

In order to reduce over-dependence on imported milk, the Government is coming up with the Village Laitier project. The main objectives are to increase fresh milk production, create employment opportunities and ensure the integration of fresh milk production in the agro-processing industry.

In the first instance, various incentives and support are being given to support existing groups of dairy farmers to enable them to increase their productivity. Subsequently the model would be replicated elsewhere. As the activities of the members of the Nouvelle Decouverte Cowbreeders Cooperative Society were already being monitored by the Extension Division of AREU, it was decided to continue to support them in the new context of the Village Laitier project.

Various government agencies have thus been providing inputs in order to help in the creation of a model Village Laitier at Nouvelle Découverte. These
agencies are AREU, Food and Agricultural Research Council, Agricultural Services, Cooperative Division, Agricultural Marketing Board, Water Resources Unit, Central Water Authority and Small Enterprises and Handicrafts Development Authority.
Tourism

The New Policy- Focus on Economic Benefits for All

The tourism industry in Mauritius has reached a very high level positioning in the economy. The third pillar of the economy after the manufacturing and agricultural sectors, it is considered as one of the most successful services sector before financial services. Gross tourism receipts are projected to reach Rs 47 600 m in 2008. A shift in government policy now sees great emphasis laid on a wider distribution of revenue to benefit a greater number of stakeholders.

The economic value of the tourism sector has undergone constant growth since independence. Evidence of a prosperous tourism services sector could be identified through the readings of macro economic variables like foreign exchange earnings, contributions to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and to Government revenue and creation of employment. These factors contributed significantly to the consolidation of the Mauritian economy from an agrarian economy towards a major service-based economy.
In 1975, per capita income was Rs 5,249 and it increased to Rs 62,371 over the next two decades to 1995. During the period 1995-2005, it increased more than 2.38 times to Rs 148,857 and by the end of 2007, it stood at Rs 184,531. Hence, the standard of living of the Mauritian has been enhanced. Given that the driving force of our economy is resting on such key service sector, the industry cannot be left to progress by itself but has called upon greater dynamics between the tourism industry and the government.

Tourists had been coming to Mauritius as early as before independence. Over the last four decades, tourist arrivals, the number of hotels and room capacity have evolved considerably, as shown in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Tourists arrivals</th>
<th>Number of hotels</th>
<th>No. of rooms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>27,650</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>115,080</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>291,550</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>4,603</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>656,453</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>8,657</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>788,276</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>10,666</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From 1968 to 1970, tourist arrivals grew at 77.78% from 15,553 to 27,650. Over the decade 1970-1980, tourist arrivals increased by 3.16 times. Over the next decade to 1990, the upward trend progressed to reach 291,550 tourists. In year 2000, tourist arrivals increased by 2.5 times to 656,453. Consequently, the number of hotels and room capacity also had to increase to match the growing demand for Mauritius as a tourist destination. As compared to 1980s, the number of hotel rooms has doubled from 43 to 102 in 2006 whilst room capacity has increased by 5 times over from 2000 to 10,666 rooms available during the same period.

**Challenges**

Greater challenges had to be faced by policy-making and planning bodies to tap the potential of the tourism industry to ensure the smooth progress towards sustainable development for a harmonious social cohesion to make it a best island destination.

In 2005, Government decided to place tourism at the top of its agenda and a target of two million tourist arrivals has been set since. This has necessitated a revamping of the tourism policy focusing on the gradual liberalisation of air access, the strengthening of the marketing strategy and product development revolving around quality tourism and personal service excellence.

In 2007, tourist arrivals reached 906,971 as compared to 788,276 in 2006, representing a growth of 15.1% over the preceding years. The trend is expected to grow as several strategies of promotion, marketing, room capacity and air access liberalisation amongst others are being intensively worked upon. If the projected minimum annual rate of growth
of 10.5% for the period 2007-2015 is applied, one million tourist arrivals can be expected by the year 2008.

Gross tourism receipts were expected to reach Rs 38,840 m (+21.6%) in 2007 as compared to Rs 31,942 m in 2006 and Rs 25,704 m in 2005. It is projected that it will reach Rs 47,600 m in 2008, expecting to increase to Rs 55,000 m in 2009 and Rs 63,500 in 2010.

The main traditional markets have remained the same over the years with Europe representing two-third of the supply base of tourists. In 2006, tourist arrivals were as follows: France (23.1%), U.K. (13%), Germany (7.3%) and Italy (8.8%). South Africa (9.0%) and Reunion Island (11.3%) are our main regional markets. Emerging markets like India, Gulf countries, Australia, China, CIS countries and more recently Brazil are being tapped.

**DEVELOPMENTS IN THE TOURISM SECTOR**

**Product Development**

The Government has encouraged the diversification of the tourism product portfolio comprising namely hotel development, social community development, cultural tourism/heritage tourism, sport tourism. Luxury hotels have made Mauritius to be known as an established destination beyond leisure and recreation further towards wellness and sports, thereby introducing and developing golf and spas facilities.

Another aspect of tourism which has been targeted is ecotourism. The Nature Trail at Chamarel, Domaine de La Grave, L’Etoile and Parc Aventure are evidences of successful ecotourism projects. Other projects with a strong impact are in the pipeline, namely the coastal walkways at Trou D’eau Douce and at Grand Baie.

![Mauritius, an upcoming destination for cruises](image-url)
Two government-owned companies have been set up. The purpose of setting up Discovery Mauritius Co. Ltd. has been to manage La Citadelle as an additional inland tourist attraction. The priority task is to restore La Citadelle to recreate the atmosphere d’antan. Subsequently, the government has decided to entrust this Company with the management of I’le Plate and the co-management of Valley de Ferney in partnership with CIEL Group. On the other hand, the objective of setting up Events Mauritius Co. Ltd. is to promote, identify and organize tourist-related events as a means of enhancing the visibility of Mauritius and its attractiveness as a tourist destination through a diversification of the tourist product portfolio. The companies would also provide a vast choice of cultural attractions and events to add value to the tourism product. The rehabilitation of La Citadelle and Aapravasi Ghat and the development of Le Morne slave route provide opportunities to create events based on historical themes.

The cruise market is also being developed with the signing of an agreement with Costa Croisiere to use Mauritius as a base destination. The fly-cruise option is expected to trigger tourism spending.

**Physical Planning**

A hotel development strategy has been put in place to ensure the judicious use of our limited resources. Strong emphasis is laid on encouraging hotel projects belonging to 4 and 5 star categories to target high spending clientèles.

In order to maintain sustainable development, the Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) has been enforced whereby hotel development projects are made to abide by the prescribed rules and regulations, the objective being to avoid the disfigurement of the coastal character. New Campement Sites that will be released in the near future are planned to be organised in a land bank for judicious development of new hotel sites.

**Air Access Policy**

In line with the growing ambition of the tourism industry, Government has reviewed its policy for air access liberalisation. The targets of tourist arrivals being high as compared to the national carrier capacity, new carriers like Virgin Atlantic as from October 2007, Comair, Corsair, TUI Nordic, Eurofly, Air Europe amongst others have been carrying passengers from different countries of the world to Mauritius. Hence, Air Mauritius has been called upon to review its strategy to conquer other markets so as to remain competitive and efficient. Today, the national airline as well as other carriers are putting hands together to create the most appropriate business environment. The tourist authorities intend to participate in joint advertising campaigns.
to support both Air Mauritius and other airlines.

**Social Community Development**

It is of prime concern on the agenda of the Government to keep the balance of recreational needs of Mauritians alongside the tourism industry.

The tourism agenda has also been reviewed to include community project at Chamarel. There are several other projects to be implemented to stir up the entrepreneurial spirit amongst Mauritian nationals.

The Tourism Fund has been set up in 2003 to finance the implementation of infrastructural works in connection with tourism development projects and other associated works to improve amenities for the benefit and welfare of the local community.

**Development and Maintenance of Tourism Infrastructure**

The modernisation and expansion of this element of the tourism product is a prerequisite for the success of the tourism industry. As a matter of fact, in the budget speech 2007-2008, Government announced the extension project of the airport (starting end 2007, with completion in 2009).

The zoning of the lagoon has been undertaken through the demarcation of four swimming zones, namely at Pereybère, Trou aux Biches, Trou D’eau Douce and Flic en Flac.

The Ministry of Tourism & Leisure has come up with the Signage Programme to be carried out into two phases, namely I and II. It consists of installation of signs and information board along the Albion to Rivière des Galets as well as the North and East of the island. The same programme is now targeted for the whole island.

Nowadays, luxury hotels are set to follow the technological revolution to improve their level of service as well as efficiency. New and modern techniques are being used in their operations in the form of green productivity for eco-friendly techniques like saving energy, composting, and recycling waste.

**Legal and Institutional Framework**

In 2003, the Tourism Authority was created to set standards, establish norms and create a spirit of entrepreneurship and professionalism. Guidelines were drafted for different types of accommodation aiming at improving quality of accommodation in non-hotel sector for high level of amenities and quality of service.

The Tourism Authority Act 2006 was enacted in December 2006 and took effect as from 1 May 2007. The Act regulates tourism related activities and makes provision for a number of licences,
among which the Tourist Enterprise Licence, the Pleasure Craft Licence, Skipper’s Licence and the Canvasser permit, to formalise the tourism sector.

**Private Sector Representation**

The ‘Association des Hôteliers et Restaurateurs de l’île Maurice’ (AHRIM) was formed in 1973, with the primary objective of representing and promoting the interest of hotels and restaurants in Mauritius. AHRIM’s goal is to promote tourism through the creation of a better environment and atmosphere for all those working directly or indirectly in the tourism sector. The vision is to make the tourism industry an engine growth for the prosperity of the economy, leading to a rise in the quality of living of all local citizens. Presently, 66 hotels and 33 restaurants, as well as two associate members and five affiliate members are linked with AHRIM.
Foreign Investment Policy

The Integrated Resort Scheme (IRS) is one the strategies to inject Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) into the economy and create a positive boost-up in the macro economic variables. The Government however ensures that the economic benefits are directly taken to the Mauritian nationals. There are three IRS projects which have been realised. The Business Facilitation Act 2005 specifies clearly simplified procedures to enable foreigners to invest in Mauritius.

Human Resource Development

The Government is keen on the education and training of personnel for the hotel sector. The hotel school at Ebène recently renamed École Hôtelière Sir Gaëtan Duval has been established since 1971. Since year 2000 to date the hotel school has trained an average of 1 200 part-time trainees per year, 275 full-time trainees as well as 600 trainees for Apprenticeship programmes. The ultimate objective is to train employees in hotel operations and management to cater for the exigency of service excellence required by hotels. Colleges have recently introduced Tourism and Hospitality subjects which can be further followed at tertiary level. The University of Mauritius (UoM) offers travel and tourism courses. Three new antennas have been inaugurated at Pointe Jérôme, Surinam and Bon Accueil to meet the requirements for new hotels and IRS projects where apprenticeship programmes are currently being run.

With the growing number of hotels, the supply of high competence employees must meet the demand of our hotels. Hence, training institutions are encouraged.

Leisure and Events

“Semaine du Patrimoine”, “Régates à Grand Gaube”, “Festival Kréol” and Vintage Rally Car are among a series of leisure events organized by the Ministry of Tourism and Leisure.

Mauritius Tourism Promotion Agency

Marketing being the backbone of the tourism industry, the MTPA was set up under the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Agency Act 1996. It is fully involved in the marketing and promotion of the island internationally. There are six offices in various parts of the world, namely South Africa, Europe and India to present and sell the destination through fairs and exhibitions. Hence, together with the MTPA, the Ministry of Tourism and Leisure can outline the perspective of growth of the tourist arrivals and the industry in the short, medium and longer terms.

The 2007-2008 budget recognizes the need to shift from the fragmented and ad-hoc approach to a permanent, coherent strategy while ensuring greater visibility of the Mauritian brand world wide. A sum of Rs. 35 million has been earmarked for a branding exercise and subsequent visibility campaign. Tender documents for the selection of a consultancy firm for the
assignment have already been submitted for the Central Procurement Board for the launching of tenders.

**Technology and Tourism**

As Mauritius is striving to be the best island destination, efforts are being made to intensify its presence on the internet, e-mail marketing, on-line advertising as well as its presence on e-news blackboard.

**Security**

The Government has taken the initiative to introduce the Tourism Police. Moreover, a committee has been set up at the national level to address security issues.

**Welfare of Employees**

The Tourism Employees Welfare Fund was set up under the Tourism Employees Welfare Fund Act 2002. The objective of the Fund is to promote the welfare of the employees of the tourism industry and give full recognition to their participation in the success of the industry.

**Regional Tourism**

Mauritius being part of various regional blocs like the SADC, COMESA, IOC has put up together with other countries in the region to explore the potentials of the tourism services sector, for instance, the facilitation of movement of persons across borders by eliminating complex visa procedures.

**International Representations**

Mauritius is member of the United Nations World Tourism Organisation. Through its membership, the island benefits from international representation and a global forum for tourism policy issues affecting travel and tourism like climate change or other environmental concerns like tsunamis.
ICT
A Major Tool to Increase National Wealth

In the wake of the digital revolution and the process of globalisation unfurling throughout the world, Mauritius is committed to fully exploit the potential of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in its drive to fasten growth, expand export markets and build a diversified economy. Viewed as a tool to increase national wealth, create new opportunities and jobs as well as promote and democratise access to information, stakeholders are provided with the opportunity to develop ICT into the fifth pillar of the economy.

The potential of ICT to impact positively on the development of the country was becoming so evident at the end of the 1990s that the Government decided to create a separate Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunications (MITT) in July 1997. MITT is responsible for the elaboration of policies to ensure that challenges facing the IT sector are adequately dealt with.

In line with the vision to make Mauritius a Cyber Island and a knowledge
hub, substantial investments have been made to provide state-of-the-art infrastructure so as to realise the twin targets associated with the vision of making ICT the fifth pillar of the economy and Mauritius a regional ICT Hub. In 2001, Government created the Business Parks of Mauritius Ltd (BPML), a private company, to spearhead the development and management of business parks and to set up state-of-the-art ICT infrastructure in Mauritius.

The ICT sector consists of manufacturing and services industries whose products capture, transmit or display data and information electronically. It also includes business services such as call centers, software development and hosting, multimedia IT consulting and disaster recovery. In 2006, value added generated by this sector was Rs 10.5 billion, twice the figure of Rs 4.5 billion in 2000. The contribution to the Gross Domestic Product was 5.8% in 2006, compared to 4.3% in 2000. After a growth of 6.4% in 2001, the ICT sector registered a double digit figure annual growth during the period 2002 to 2006. The growth rate in 2006 was 11.2%.

The Cybercity

The first initiative consisted in the development of the Ebène Cybercity, a strategically located Business Park of a total area of 152 acres, with modern infrastructural facilities including an efficient road network, uninterrupted power supply, a central sewerage system, adequate water supply, fibre optic and copper connectivity over the whole area and more importantly a conducive work environment within a well maintained landscape in the Knowledge Corridor of Mauritius.

To promote entrepreneurship in the ICT and ICT-enabled sector, the National Computer Board (NCB) launched the Technology Awareness Programme for Small and Medium enterprises. The Programme aims at providing SMEs with the necessary information and knowledge on ICT productivity tools and technologies and promoting the usage of new technologies for the creation of new entrepreneurial possibilities. Furthermore, with a view to creating awareness among the population on emerging technologies and support the growth of business opportunities in the ICT sector, NCB has been organizing annually since 1995 the INFOTECH.

Government wants to take ICT to the next level where it truly becomes one of the pillars of the economy, the fifth one after tourism, agriculture, offshore finance and manufacturing. Strategies relating to the development of ICT for the next five years have been clearly spelt out in the National ICT Strategic Plan (NICTSP) 2007-2011. The Plan aims at providing the right environment for harnessing ICT to generate employment, improve quality of life and create new opportunities for the socio-economic development of the country.
**Government Online and E-Education**

As regards capacity building, the Universal ICT Education programme was launched in 2004 with the objective of imparting computer proficiency skills to all class of the population, students, workers and the unemployed. Through this programme, Government aims at training 400,000 citizens on the internationally recognized Internet and Computing Core Certification (IC3) over a 4-year period. Substantial progress has been made and Mauritius now ranks high along with other developed countries of the world in its readiness for e-Government.

The Government Online Centre has been set up and the Government Web Portal has become operational in May 2005. The main objective is to bring government closer to the people by making services available electronically 24 hours a day and 7 days a week to the business community and to the public at large. A total of 48 online e-services has been launched and aimed at providing a gamut of services to businessmen, employees of the public and private sectors, as well as teenagers, and Mauritian citizens established abroad.

E-education is another major component on which the authorities are according high primacy. Work has already started towards the formulation of a comprehensive programme for promoting IT in all schools through a Computer Proficiency Programme. In November 2000, the National Computer Board (NCB) launched the IT Coach project aimed at making IT facilities available to the whole community by providing training in basic IT literacy and IT awareness courses targeting unemployed, women, students, children, senior citizens and the general public. To date, 5,269 people have followed IT literacy courses, 55,662 people have followed the ICT awareness courses.

**Telecommunications and Data services**

As regards the telecommunication sector, Mauritius has undergone a phenomenal development. Mauritius Telecom, the main telecommunications operator and its precursors (the Department of Telecommunications, Overseas Telecommunications Services Ltd (OTS), Mauritius Telecommunications Services Ltd (MTS) have greatly contributed to the socio-economic development of the country. During the last 40 years, deep changes have marked the telecommunication environment of Mauritius. These changes encompass all the aspects of the sector including corporate set-up, technology, regulation and customer service.

Mauritius Telecom (MT) was incorporated in 1992. In anticipation of the liberalisation of the telecommunications market, it entered into a strategic partnership with France Telecom in November 2000. The aim was to strengthen its market position both locally
and regionally. Since independence, MT’s fixed line customer base has known an exponential growth. It has increased from 10,417 in 1968 to 340,000 in 2007. The company has set up an extensive network to meet the needs of all clients, from customers to business and other local operators for data, multimedia, and bandwidth services.

**Enhancing connectivity**

The access network of MT, which covers the whole island, is made up of essentially copper cable. However, to meet the increasing needs of customers, MT has been increasingly considering optical fibre cables instead of the traditional copper wire. Mauritius made the first step into space age in 1975 with the installation of a 10 metre diameter satellite antenna at Cassis. Operator assisted international calls became possible as well as the transmission of telex messages overseas. In 1987, Mauritians were able to make direct calls overseas with the introduction of the IDD (International Direct Dialing) service. In the same year, a second Standard B earth station was installed at Cassis and a domestic satellite network was set up with Rodrigues and the Outer Islands. The first IDD calls from Rodrigues were made in 1989. In 1992, international communication services were further enhanced with the installation of a revised Standard A Earth station and the opening of a direct route to North America.

The South Africa Far East (SAFE) fibre optic system, which extends from Portugal to India and Malaysia with landing points in countries of Southern and Western Africa and in Mauritius, was inaugurated in 2002. It was a major breakthrough for international communications. SAFE provides international bandwidth capacity, network reliability and security needed for bandwidth intensive services such as IT Enabled Services and Business Process Outsourcing. The ultimate speed of SAFE is 130 Gbps and the system can convey 6.3 million simultaneous telephone channels. With this, Mauritius is now firmly connected to Europe and Asia into the Global Information Infrastructure. Its position as a regional telecommunications hub is further enhanced with a major advantage that it provides an interrupted and secure connection to the Internet even during cyclones that sweep the Indian Ocean.

Government is also taking an active part in the EASSy (Eastern Africa Submarine System) project, which will link the only part of the African continent that is not currently connected to any submarine cable. EASSy will boost connectivity of East African countries and Madagascar between themselves and with the rest of the world together by enhancing their development. As for Mauritius, EASSy will provide the country with additional international bandwidth capacity and coupled with the SAFE cable system will increase the reliability of its international communications.
Broadband Internet services at 128 Kbps became available in 2000 with the introduction of the ADSL technology. The speed of Internet connection has increased from 64 Kbps based on dial-up connections in 1996 to 1 Mbps based on ADSL 2 in 2006. MT is studying the possibility of ADSL2+ which allows Internet connections at speeds of up to 16 Mbps.

With a unique Internet service provider operational in 2000, the number has now reached seven.

**Telephone Density**

At the end of 2006, there were two fixed telephone service providers, Mauritius Telecom and Mahanagar Telephone Mauritius Limited (MTML) and three mobile cellular service providers, Emtel, Cellplus and MTML. Through
Emtel, Mauritius was the first country in the southern hemisphere to launch mobile telephony in 1989. The company was also the first in Africa to launch 3G services.

The number of fixed telephone lines was 357 300 in 2006 compared to 262 000 in 2000. Teledensity, defined as the number of fixed telephone lines per 100 inhabitants, which was 22.0 in 2000 increased to 28.4 in 2003, a level which was maintained till 2006.

As regards mobile cellular telephone, the number of subscribers recorded an increase of more than 300% reaching 772 400 in 2006 compared to 174 5000 in 2000. Mobidensity that is the number of mobile cellular phones per 100 inhabitants reached 61.5 in 2006 against 14.6 in 2000.

**Digital Economy**

The vision of transforming Mauritius into a Cyber Island is backed by bold measures like the liberalisation of telecommunications. Telecom services are now totally liberalised since January 2003. Convergence is a driving force which is shaping the digital economy in which we live, work and play, and a powerful catalyst for business change.

In an era where geographical barriers are becoming less significant than the flow of capital and information, ICT represents a huge potential for growth. Mauritius has emerged as one of the most business-friendly countries in the region.

Several leading US companies such as Microsoft, IBM, Hewlett Packard and Oracle use Mauritius as regional distribution centre for their operations.

The Information and Communication Technologies Authority (ICTA) was created in June 2002 to act as the national regulatory agency for the ICT sector and the Postal services in Mauritius. Since its creation, ICTA has several achievements which aim at opening the market to new operators and creating a level playing field among operators for the benefit of the consumers.

With the fast changes operating in the telecommunication sector, ICTA aspires to respond adequately to the regulatory challenges that will be posed as and when technology and business models evolve.
Le Commerce et La Consommation

Une Profonde Transformation

S’il est un secteur où la transformation depuis l’indépendance est des plus visibles, c’est bien le commerce. En fait, la façon de commercer et les habitudes de consommation ont changé radicalement. Les boutiques du coin, autour desquelles s’organisait la vie de la communauté, cèdent de plus en plus de terrain aux grandes surfaces et à la grande distribution.

Si les gens s’approvisionnent toujours à la boutique du coin pour les commodités essentielles, un nombre grandissant de Mauriciens préfèrent désormais faire leurs courses dans les nouveaux grands espaces commerciaux où magasins, boutiques, loisirs et fast food leur offrent une occasion de divertissement et d’évasion.

Le gouvernement, à travers le ministère de l’Industrie, du Commerce, des Petites et Moyennes Entreprises et des Coopératives, a pour sa part mis en place le cadre légal et institutionnel pour favoriser des termes de commerce justes et équitables, sans pénaliser indûment aucun partenaire,
que ce soit consommateur, fournisseur, distributeur ou prestataire de service. Les principales instances à travers lesquelles le ministère agit sont l'Import Division, la Foreign Trade Division et le Legal Metrology Service, pour faciliter le commerce, et la State Trading Corporation, pour réguler et stabiliser le marché concernant certaines commodités essentielles tels le riz, la farine, le pétrole et le gaz.

**L'Import Division**


Le Kimberley Process Certification Scheme est opérationnel depuis 2003 afin
de prévenir le commerce illégal de diamants non taillés par des protagonistes engagés dans des conflits armés contre des gouvernements légitimes.

De nouveaux règlements sont entrés en vigueur en décembre 2004 afin d’assurer un meilleur contrôle sur l’importation des voitures d’occasion.

**Foreign Trade Division**

L’activité principale de cette Division est d’octroyer les documents d’exportation et les certificats d’origine requis sous certains régimes tels le Système de Préférences Généralisées et l’Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA).

Le système d’échange de données électroniques s’applique également pour l’octroi de permis d’exportation pour des articles dont l’exportation est contrôlée. La Division fait aussi office de one-stop-shop et est reliée au département des Douanes.

Un mécanisme approprié a été mis en place pour appliquer les dispositions de l’AGOA et du Kimberley Process Certificate.

La Division conseille les exportateurs sur les dispositifs existants et les possibilités qu’offrent les régimes commerciaux. Elle anime aussi des ateliers de travail destinés aux différents partenaires commerciaux.

Par ailleurs, l’expertise mauricienne est souvent sollicitée par les pays de la région ainsi que ceux du continent africain afin de les aider à mettre en place des systèmes commerciaux appropriés.

**La State Trading Corporation**

La State Trading Corporation (STC) a été créée en octobre 1982 quand elle a pris en main les activités du Department of Supplies pour l’importation du riz et de la farine. Au fil des ans, elle s’est engagée dans l’importation d’autres produits tels les produits pétroliers, le ciment et le riz de luxe. De plus, elle intervient sur une base ponctuelle pour stabiliser le marché et les prix de certains produits tels les fruits et le lait. Depuis 2003, la STC assure l’approvisionnement en fioulle au CEB et devient l’unique importatrice de GPL.

L’Automatic Pricing Mechanism a été introduit en 2004 pour les produits pétroliers. Ce mécanisme tient compte de la réalité du marché et permet des réajustements de prix, à la hausse comme à la baisse.

Un contrat portant sur l’approvisionnement en produits pétroliers pour la période 2007-2010 a été signé avec une compagnie indienne, Mangalore Refinery Petrochemicals Ltd (MRPL).

La STC a incorporé une nouvelle compagnie, STCM Ltd, pour s’engager dans des activités jusqu’ici non couvertes.
par elle. Ainsi STCM importe depuis peu des grains secs de l'Australie, de Madagascar et de la Chine pour les vendre à des prix compétitifs au consommateur.

La STC, qui a reçu la certification ISO en octobre 2005, a signé des accords avec STC (India), Rajatpharma de l'Inde et la Trading Corporation of Pakistan.
International Trade

Mauritius: Evolving from a trading post to a trading nation

A country's economic health can partly be measured by its volume of trade. The value of trade for 2006 amounted to Rs189 539 million. In 1968, this figure was Rs 775.1 million. Total imports for 2006 amounted to Rs 115 502 million and total exports Rs 74 037 million. Europe remains our main export destination and Asia our main source of imports.

This article, researched by the International Trade Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Cooperation will give our readers a rare insight of the evolution, over the centuries, of Mauritius from a trading post to a trading nation.

The chequered history of Mauritius is intertwined with the effervescence of trade. Blessed by its strategic geographical location and bestowed with natural harbours, Mauritius has forged its destiny by becoming an important chain-link in international trade. It rightly deserved the title of the “star and key of the Indian Ocean” and even after the opening of the Suez Canal, the island continued to emulate as a gateway to
continental markets. Ever since the island was discovered, it was successively used as trading post by different influential trading nations operating in the Indian Ocean.

**Port of Call**

For centuries Arab traders and sailors had been familiar with the islands of the Indian Ocean. The island of Mauritius, then known as Dina Arabi according to the map drawn by the Arab geographer El Idrissi, in 1153, served as a port of call to Arab sailors who used to trade with distant ports of East Africa, India and the Far East. The Arabs did not settle in Mauritius but their long domination of trade in the Indian Ocean was marked by freedom of trade and the security of trader.

**Spice Trade Route**

With the advent of the Portuguese in the Indian Ocean in 1500, there occurred a drastic change in the character of trade. The Portuguese were bent upon having the total monopoly of the spice trade. They breached the unwritten law of the “inviolability of the trader” and they gradually elaborated a system of compulsion aimed at eliminating the middlemen and obtaining the right to purchase the spice at prices much below the market rates. But the stay of the Portuguese on the Mauritian island (1507-1513) lasted only for a brief period. Despite the Portuguese supremacy at sea, it did not spare the trade in the Indian Ocean to be plagued by pirates of different nationalities, mainly the Dutch, French and English.

**Export of Ebony**

The Dutch colonization of Mauritius (1638-1710) was largely prompted by the desire of the Dutch East India Company to develop the commercial potential of the island and to stop English and French ships from using its natural harbour. The Dutch wanted Mauritius to focus on the export of ebony bark and ambergris to Europe. They set on this task with the help of slaves brought mainly from Madagascar. With regard to import activities, it seemed that they were almost inexistent during the Dutch period. The small population in Mauritius satisfied its food needs by relying heavily on home-grown products obtained from farming, hunting and fishing. They profusely consumed the meat of the Dodo and the giant tortoise to the extent that these species were decimated.

Towards the end of the 17th Century, the Dutch realized that Mauritius was no longer a profitable venture for them. The earnings derived from the export of ebony and ambergris were not adequate to cover the administrative expenses of the island. The difficulties of the Dutch were compounded by frequent cyclones and floods followed by severe drought, plague and food shortage. In 1707, the Dutch Company upon the advice from the Dutch government in Cape of Good Hope,
decided to leave Mauritius. By 1710, the Dutch had completely abandoned the island.

**Axle of maritime trade**

By the time the French decided seriously to settle in Mauritius, the Dutch had considerably lost their grip in the Indian Ocean. Several reasons prompted the French to take possession of Mauritius. In the first instance, they wanted a safe natural harbour that could serve as port of call to French merchants trading between France and India. They also wanted to check the notorious activities of the pirates who used Mauritius as a hiding place and who represented a serious threat to French ships trading with Bourbon (Reunion island). But more importantly, the French planned to use it as a naval base for the French fleet carrying soldiers from France to India in their fight against the English.

When the French landed in Mauritius (which they named Isle de France) in 1722, they landed in Wawryck Bay. They however soon realized that because of its geographical location, this natural port would be subject to frequent climatic haphazards. It was indeed situated in the south-eastern part of the island and therefore subject to strong south east trade winds that blew 10 months a year. This, coupled with dangerous reefs, was a constant threat to the fleets.

The French therefore safely moved to the “North West” harbour, which they renamed Port-Louis. The transformation of Port-Louis from a primitive harbour to a thriving sea port was largely due to the efforts of Mahé de Labourdonnais (1735-1746). Under his command, the French embarked upon a huge infrastructural task in making Port Louis the main harbour of the island, thus becoming an important axle of maritime trade in the Indian Ocean.

They brought slaves from Madagascar and Africa and skilled workers and lascars (sailors) from India to help them in this task. They undertook the pioneering works in building the port, the warehouses and the ancillary facilities, without which it would have been difficult to imagine international trade. It was a deliberate policy of the French that Mauritius should concentrate on trading activities while Reunion Island (Bourbon) would continue with its agricultural vocation and become the main agricultural supplier in the Mascareignes.

Towards the end of the 18th Century, the instability in France, which was marked by the French Revolution (1789-1799), had plunged Mauritius in a spiral of inflation and speculations. One by one, hundreds of local enterprises were liquidated under the pressure of debt. The situation in the island was aggravated by the fact that it was practically cut off from the French administration in Paris and was deprived of the lucrative Indian trade.
After the take-over of all the French trading posts in India by the English, the French corsairs in Mauritius organized several raids on British commercial ships and rekindled the economy of the island with their booties.

Institutional Infrastructure

The British, annoyed by the French harassment, took possession of Mauritius in 1810, thus annihilating the French capacity to harm British interest in India and enhancing the safety of commercial ships travelling in the Indian Ocean. Their immediate task, after settling in Mauritius, was to develop profitable agro-industrial ventures that would generate export and would provide adequate earnings for the upkeep of the island economy. They had recourse to immigrants mainly from India and to some extent from China.

Modern infrastructure to facilitate international trade
The British were also consistent in their efforts to build the institutional setup of the island with a view to sustaining the trade and business drive of the unfolding Mauritian economy. They founded the Bank of Mauritius in 1813, the Mauritius Commercial Bank in 1838 and the Mauritius Chamber of Agriculture in 1853. All these factors led to the emergence of a private sector with the active participation of French and English businessmen in the affairs of the colony.

By the time Mahatma Gandhi visited Mauritius in 1901, a prosperous merchant community of Indian origin was already assertive and was engaged in export of sugar to India and imports of rice, flour, spices, pulses, cooking fat and fertilizer. The Chinese immigrants, who had established retail network all over the island, established the Chinese Chamber of Commerce in 1908, thus paving the way for intense commercial linkages with China and the Far Eastern countries.

**Indian Labourers**

Taking advantage of the opening of the British market for the Mauritian sugar in 1825, the colonial administration encouraged the expansion of sugar cane all over the island. To this end, Indian labourers were brought to work on the sugar-cane fields and British capital was invested massively in the construction of sugar mills, installation of transport system for sugar and acquisition of commercial ships. The sugar trade prospered so rapidly that it became the main activity of Mauritius until its independence in 1968. During that period, sugar accounted for more than 90% of the Mauritian export.

**Sugar Trade**

From 1825 to the end of the 19th Century, England, India, Australia and South Africa had been the main export destinations. For the period 1870-1910, a sharp decline in exports was noted towards the British market but was compensated by a sizeable increase to India. With the introduction of Imperial Preferences in 1919 and its subsequent extension to British Colonies, the export of sugar once again took an increasing trend to the British market. However, during the course of time it was recognized that climatic hazards and price fluctuations were the major destabilizing factors of the Mauritian economy. These problems were also encountered in other British sugar-producing colonies. Hence, in 1951, the Commonwealth Sugar Agreement came to play a stabilizing role in providing a guaranteed market and guaranteed price for sugar.

Sugar thus became the backbone of the Mauritian economy. The earnings from sugar were used to pay the import bill. The island had to rely heavily on import of food, clothing, machinery and fertilizer. Great Britain, India, France, South Africa and Madagascar happened to be the main import sources. The
prosperity of the sugar industry contributed tremendously in the transformation of the socio-economic setup in Mauritius. The peaceful life and the improvement in the health conditions led to unprecedented demographic growth. Its impact was severely felt during the decades of 1940 till 1970. The income derived from sugar was no longer sufficient to feed the growing population. This was further compounded by increasing pressure on the labour market which could not provide matching jobs to hordes of school and college leavers. The British government commissioned a study by Prof. J. E. Meade in 1961 with a view to finding a solution to this economic disequilibrium. The recommendations of Prof. Meade went in the direction of agricultural diversification with little hope on industrial development. The much that could be done in the years preceding the independence of Mauritius was the setting up of some import-substitution industries which operated under heavy tariff protection. These newly established industries produced solely for the local market which soon became saturated due to its smallness.

**Preferential Trade**

It was against this backdrop that the newly independent Mauritius in 1968 had to forge its way in world trade. The first of its priorities was to consolidate its preferential trade ties with Great Britain but also to secure preferential access on the Common Market of Europe which was emerging as a powerhouse. Mauritius took the initiative to organize the first ever international summit on its soil in 1973, known as Organisation Commune de l’Afrique et de Madagascar (OCAM). The objective was to promote a type of preferential trade arrangement between the European Economic Commission (EEC) and the ex-French colonies. This conference, though short-lived, paved the way for the Yaoundé Convention which, after Britain’s entry to the EEC, was subsumed into the Lomé Convention in 1975 to which the Sugar Protocol was an integral annex.

Mauritius owes much of its post-independence economic success to the Lomé Convention (1975-2000) which as from 2000 became the Cotonou Agreement. In fact, Mauritius has been able to maximize the benefits derived from the Sugar Protocol. By providing the island with a predictable and stable source of earnings over the years, the Sugar Protocol has been instrumental in developing the local sugar industry and in fostering the economic diversification of the island. Revenues from sugar exports have continually been re-invested into the sector and into other economic activities, some of which have today developed into major pillars of the Mauritian economy, namely manufacturing, tourism and finance. But the importance of sugar is still such that it will remain for quite some time the backbone of the economy and will continue to play a vital role in the socio-economic fabric of Mauritius. It is worth noting that preferential access for sugar and clothing exports to the
European Community has been one of the factors behind the rapid growth of the Mauritian economy in the 1980s.

**Export Diversification**

Mauritius has moved from a one-crop economy at the time of its independence in 1968 to a relatively diversified, export-oriented economy. The transformation of Mauritius from a sugar-exporter to an exporter of textile and clothing has been quite remarkable. In 1971, the Mauritius Export Processing Zone (EPZ) was created which led to the rapid expansion of industrial development. The Government provided many fiscal incentives to investors such as tax benefits, duty free imports of raw materials and machinery and other inducement for the export of EPZ products. In 1985, the EPZ sector overtook sugar as the prime source of exports, foreign exchange earnings and employment, depicting the gradual diversification of the economy. In the 1980s and 1990s, the clothing sector boomed mainly due to the duty-free and quota-free access enjoyed by Mauritius on the EU market as well as the bilateral preferential treatment accorded by the US government. Clothing then accounted for over half of exports, with Mauritius ranking as the third largest exporter of woolen garments in the world. Although the relative importance of EPZ has declined since the early 1990’s due partly to the continued effort at diversification, it remains a vital pillar of the Mauritian economy. During the same period, the economic diversification also encompassed tourism and financial services. The services sector has assumed considerable importance in the Mauritian economy, accounting for around 74% of the real GDP.

**Erosion of trade preferences**

The results of the Uruguay Round and the advent of the WTO in 1995 had severe impact on the Mauritian economy. One by one the preferential trade policies on which Mauritius had built its development strategy have been challenged in the WTO. The phasing out of the Multi-Fibre Arrangement eroded the preferential access Mauritius' exports enjoyed on its traditional markets. The implementation of the WTO Agreement on Agriculture, together with the reform of the EU sugar regime has caused significant price depression of Mauritian sugar exports. All these developments led the EU and the entire ACP group, including Mauritius, to redefine the preferential trade arrangement and to replace the existing trade regime of the Cotonou Agreement by a WTO-compatible Economic Partnership Agreement.

**Economic Reforms**

Though Mauritius has continued to implement trade-related reforms, it has nevertheless over the last decade faced numerous challenges on the international market that are beyond its control. More recently, the 'triple shocks', caused by
external factors namely the loss of textiles preferences, the soaring oil prices and reduction in sugar prices have been detrimental to the economy. Such events have prompted the government to adopt measures geared towards major economic reforms.

The reform programme aims at moving the country away from preference dependence to global competitiveness. Its main objective is to direct the economy onto a higher growth path and thus making it less vulnerable to the external shocks. The reform strategy to open the economy has been designed along four major axes: first, there is an urgent need to address the high budget deficit which is a major obstacle to sustainable economic growth. Secondly, there is a need to improve the general investment climate to facilitate business conduct. Also moving towards a higher growth path entails attracting FDI. Finally, the economic structure must be reviewed, not only by restructuring and modernizing the existing sectors, such as the textile and sugar sectors but also by creating new growth poles, in areas such as ICT sector, sea food hub, land-based oceanic industry, hospitality and property development, healthcare and bio-medical industry, agro-processing and bio-technology and the knowledge industry. More importantly, in its bid to keep the momentum of growth, Mauritius has taken concrete steps to move towards a service-oriented economy. The reform also encourages temporary migration of workers abroad.

**WTO Negotiations**

Mauritius’ participation in the WTO negotiations has been prompted by its belief in a fair and rules based multilateral trading system. It has actively participated in all WTO Ministerial Conferences pushing to break down trade barriers while ensuring that its concerns are not jeopardised. As a small island developing state, Mauritius has negotiated actively to safeguard the interests of small economies. In this regard, it has been on the forefront regarding the elaboration of a Work Programme for Small Economies in accordance with the mandate of the Doha Ministerial Declaration of 2001. The major concerns of the small economies are related to the loss of market access arising from the erosion of trade preferences and the difficulty in integrating the multilateral trading system owing to its smallness and inherent weaknesses.

**Aid for Trade**

At the Hong Kong WTO Ministerial Conference in 2005, Mauritius has been among the proponents to advocate that market access, however generous and preferential, could become meaningless to small, weak and vulnerable economies if these countries would not have the capacity to produce and trade. Mauritius, along with other trading partners canvassed for the support of the Aid for Trade Initiative in order to
address the supply-side constraints and trade-related infrastructure bottlenecks that inhibit the small, weak and vulnerable economies from taking full advantage of international trade. In the aftermath of the Hong Kong Ministerial Conference, Mauritius played a constructive role in the framing of the Aid for Trade initiative as a major development component of the Doha Development Round. Accordingly, Mauritius on its own initiative organized an international conference on Aid for Trade with a view to galvanising larger support for this agenda. Mauritius, on behalf of the ACP group, was also called upon to play an important role in the WTO’s Aid for Trade Task Force which was specifically assigned to formulate concrete recommendations aimed at operationalising the programme. Mauritius is relying heavily on the resources available under the Aid for Trade to support its economic reform and mitigate the adjustment costs.

Regional and Bilateral Trade

On the regional front, Mauritius has joined efforts with other countries in the region through SADC, COMESA, IOR-ARC and IOC to promote intra-regional trade and economic growth as well as adopt measures in the fight against poverty. Mauritius has been continuously active in the regional trade negotiations and has abided by its various commitments to regional integration. At the level of both SADC and COMESA, the country has participated actively in promoting the agenda of the Free Trade Areas. In fact, it has always been in favour of having fully effective FTAs between sub-regional groups which would eventually lead to a continental FTA covering the majority of the African countries.

Mauritius has also taken advantage of its trade relations with the US through AGOA together with the Sub-Saharan
African countries. In fact, AGOA has been a Mauritian initiative right from the day of the Public Hearing of the US International Trade Commission on 20 July 1995 till its adoption by the US Congress in 2000. Mauritius has been at the forefront of the initiative in the conceptualisation, lobbying and concretization of the AGOA legislation. AGOA provides trade opportunities not only to textile and clothing but also to some 6000 products which are yet to be exploited. Moreover, in September 2006, it has consolidated its trade ties with the US by signing the Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA). The TIFA aims at strengthening and expanding trade ties between the two countries. It provides an opportunity for both countries to work more closely on a broad range of issues including moving the WTO Doha Development Round forward and on implementation-related issues with respect to AGOA.

In its effort towards market diversification, Mauritius has strengthened its trade and economic relations with its traditional partners such as India and Pakistan and has forged new strategic partnerships. For instance, Mauritius and India are actually working towards the conclusion of a Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement (CECPA). The CECPA will provide a new dimension to the trading arrangement between the two countries, encompassing not only trade in goods but also trade in services, investment and economic cooperation. Moreover, Mauritius and Pakistan have signed a Preferential Trading Agreement (PTA) on 30 July 2007 which came into force on 30 November 2007. The PTA applies to a list of thrust products that constitute a good potential for dynamising trade. As an initial step, the two countries have agreed to extend tariff concessions to each other on more than 100 tariff lines and will subsequently expand this list during the course of the future negotiations. Discussions on the FTA would start in early 2008 and will cover substantially all trade, trade in services as well as trade-related investment.

All the more, Mauritius has intensified its efforts to explore avenues of South-South trade with countries such as China, Brazil, Russia, SAARC and ASEAN countries. These emerging economies are experiencing much faster growth than developed countries and thus enhancing trade relations with them will undoubtedly be beneficial to Mauritius.

The Mauritian trading structure has undergone remarkable transformations over the years. Mauritius has evolved from a trading-post to a trading nation. Its strength and weaknesses have been to a large extent conditioned by the natural factors. The geographic location of the island has always remained a permanent feature in the trade strategy of different groups of people who visited or ruled the island. The smallness of the island and its remoteness from the main market centres have been the major handicaps in its trade development, but these have been
overcome by trade preferences and sound macro-economic policies. Each time that Mauritius has confronted major challenges it has tried to re-engineer itself. The transformation from sugar-producer to textile and clothing manufacturers and from export-processing zone to service-oriented economy has been quite remarkable. In the wake of global challenges, Mauritius has embarked upon a paradigm shift in its trade policy orientation, moving away from a preference-dependent economy to global player. The ability of Mauritius to drive on the global trade highway will depend much upon the ingenuity and inventiveness of its people and the dynamism of the government in policy formulation and policy responses to national and international challenges.
Interpreting the Socio-economic Evolution of Post Colonial Mauritius

Introduction

At independence in 1968, Mauritius was in an impasse. The country faced huge balance of payments deficit, soaring unemployment, an exploding population and huge level of debts. Professor Meade was invited to advise the government on the best course of action but, like a few other people, he was quite pessimistic about the country’s future. Mauritius however defied the apocalyptic predictions of Meade and a few others. What helped to defy the apocalyptic predictions of Meade was the vision of the political leaders of the time as well as the visible hands of the state.

The history of post colonial Mauritius is one based on the profound visibility of the hands of the state. The state has played a central role in the country’s development-socio-cultural, economic and institutional. Mauritius followed the advice of Meade in its diversification process but used its own state creativity, capacity and vision to manage the affairs of the country. In less than two decades, Mauritius became known
as the miracle, the 'tiger' of the Indian Ocean.

The country's development was steered in such a manner that the Malthusian predicament was avoided and the country became a middle income country with a per capita income of more than 5000US$. The Mauritian State managed to lift its people out of poverty and provoked a revolution of aspirations and expectations nation wide. Various factors explain the first phase of the Mauritian success story. These include an industrial policy based on an export -led diversification strategy, a national bourgeoisie, a committed and competent bureaucracy, the absence of conflicting ideologies, a strong welfare state, human faced structural adjustment, successful demographic control, tapping of preferential arrangements, economics of ethnicity and cultures and a 'habitus' for institutional engineering. As Mauritius steps further into the 21st century and struggles with the vagaries of globalisation, it has to face a number of new challenges. If the latter are not handled effectively, gains made so far can easily be eroded. The challenges also raise further questions about the shape and nature of Mauritian democracy in the future.

**Factors explaining the rapid socio economic development of Mauritius**

Almost all scholarly writings on Mauritius have attributed the Mauritian success story to the active engagement of the State in the affairs of the country. Commenting on Mauritius's remarkable economic achievements, Lincoln (2006:59) states:

“This in significant measure is the successful outcome of deliberate policy implementation under the stewardship of the State.” Lange (2003) also highlights Mauritius's exceptional state building and development during late colonialism and how this has served as an important foundation for consolidating development. In the post colonial period, the leaders built upon this foundation to ensure that Mauritius develops at a rapid pace.

**A state driven industrial policy**

Mauritius's industrial policy is based on export led industrialisation and is largely State driven. Meiselhelder (1997:290) states: “Designed, subsidised and guided by the State, the EPZ expanded annually by as much as 30 per cent in the mid 1980s.” The State offered a number of incentives such as a tax holiday, duty free import of raw materials, free repatriation of capital, low corporate taxes to attract foreign capital but local capital could also benefit from these very incentives. Contrary to many other countries, Mauritius adopted a policy of 'taking the EPZ to the workers' rather than 'workers to the EPZ'. Decentralisation was at the heart of the policy. The EPZ in Mauritius is not of an enclave type but rather scattered in various parts of the island. Government's
foresight and vision regarding the spill over effects of a decentralised EPZ go without saying. (Bunwaree, 1998).

The quality of infrastructure and good road networks as well as the smallness of the place contributed to making this possible but mention should also be made of the readiness and willingness of local capital to venture into this new sector. The multiplicity of incentives offered by the State acted as a pull factor and the growing difficulties of the sugar sector as a push factor. This does not mean that the sugar sector was abandoned altogether, far from it.

**The presence of a national bourgeoisie - The prominence of local capital**

The role of the local bourgeoisie/the Mauritian sugar plantocracy in the successful diversification process of the Mauritian economy and their predisposition to channel their capital into new state driven sectors provides some important challenges to both modernisation and dependency theories. The strong presence of local capital is an important variable explaining why the frequently made equation of dependista theorists that export led industrialisation is often tantamount to development failure does not hold good as far as Mauritius is concerned.

Whilst modernisation theorists saw various internal obstacles including tradition as blocking the way to development, dependency theorists saw how local elites often helped to siphon off economic surplus to the west. But in Mauritius, the problem of the production of a comprador class selling out local interests did not arise. The national bourgeoisie played an instrumental role in rooting and anchoring industries within national borders. (Lamusse, 1989). Capital accumulation in Mauritius reduced dependency on foreign capital and permitted not only the transition from a stagnating sugar monocrop economy but also furthered diversification of the economy with the opening up of new sectors such as tourism, offshore and financial services.

**Able and competent bureaucracy**

Carroll and Carroll (1999) note that “Mauritius has a senior public service which seems to be as competent, as ethical and as committed to the goal of service to the public, as any public bureaucracy in the developed countries.” Bunwaree (1994) notes that “unlike their counterparts in more socially and politically troubled less developed countries, Mauritius's intellectually trained elite has been able to take a long range approach to macro economic policy making and implementation" and Bunwaree (1994) adds that the bureaucracy has therefore been a prime mover in Mauritian society. In many ways, Mauritian bureaucracy has helped to give shape and form to the conviction and consensus in the country regarding the route to be adopted for the
In the post colonial period, Mauritian bureaucracy was largely filled by an Indian middle class which had emerged as a consequence of the grand morcellement- the parcellisation of land that took place and the educational opportunities that were created. It is important to point out that the economic and the political elite in Mauritius was not one and the same. The political elite in close collaboration with the bureaucracy used its relative autonomy and capacity to squeeze out resources through an important sugar tax to fund its welfare programmes. (Dommen and Dommen:1996).

**Human faced structural adjustment programme (SAP)**

Some people argue that contrary to many other developing countries where IMF and World Bank policies were dictated by these latter institutions, Mauritius adopted SAPS in an atmosphere of negotiations and consensus. There was a lot of dialogue and consensus which allowed the introduction of SAPS to be more smooth and 'human faced'. Bheenick (1991:5) argued that the government was committed to reform but maintained an 'Intensive Policy Dialogue' with the World Bank and the IMF which meant that the structural adjustment loan was bank supported rather than bank dictated. Contrary to many other developing countries, Mauritius resisted the IMF/World Bank conditionality of abolishing free education and free health. The continued free provision of these services made SAPS in Mauritius more of a human faced type.

**Absence of conflicting ideologies**

Mauritius has alternated governments eight times since independence and this has been done in the context of regular, free and fair elections and a voter turnout of around 80% or more each time. Interestingly and perhaps also facilitating policy direction is the absence of competing and conflicting ideologies. Every single dominant political party in Mauritius has had a rather socialist orientation with a good combination of laissez-faire and government intervention. The only one time that there was some kind of threat that there may be a drastic change in orientation was when the left leaning radical MMM party came to power in 1982. The MMM had initially spread the idea of nationalization of the sugar industry, a more collectivist approach to development, a redistribution of income and collective self reliance. Backed by worker support and a number of trade unions, the MMM gained in popularity. Soon after it came to power however, the MMM quickly realized that it was not possible to go the radical left route and opted for a more centrist approach instead.

In many ways, the absence of conflicting ideologies and the kind of subtle consensus that emerged made the formulation and implementation of
policies easier and provided for continuity in a number of programmes and projects.

**Successful demographic control**

The setting up of the Mauritius Family Planning Association and the decentralized door to door campaigning, facilitated by the smallness of the island, helped reduce fertility rates in the country. Wide publicity campaigns to sensitize people to the problem, the training of women on birth control methods, the provision of free contraception pills as well as the rapidly expanding educational opportunities for girls helped to bring the reproduction rate down in the country. In addition to the above, the catholic church through Action Familiale also engaged in an intensive campaign for natural contraception. A large majority of the 'Population Générale' group are Christians, with many of them regular church goers. These combined factors helped the country to avert the Malthusian disaster evoked by Meade.

**Tapping of preferential trading regimes and commodity protocols**

Mauritius has since the early post colonial period used its savoir-faire in economic diplomacy. Mauritius exploited its relationship with its former colonial masters to negotiate markets and guaranteed prices for its products. The Lomé Convention was negotiated by Mauritian and helped sugar producers to find guaranteed prices and markets for their product. Mauritian leaders displayed important skills in negotiating and could lobby the European market for certain preferential arrangements. Mauritius has often used its 'smallness' as an important tool of economic diplomacy but to continue to do so in these globalising times is proving to be increasingly difficult.

**The economics of ethnicity and culture**

Mauritius has been quite adept at using its multiple ethnicities as an important economic resource. The different ethnic communities had and still have important links with their homeland. The Chinese community, for example, attracted investment by Hong Kong entrepreneurs who sought overseas locations for their textile operations in an attempt to circumvent the textile quotas imposed on Hong Kong. Also, there was fear of what was going to happen to Hong Kongese capital as Hong Kong gets taken over by Communist China. The Hong Kongese looked at Mauritius as a safe haven and transferred large amounts of capital to the small island State. The Indo Mauritian are busy developing commercial interests with the subcontinent, for example now that Mauritius is speaking of transiting to an intelligent/network island, it is turning to India for investments and know-how in this sector. The Muslims are tapping into their cultural affiliation with the Arab world to promote business with the latter.
Habitus for institutional engineering

The mushrooming up of several institutions has contributed to more transparency, accountability and social dialogue and is a reflection of the habitus that Mauritian leaders have towards developing institutional frameworks. There are several fora for discussion and debate with civil society, trade unions and employers federation. These include the Mauritius Council of Social Services - an umbrella NGO which groups a number of NGOs in the country, the National Trade Unions confederation, the Federation of Civil Service Union, the Joint Economic Council and the more recent National Economic and Social Council.

Other major institutions which have impacted directly on the efficiency of the different sectors of the economy are the Mauritius Export Development Investment Authority (MEDIA), The Board of Investment (BOI), the Small and Medium Industries Development Organization and the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority (MTPA) and more recently the Financial Services Commission (FSC) to mention a few. Despite their own internal difficulties, credit must be given to these institutions in contributing to economic progress in the country.

The factors discussed above have in more ways than one contributed to the rapid socio-economic development of the island but the one factor which stands out as largely responsible for the upliftment of people's lives is the strong welfare state.

Welfare state and its consolidation

The history of concern for social welfare is heavily dominated by Fabianism. The first Prime Minister of the island, Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, had studied in England, where he met a number of other leaders studying at the London School of Economics. They were all influenced by the model of gradual socialism advocated by Fabianism. Mulloo (2000:285), citing Ramgoolam himself, notes: 'Fabian socialism suited my temperament and I have been a Fabian all my life....I have tried to cultivate the indefatigable patience of the Fabian philosophy and the Fabian belief in moderation and conviction in parliamentary reform and the concept of welfare state wherein the State is viewed as the representative and trustee, guardian and protector of the people'. The 'social conscience' of the nation was developed from very early on. Carroll and Carroll (1999) comment that Mauritius escaped the worst excesses of leadership found in newly independent states as the commitment to Fabian socialism of the country's first Prime Minister and his allies meant that they did attempt to improve conditions for ordinary workers. “They were neither gangster politicians using the State to
enrich themselves, nor factional leaders committed only to the welfare of their own members.”

Political parties in Mauritius are fully aware of the extent to which government social expenditure legitimizes the state and have over the years resisted different pressures to downsize the welfare state (Bunwaree, 2007). The popularity of the parties in power depends heavily on the continued financing of the welfare state. In addition to consolidating vote banks, the state is also conscious of the important role of a strong welfare state in supporting the economic growth of the country. This is fully captured in the government’s Vision 2020 report (1996:5), which states:

“Some people marvel that we have achieved so much economic success despite the burden of our welfare state. It can well be argued that in reality it was the other way round. We achieved economic success because of the strength of our welfare system. For it is free education, social security and health and welfare services which have given the high education levels, high health standards and above all the exceptional social cohesion which have underpinned our past economic development.”

Whether it is a strong welfare state that has contributed to the economic development of the country or vice versa, the reality now is that the contemporary economic conditions will make it very difficult to maintain such a welfarist orientation.

Globalisation - The critical challenges that the small island state faces

The world system is in a constant state of flux leading to new dynamics and impacting on the developing world in multiple ways. Mauritius too is subjected to the new dynamics of the global system and faces a host of new challenges.

The major challenges that the economy currently faces are the dismantling of the multifibre agreement, the loss of protected markets and the erosion of cheap labour. The latter is the country’s only comparative advantage and the relocation of industries to cheaper sites of production is another major problem. The poor vertical and backward linkages in the Mauritian economy, the over dependence on one or two products and the failure of diversifying the EPZ products are also problematical. Markets had been diversified but products not sufficiently so. The loss of FDI that fuelled the boom is tapering off. The erosion of cheap labour is also provoking the import of cheap foreign labour from places such as China and Bangladesh. Often the conditions in which these foreign workers live are dehumanizing. On a couple of occasions, conflicts have erupted between employers and workers.

The rapidly changing demographics also poses a challenge. The population is ageing very fast and the worker pensioner ratio is deteriorating thus putting more
pressure on the country’s resources. Coupled with this is the new wave of migration out of the country. The country is having to grapple with an increasing level of brain drain.

In addition to losing part of its trained human capital to the outside world, Mauritius has to grapple with an inadequately trained human capital. Education is free and compulsory but approximately 40% of the student population stumble at the last year of primary school at the age of ten plus, thus causing a major waste of the country’s resources. The social implications of this wastage are also cause for concern. Despite various education reforms, there is a continuing mismatch between the outputs of the education system and the requirements of the labour market, particularly new niche areas such as Information Technology. The country’s scientific and technical expertise remains very low as compared to other middle income countries (Wignaraja and Lall, 1998).

The most important challenge however in contemporary Mauritius is how to sustain the welfare state. In an interview accorded to the Mauritius Times of 22 September 2005, Percy Mistry, Chairman of the Oxford International group, notes that a growth rate of 7-8% is necessary for Mauritius to be able to afford its welfare state. He also notes that Mauritius has “probably overdone the dimensions of its welfare state before Mauritius can really afford it. It has built up expectations of guaranteed entitlements of social provision and protection, as well as of eternally free public services, that is way above what a society at Mauritius’s level of development can deliver. The social overhead cost definitely gets in the way of its competitiveness...Mauritians seem to put populist-pandering politics above good economics. As a result they get both bad politics and bad economics...”

It is not quite clear what is meant by ‘bad politics’ in this context but if politics is truly about transforming people’s lives and improving the standard of living of the average citizen, about ensuring a good dose of social citizenship, then it is clear that Mauritius has fared quite well so far.

Implications of these challenges for citizenship and the deepening of democracy

Democracy is not only about free and fair elections, an independent judiciary and vibrant press but also about the enhancement of people’s lives, their ability to access opportunity and to make informed choices. This therefore raises serious questions about women and the poor in modern Mauritius after 40 years of independence. Whilst it is true that a fair amount of progress has been made in relation to women’s status, there are a number of gender issues which remain unaddressed. These include the question of the poor participation of women in the paid labour market as well as the marginal positions they occupy, the under
representation of women in science and technology, the trauma and risks associated with the important number of backstreet abortions that persist in modern Mauritius, the growing feminisation of poverty, the inadequate representation of women in politics, the continued violence towards women on a rather significant scale. Legislations such as the Domestic Violence Act and the Sex Discrimination Act have been successfully passed but their effective implementation remains a rather difficult task. In many ways therefore the subtle discriminations that persist towards women prevent them from being treated as full-fledged citizens since some of their most fundamental rights are not being fully respected.

Whilst the gender question remains very relevant to the consolidation of democratic governance, it is also very important to address the poverty question. The riots of February 1999 are a stark reminder of the growing frustration and alienation of certain segments of Mauritian society. Mauritius has developed and implemented a number of poverty alleviation programmes but understanding and addressing poverty remains quite difficult and a more holistic approach is required if one wants to make headway in the war against poverty.

Mauritius is currently engaging in various reforms with the view of bringing redress to the economy. Some of the measures have provoked discontent and there is fear that Mauritian democracy may implode. The economic reforms that Mauritius is currently undertaking may be an indicator of the State being increasingly subjected to international capital thus allowing its own capacity and autonomy to be eroded resonating with Block’s idea that economic hard times often increase the power of capital over the state and this in turn jeopardizes state legitimacy (Block, 1977).

**Conclusion**

The remarkable economic and social achievements of the small, isolated, resource poor, multi ethnic island state of Mauritius during the past 40 years speak volumes about the commitment of the people as well as the country’s leaders to drive the country forward but the biggest threats now are the growing identity politics, the resurgence of communalism, the increasing asymmetry in the distribution of entitlements. And when these take place in a context when the ideology of the market dominates and neoliberalism is the order of the day, there is every reason to remind us of Polanyi’s warning to avoid blind faith in excessive neoliberalism since this would result in the 'demolition of society with humanity being robbed of the protective covering of social institutions' thus defeating the very essence of democratic developmental States.

Mauritius would gain by using its education system more effectively to ensure that fundamental values such as justice, equity, sharing, respect and appreciation of the 'Other' as well as...
other’s rights be inculcated in the sons and daughters of the soil. Only when Mauritians have been imbued with a sense of Mauritian ness and take full stock that each and every one of us has the full right to participate and share the fruits of development that we will be able to speak of the Mauritian nation. Mauritius is young, the road travelled so far has not been easy, it is still very much a nation in the making; it will grow provided that a strong social conscience is developed and we all channel our efforts to strengthen the nation.

Note: The bibliography has been omitted by the Editors.

By
Sheila Bunwaree
Associate Professor
University of Mauritius
Port Sector

Port Louis Harbour, A Regional Hub

Although Port Louis harbour has a very rich history, its main developments date back only to the past few decades, which have witnessed a major transformation of the port sector.

Port Louis harbour has been recording since the few past years unprecedented growth in transhipment traffic. The objective of transforming it into a regional hub for transhipment requires a regular upgrading of infrastructure, equipment and services.

Obsolete infrastructure in the seventies

The 1970s were characterised by poor infrastructure, obsolete handling equipment, archaic methods of operations and tense industrial relations. In fact, Port Louis harbour was a lighterage port, with most cargoes being unloaded in midstream and then towed in lighters for unloading alongside the lighterage wharves. Cargo handling operations were extremely slow with lengthy waiting times, huge berthing delays and obviously high turnaround time resulting
in imposition of heavy port detention surcharges.

In the wake of the industrialisation of the country, Government came up with a plan to develop Port Louis harbour to improve port facilities and services. The first phase of the port development comprised dredging and reclamation works, construction of deep-water quays, sheds, back-up open storage areas and a container park. Other related developments included the construction of a workshop for heavy equipment, fire station and a port administration building. An important fleet of cargo and container handling equipment was also acquired. The major part of these facilities was commissioned in 1979, while the Bulk Sugar Terminal became operational in 1980.

The Eighties - Creation of the Cargo Handling Corporation

Thus the 1980-90 decade started with the transformation of our port from a lighterage port to a modern one with deep water alongside facilities for general cargo and container vessels together with the introduction of new operational handling systems. During that period, the focus was mainly on rationalization of cargo handling operations, the creation of the Cargo Handling Corporation Ltd in 1983, the commissioning of a comprehensive Port Master Plan in 1985 and its subsequent updating in 1989 as a result of the country's rapid economic growth. This decade also witnessed the development of the Trou Fanfaron Fishing Port (1985 and 1990).

Attention continued to be focused on improving port operations efficiency and upgrading of marine facilities with the enlargement of the turning basin and acquisition of harbour and deep-sea tugs.

The Nineties - New container terminal and quay cranes

The 1990-2000 decade witnessed yet another major historical phase of port development culminating with the commissioning of a new container terminal - the Mauritius Container Terminal (MCT) in Mer Rouge. This crucial period marked the transformation of harbour into a modern gateway. Other principal achievements during the decade included:

- Major dredging and reclamation works, with the creation of over 100 hectares of land at Mer Rouge and Les Salines, and the subsequent related revetment works
- Construction of freeport facilities
- Development of the Peninsula area with the reconstruction of Quays A, D and E.
- Implementation of the Port Development and Environment Protection project with the overall objective of enhancing Mauritius' transport and trade competitiveness in the maritime sector in an environmentally sound manner
Construction of a modern container terminal at Mer Rouge equipped with three post panamax quay cranes and ancillary facilities and their commissioning in 1999

Construction of new road network and associated facilities to link the Mer Rouge area

Reviewing and updating of the Ports Act 1975 leading to the promulgation of the new Ports Act 1998, and the change of name into the Mauritius Ports Authority

Signature of concession contracts with the Cargo Handling Corporation Ltd for the operation of all terminals

A transhipment hub

During 2002-2007, the harbour recorded unprecedented growth in transhipment traffic, following various agreements signed with major shipping consortiums using the port as a transhipment hub. With this surge in transhipment traffic, Port Louis soon started facing capacity shortages.

The Mauritius Ports Authority consequently embarked on a series of development projects, with the objective of modernising port infrastructure and facilities and also adding the required capacity to meet the exigencies of the fast expanding maritime trade. These projects relate mainly to:

(i) Expansion of the Container Yard of the MCT by an additional 6.4 ha which increase the storage capacity to 500 000 TEUs completed in 2004;

(ii) Construction of a dedicated oil jetty in the English channel, for the unloading of petroleum tankers and LPG on a site segregated from normal port operations projected for commissioning in mid 2008;

(iii) Additional dredging works completed in December 2006 deepening the navigational channel and turning basin to a depth of 14.5 mts;
(iv) Strengthening of security measures through a new fencing system, improved gate controls and installation of an appropriate CCTV surveillance system; and

(v) Construction of a new Harbour Radio Station with modern radio/communication and vessels’ tracking system so as to provide a better maritime service and enhance navigational safety.

The above projects will enable the harbour to meet the challenges of transforming itself into a regional economic centre incorporating a number of services from port-related activities including cruise tourism, waterfront and recreational activities, seafood hub and freeport business.

There are a number of prerequisites that need to be satisfied in order to make of Port Louis a dynamic, attractive...
and competitive destination. These prerequisites vary from equipping the port with modern infrastructure, upgrading its services and promoting a high degree of competitiveness to achieving excellence in port operations and services.
The Airport

An extensive air transport network constitutes an essential infrastructural asset for any country. The development of air transport in Mauritius since the early seventies is closely associated with its economic success and has greatly helped the country to integrate the global economy.

Plaisance airport was founded for military purposes by Britain’s Royal Air Force in 1941 and commercial flights began only in 1946. A new terminal was built in the late sixties and the airport grew with the national airline Air Mauritius which was launched in 1967.

Over the years, major works have been undertaken to upgrade infrastructure. Between 1969 and 1976, a departure block and other facilities were added and the apron enlarged to accommodate three Boeing 747 airplanes. Following a Master Plan prepared by Aéroports de Paris in 1982, a new control tower and a new terminal Building, taxiway and apron were constructed, along with other ground facilities. The airport was renamed in honor of Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam in 1986.
The main passenger terminal in use today was built in 1987. Other infrastructural projects have since been implemented to increase capacity and to support greater traffic. These consisted in the extension of the runway, the apron and the terminal building, along with the construction of a cargo complex and additional storage capacity for aviation fuel and other infrastructural improvements.

In 1993, the civil aviation sector was reorganized to make it more responsive to the needs of the country. The Department of Civil Aviation continued to regulate civil aviation matters. Two companies, the Airport Development Corporation Limited (ADCO) and the Airport Management Services (AMSL), were set up to discharge the functions of development and management respectively. These two companies, which started operations in October 1995, merged into a new company, the Airports of Mauritius Co Ltd (AML), in 1998. AML enjoys full managerial as well as financial autonomy.

In 1999, the company entered into a five-year strategic partnership with the British Airports Authority (BAA). This strategic alliance helped bring about a transfer of technology and knowledge and a new approach. The company went through a complete reorganization together with the necessary empowerment at senior managerial levels enabling it to discharge its safety and operational obligations as well as handling maintenance and development works. Under the BAA impulse, the terminal was subjected to a new concept, with a changed layout design and approach.

SSR International Airport handles around 2.1 million passengers, 20,000 aircraft movements and over 40,000 tons of cargo each year. It has one runway which handles around 60 aircraft movements per day with flights from 14
airlines, including Air Mauritius, Air France, British Airways and Emirates.

The liberalization of air access, decided by the Government to boost up the tourist and hospitality sector, is exerting additional pressure on infrastructure and ground facilities. Besides, the airport infrastructure will have to be ready for the landing of larger aircrafts. New projects are being implemented to meet the challenge.

In 2004, Government approved an updated Master Plan for 25 years. Indications are that air traffic will increase from about 1.7 million passengers a year to about five to eight million passengers in the year 2025.

Among major works already completed: the extension of the aircraft parking area by two additional stands, the reorganization of operational facilities within the passenger terminal and the creation of new lounges and commercial facilities.

Other developments include the new road from the airport roundabout to Le Chaland, aviation fuel storage and handling facilities, financed by fuel companies, and wastewater and sewerage treatment plants. AML is developing a general/corporate aviation facility to provide aircraft parking stands for itinerant aircrafts and lease sites for corporate aviation fixed base operators. An internal road network has been constructed to cater for the development of the corporate aviation facilities and forthcoming freeport activities.

**Future developments**

- Improvement of runway capacity
- Extension of passenger terminal to four times its current size to over 100 000 sq metres
- Extension of apron and construction of 18 aircraft stands
Construction of a new cargo stand and relocation of the cargo development zone

Development of a free port zone

**THE DEPARTMENT OF CIVIL AVIATION**

The Department of Civil Aviation (DCA) is the regulatory body of the Government on matters pertaining to civil aviation. It plays a leading role in the development of the aviation industry in Mauritius. Security requirements at SSR Airport are laid out and regulated by the DCA, which also provides air navigation services in the Mauritian airspace in compliance with the Standards and Recommended Practices of the International Civil Aviation Organisation.

Its specific responsibilities are enshrined mainly in the Civil Aviation Act of 1974 and the Civil Aviation Regulations of 1986 and include amongst others:
- issuance of air operator certificate, registration of aircraft, airworthiness of aircraft and licensing of personnel
- certification and licensing of aerodromes
- provision of air navigation services
- aviation security and facilitation.
Air Mauritius remains a key player in the national endeavour to open up the country and the economy to the world. It flies to 30 destinations as far as Europe, Asia and Australia. The success of the tourist and manufacturing industries is closely linked to the expansion of the national airline and its capacity to live up to the various challenges.

Every year, Air Mauritius carries about one million passengers. In 2006, the company transported some 42,000 tons of freight, which accounted for one-fifth of revenues. The diverse fleet includes five Airbus A340 aircrafts, two A319s, two ATR 72 turboprop, two ATR 42s, and three Bell Ranger helicopters. Air Mauritius took delivery of a new A330-200 in December 2007. The Republic of Mauritius has a 51 percent controlling interest in the airline, which African Business dubbed "African Airline of the Year" in 2003.

Origins

Air Mauritius Ltd. (AM) was founded in June 1967, as a ground handling agent for other airlines. In 1972, Air Mauritius began its own flight operations with a single, six-seat Piper Navajo leased from Air Madagascar. The first island-hopping flights were to neighbouring Reunion and Rodrigues.

Nonstop Growth in the 1980s

In 1984, Air Mauritius began operating nonstop service flying Boeing 747 jumbo jets to major European cities including London, Paris and Rome. In April 1987, it began leasing two Boeing 747s for use on long routes, including one to Munich. It also ordered two Boeing 767 airliners worth $130 million.

As the network expanded to the east, AM began serving Singapore in 1985, using the stop as a regional hub. At the same time, increasing demand on the European market called for new strategies involving new destinations and more flights.

Air Mauritius is currently investing in a fleet development programme which will respond more effectively to the requirements of different markets. This will also contribute to reaching the milestone of two million tourists by 2015, as set by Government.

The airline offered 20 percent of its shares on the Stock Exchange of Mauritius in November 1994.
Road and Transport

Improving the Network to Cope with the Ever Increasing Traffic

With the expansion in the economic activities as well as the development of new residential zones, there has been a tremendous increase in traffic, both in number and type, plying on the Mauritian road network which engendered congestion and road safety hazards.

The road has been the only means of mobility for people and goods on the island following Government’s decision in the sixties to abolish the rail system. Tremendous pressure has been exerted on the structural strength of our road network which has primarily evolved from simple tracks to major roads through a series of upgrading activities. This situation has called for continued rehabilitation, strengthening, widening, vertical and horizontal realignment of numerous main roads and structures such as bridges and culverts. Much emphasis has been placed on road safety through provision of traffic management schemes, footpaths, footbridges and underpasses.

The road network has had to be expanded to cater for the increasing traffic
with the construction of new roads and bypasses. To date the road network consists of about 56 km of dual carriageway (motorway), 974 km of main roads and an estimated figure of 991 km of secondary and other roads.

Since independence, the responsibility for the main roads has rested successively with the Ministry of Works, the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping and now with the Road Development Authority (since 1998).

Since 1968, major roadworks have been carried out throughout the island. The dualing of the Southern entrance to Port Louis was completed in September 1973.

The second major post-independence road project was the Northern Entrance Road from the northern boundary of Port-Louis near Latanier River to Terre Rouge. This project, which was jointly financed by the African Development Bank and the Government, was completed in 1980. The project was followed by its extension to Pamplemousses - called the Relief Road to the North, financed by the European Development Fund. Thus in December 1982, the northern dual carriageway from Quay B to Bois Rouge was completed.

In the wake of this project, two major bridgeworks were implemented. The Manoa bridge near Solitude was completed in April 1983 and a new bridge over the Grand River North West, to replace the narrow steel bridge and financed by the African Development Bank, was opened to traffic in November 1985. A new bridge was also constructed over the Bain des Negresses River in the south in 1990 to replace an existing narrow bridge. Two other bridges were completed in 1992 financed through a
donation from the Chinese Government. They were the Barkly Bridge near Subramania Bharati Eye Hospital and the Pointe Monier Bridge in Rodrigues.

The extension of the dual carriageway from Phoenix towards the south was initiated in the early eighties and executed in phases beginning with the Phoenix-Nouvelle France Road which was opened to traffic in January 1989. The whole dual carriageway from Phoenix to the Airport was finally operational in May 2003. The project was executed with the help of the Fonds d’Aide et de Coopération of the French Government, the Caisse Centrale, the European Union and the African Development Bank.

Meanwhile, with the help of the World Bank, the Ministry of Works embarked on a major road upgrading project called the First Highway Project. The A1 road from Port Louis to St Jean; the A10 road from Phoenix to Curepipe; A5: Port Louis-Mount Road; B11: Arsenal-Fond du Sac Road; and B27: Quartier Militaire - Bel Air Road were all upgraded to a seven-metre wide road with shoulders and footpaths as appropriate. The vertical and horizontal alignments were corrected to acceptable standards. Works which started in January 1986 were completed in December 1988.

The motorway through Port-Louis which linked motorways M1 in the South and M2 in the North was completed in April 1989. The project was financed jointly by the African Development Bank and Government and included the construction of a major transportation centre at Immigration Square.

Between October 1991 and April 1994, major upgrading works were carried out under the Second Highway Project. The project was financed by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank) and
Government. The major components were the A3 road between Rose Hill and Black River Bridge and A8 from St Jean Roundabout to A3 at Bamboo through La Louise and Beau Songs as well as the Flic en Flac Road from its junction with A3 to the public beach. Within the SHP, a fly over was constructed in 1993 at St Jean which was meant to be the first phase in the provision of a grade separated junction to replace the St Jean Roundabout. Phase 2 of the project was completed under separate local financing in June 1995. Numerous other roads were also resurfaced under the Second Highway Project during the period May 1992 to April 1994.

From April 1993 to September 1995, the Pamplemousses - Grand Baie Road was constructed with a view to facilitating access to the Northern touristic regions by-passing the congested village of Triolet.

Between May 1994 and November 1995, a crawler lane was provided to the southbound carriageway of Motorway M1, between Pailles and Reduit. The Coleville Deverell Bridge on the Motorway was widened in 1997 with a grant from the Government of Luxembourg and the existing bridge was inspected and repaired in 2000.

In 1997 Government embarked on a Third Highway Project which involved the upgrading of the B1 and A7 roads from Rose Hill to Providence via Quartier Militaire and the replacement of Reduit Roundabout by a grade separated intersection. Reduit Roundabout was completed in November 1998 and the remaining sections in July 1999. For more fluidity in the traffic on motorway M1, two other grade separated junctions have been constructed, namely in 1997 at Bell Village and in 2000 at Grewals, Pailles.

Between 1995 and 2004, a number of bridges have been replaced, repaired or upgraded namely Martial Noel Bridge at St Pierre, Hermitage Bridge in Flacq, Hermitage Bridge at Camp Fouquereaux, Mare Chicose Bridge, Amaury Bridge, Castel Bridge and Aubin Bridge at Riviere du Rempart, Rivière du Poste Bridge and Calebasses Bridge (Pont 50 sous). The latest bridge project was the Pailles Junction Bridge Project which was completed in December 2006.

In order to cater for pedestrians crossing highly dense roads, a number of footbridges have been constructed in key locations during the period 1997 to 2003, notably on Motorway M1 in Pailles, Montebello, Phoenix, on M2 at Bois Marchand, Terre Rouge, Calebasses, Pamplemousses, on the Phoenix - Airport Road at Camp Fouqueraux and Gebert, on A1 road at Cité Vallijee and Coromandel.

New link roads constructed include the Sodnac to Phoenix Road which was completed in 1993, the Beau Vallon to Blue Bay Link Road completed in October 2000, the Gros Bois to l'Escalier...
Link Road completed in December 2000 and the Ebene Trianon Link Road completed in October 2003, Vandermeersch Reduit Link Road was the last link road constructed and was commissioned in September 2005.

The last major road project is the South Eastern Highway Project, running from Plaine Magnien to Ferney. The project, which has cost Rs 450 million, started in May 2004. The road was open to traffic in December 2007. It is expected to ease the traffic flow from the airport to the East coast of Mauritius.

As part of the project, the existing road from Kewal Nagar to Bel Air over a length of 9 km has also been upgraded. In addition to resurfacing works, footpaths and drains and street lighting have been provided in built up areas. A new roundabout has also been provided to ease the traffic problems at the junction of...
Flacq - Mahebourg and Montagne Blanche - Bel Air roads.

**Land Transport**

A massive increase in the number of vehicles and road users has led to a saturation of the road network, especially those leading to the capital. It is considered that the heavy flow of traffic is having a negative impact on the national economy. Government is therefore considering the adoption of an alternative mode of public transport.

The total number of vehicles registered in 2006 was 319,440, out of which 2,612 buses. These carried a total of 259,890,000 passengers.

Among other vehicles in 2006 were 138,174 motorized two-wheelers, 135,132 cars and dual-purpose vehicles, and 12,272 lorries and trucks.

In 1968, the registered fleet of vehicles numbered 23,811 among which 657 buses, 10,876 cars, 5,000 two-wheelers and 4,009 lorries and trucks.

Demography alone cannot account for this sharp increase, which is actually an indicator of the degree of expansion in economic activities in all spheres over the last 40 years.

The bus remains the most used means of mass conveyance. The ever increasing fleet as well as the swelling number of passengers have called for the construction of traffic centres in all the districts of Mauritius for better regulation and coordination of bus routes and time schedules, thus ensuring a better service to passengers.
Electricity

A Reliable Network to Respond to the Challenges of a Modern Economy

The challenge of the Central Electricity Board (CEB) has been to provide sufficient power to supply the electricity needs of a rapidly growing economy. Sustained growth in electricity demand of more than 10 percent per year has exerted tremendous pressure on the electricity sector.

Generation of electricity for commercial and public purposes started with hydroelectric schemes at Tamarind Falls and Le Réduit by pioneers Adam, Fanucci and Major Atchia. In the 1950s, the bulk of power generation was ensured by the Tamarind Falls power station.

During the Second World War, the British brought in two generators to provide electricity to the local airbase. Also in the early fifties, a number of private entities entered into the business of electricity generation but only a small section of the population was able to enjoy the benefits of electricity, which led the British governor to propose the creation of a state organization to develop and regulate the production and
distribution of electricity in Mauritius. The new organization was named the Central Electricity Board (CEB).

The CEB was constituted in 1952 in accordance with the provisions of the first Central Electricity Board Ordinance 1951. The CEB took over the functions and assets of the individual electricity undertakings operated by the Department of Electricity & Telephones and the Electric Generating Power Company which supplied electricity to the districts of Grand Port and Savanne. The early fifties also witnessed the inception of the first diesel based thermal power station at St Louis, Plaine Lauzun and by 1962, the installed capacity was 14 MW. In the sixties, major hydroelectric development took place island-wide with new power stations being set up at Le Val, Cascade Cécile, La Ferme and Magenta.

**Independence and After**

At the time of Independence in 1968, the national rural electrification programme was under way. As the population increased and habitations cropped up all over the island, the CEB was called upon to connect schools, water pumping stations, housing estates and allotments, as well as industries such as stone crushing plants, poultry farms and irrigation stations.

As from the early 1970s, the CEB’s networks expanded to supply new industries such as tourism and textile. By 1981, the national rural electrification programme was completed when Chamarel became the last of a long list of about 153 villages and housing estates to be electrified.

Over the years, the CEB has set a proven record of providing reliable electricity to the country, through massive
capital investment in electricity infrastructure. Today, Mauritius has an extensive network which allows a stable and continuous electricity supply that supports a more diversified economy.

In 2006, the CEB produced about 1,075 GWh of energy, representing about 51 percent of the country’s requirements, from its four thermal power stations and eight hydroelectric plants, that have a combined installed capacity of 432 MW and an effective capacity of 375 MW. The remaining 49 percent of energy requirements were purchased by the CEB from Independent Power Producers. Sales of electricity reached 1,855 GWh and the system peak demand was 367 MW while the number of customers exceeded 360,000.

**Challenges and Outlook**

The challenge in the future is to deliver electricity services more efficiently and act as an enabler for the country’s new phase of development. The needs of Mauritius in terms of energy will inevitably increase over the coming years, as the country strives to embark on a higher growth trajectory in a highly competitive world economy. With the ever-growing demand of fuel worldwide, resulting in constantly increasing prices, the CEB will be faced with the daunting task of maintaining a fair balance between financial sustainability of the organization and price affordability to its customers.

**Major CEB Projects since Independence**

- 1971 - Construction of Ferney Hydro Power Station, in line with implementation of the hydroelectric schemes
- 1972 - Inauguration of Port Mathurin Power Station at Rodrigues
- 1974 to 1977 - Addition of eight generating units at Fort Victoria (in operation since 1964) to cope with energy demand of the rapidly expanding manufacturing sector
- 1981 - Completion of the national rural electrification program, with Chamarel becoming the last of a long list of about 153 villages and housing estates to be electrified
- 1983 - Construction of several substations island-wide to form a 66 KV ring
- 1984 - Champagne hydroelectric power station operational. Along with Ferney, this new hydropower plant contributed to the tune of 40 MW to the national grid, thereby increasing the energy yield from renewable source to 65%
- 1985 - Setting up of New Control Centre in Curepipe to allow load dispatching and remote control of substations islandwide
- 1988 - Commissioning of a gas powered station at Nicolay.
capacity additions in 1991 and 1995, bringing total capacity to date to 77 MW


2000 - Beginning of construction of new 132 KV transmission lines to improve energy distribution and minimize network losses

2004 - Commissioning of two diesel-generating units, each of a capacity of 1.9 MW, at Pointe Monnier Power Station, Rodrigues

2006 - Commissioning of three diesel generating units, each of a capacity of 13.8 MW, at St Louis Power Station

**NEW PROJECTS**

- New coal based plant project at Pointes aux Caves comprising two units of 55 MW each.
- Waste-to-energy project - Project involves the setting up of an incinerator of municipal waste, with electricity production of up to 20 MW as a sideline activity.
- Wind park - Bigara is a potential site
- Sugar industry - A third bagasse coal plant at Savannah
New Goals
New Challenges

FRAMEWORK FOR SUGAR INDUSTRY INDEPENDENT POWER PRODUCERS (IPPs)

- The Sugar Action Plan (1985)
- The Sugar Industry Efficiency Act (1988)
- The Bagasse Energy Development Programme (1991)
- Multi-Annual Adaptation Strategy
- Outline of Energy Policy 2007-2025
Water

Maximising resources to meet national demand

Upon acceding to Independence in 1968, Mauritius found itself confronted by an acute problem of water supply for the population and for economic operators. In fact, water supply appeared to be a major cause of concern for the economic development of the country.

Infrastructure more than fifty years old

The main water infrastructure was above fifty years old and had nearly completed its economic life. The distribution network was fraught with leakages. The volume of unaccounted for water was as high as 75% in the Port Louis System and averaged 65% for the Mare aux Vacoas and Districts System.

Our potable water sector assets consisted of seven earth-filled dams totaling 65 Mm$^3$ of storage capacity, 45 service reservoirs totalling 35 000 Mm$^3$ storage capacity and a few hundred kilometres of pipeline. Most of those pipelines had been laid as far back as 1886 and 1926.
There were 48,065 private connections and 1,365 public fountains to serve a population of 767,900 inhabitants and business enterprises.

Intermittent supplies prevailed throughout the Island. Many people relied on public fountains and mobile water tanker service for their potable water supply. The water supply situation was further complicated as it became absolutely necessary to provide water to the 156 CHA housing estates, constructed throughout the Island to house post-cyclone Carol (1960) victims. Improvement to the water supply service was urgently warranted.

**Master Plan Study commissioned**

In 1971, Government commissioned a Master Plan Study for the proper utilisation of the water resources of the Island. The Master Plan Study was submitted in 1973. In parallel, the Central Water Authority was established, to be responsible for the development and management of water resources of the Island.

The CWA has over the years undertaken major works to improve the distribution network and the water systems. These include the laying and replacing of pipelines over the island, the construction of service reservoirs and of new treatment plants, as well as the rehabilitation of existing ones.

Yearly production which averaged 49.5 Mm$^3$ in 1972/73 has now reached 202.0 Mm$^3$. From a mere Rs 15.0 m at that time, capital expenditure amounted to Rs 439.0 m in 2006/07. As for the number of individual connections, it has risen from 62,255 to 295,000. In year 2000, 285,067 households had piped water on premises, against 53,500 in 1973.

**Water Supply Situation Today**

Piped potable water is universal in Mauritius with 99.8% of the population having access to piped potable water within their premises. During normal wet season some 86% of the population benefit from 24 hours supply.

**Service Coverage**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of Households</td>
<td>183,599</td>
<td>199,937</td>
<td>229,367</td>
<td>289,170</td>
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<td>Households with piped water on premises</td>
<td>53,500</td>
<td>156,182</td>
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<td>285,067</td>
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<tr>
<td>Households relying on Public Fountains, rivers, wells and springs</td>
<td>62,700</td>
<td>38,472</td>
<td>20,647</td>
<td>4,103</td>
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Daily throughput in the distribution network presently averages 525,000 m³. Demand has been increasing by an average of 2% per annum over the past ten years. This trend is forecast to continue up to year 2020.

As regards raw water resources, 55% are derived from ground water abstracted through the 112 pumping stations. Water from this source, because of its good quality, is injected directly in the distribution network or service reservoirs following chlorination. The balance of water resources is obtained from surface sources and is treated at the seven treatment plants having installed capacity of 318,000 m³. To sustain and guarantee security of supply, the CWA ensures service delivery through some 4,800 km of distribution pipelines drawing from 105 service reservoirs, with total storage capacity of 238,000 m³.

Consumption per capita for household (at national level) averages 160 l/h (litres per head per day) with peaks of 180 - 212 l/h in the urban areas and variance of 147 - 155 l/h in the rural and semi urban areas.

As regards water quality, CWA is guided by the standards set by the World Health Organisation (WHO) for drinkable water. An average of 500 samples are collected island-wide and analysed monthly. Analysis for some 28 parameters are performed. There are established protocols for follow up on water sources failing water quality parameters.

Although the distribution network has been extended to cover the whole Island, there still remain some improvement and upgrading works to be undertaken to ensure reliability and security of supply and to meet present unsatisfied and forecast demands.

Over the years, the CWA has undertaken major works consisting of the construction/replacement of pipelines, the construction and upgrading of service reservoirs and the rehabilitation of water treatment plants and other associated works throughout the island.

The strategy of the CWA to meet demand is to invest in projects that would allow a reduction of non revenue water from the present 46% to 25% by 2012. This will involve the rehabilitation and renewal of old and inefficient and leaking distribution networks and renewal of some 100,000 cold water meters to improve water accountability for revenue generation. In addition, investment will also be needed for harnessing of additional resources, increasing treatment capacity and storage facilities and for the upgrading of water mains throughout the Island.

**Water Resources**

The Water Resources Unit of the Ministry of Public Utilities, set up in 1992, is responsible for raw water mobilisation. A number of major projects have already been implemented by the Unit and other projects are planned for supply of raw water to the CWA.
MAJOR PROJECTS

**Midlands Dam**

The Midlands Dam, located on Grand River South East (GRSE) near Midlands village, was completed in December 2002, at a cost of Rs 1 600 million. The additional water yield as a result of the construction of the Dam is diverted to La Nicolière Reservoir through the existing La Nicolière Feeder Canal.

The Midlands Dam provides the back-up storage required to maintain, in normal circumstances, an adequate and reliable water supply to the population in the North and to all sectors of the economy, be it for industry, tourism or for irrigation. Provision has been made for Hydropower generation by incorporating a DN 1000mm steel pipe in the Concrete Spillway structure.

**Rehabilitation of La Nicolière Dam (Rs 68 million) and La Nicolière Feeder Canal (Rs 245 million)**

La Nicolière Dam, constructed in 1929 across River du Rempart, near Grande Rosalie, is one of the main source of water supply (domestic, industrial, touristic and irrigation) to the Northern Districts of Mauritius and part of Port Louis.

Rehabilitation works have minimised seepage and other conveyance losses, helping in providing a regular and adequate water supply to the North. The project was completed in December 2005.

La Nicolière Feeder Canal (LNFC) takes off at La Pipe Dam on GRSE and diverts the river water to La Nicolière Reservoir. It is the backbone of potable and irrigation water supply to the Northern Districts of Mauritius.
After the coming into operation of Midlands Dam in 2003, LNFC carries some 41 Mm$^3$ of additional water to La Nicolière Reservoir annually. The LNFC was suffering from various structural defects and the water losses were well above the international norms. The rehabilitation project was completed in March 2005.

**OTHER REHABILITATION WORKS**

- **Rehabilitation of Trianon Grosses Roches Feeder Canal (Rs 49 million)**
  
The Canal diverts river waters to La Ferme Reservoir. The project has brought about an additional annual flow of about 10 million m$^3$ to the reservoir.

- **Rehabilitation of Municipal Dyke (Rs 57 million)**
  
The Dyke, constructed across Grand River North West (GRNW), is the backbone of Port Louis Water Supply System. It diverts water of GRNW to Pailles Treatment Plant which is the main source of water supply to Port Louis. The rehabilitation works have increased storage capacity and improved water supply to Port Louis.

- **Groundwater Development**
  
The contribution of groundwater to the potable water supply is about 54%. There are five main aquifers in Mauritius. These account for most of the groundwater resources of the country.

Presently there are 397 boreholes in use, of which 115 are used for potable water. To cater for urgent demand for potable water, four to five boreholes are being drilled every year in consultation with the CWA.

**FUTURE PROJECTS**

- **Bagatelle Dam Project**
  
The sources of supply for the Port Louis System are Grand River North West Municipal Dyke, ground water (including Pierefond tunnel) and river off-takes. In the absence of any surface dam, the Port Louis Water Supply System experiences considerable shortage of water, especially during the dry season extending from September to December.

  The Proposed Bagatelle Dam on River Terre Rouge, one of the major tributaries of GRNW, will increase the water resources to Port Louis System, thereby ensuring regular water supply throughout the year for the capital and for lower Plaines Wilhems. The Bagatelle reservoir, which will be of a capacity of 8.5 Mm$^3$, with a Regulated Annual Volume of 14.5 Mm$^3$, could also contribute to irrigation water supply.

  The Final Feasibility report has already been submitted. The Terms of Reference for the Detailed Design and Environment Impact Assessment (E.I.A) Study are being finalised. It is
estimated that the construction of the Bagatelle Dam including the downstream works (Water Treatment Plants and Trunk mains) may cost around Rs 2.4 billion.

**South Mauritius Water Supply Project**

There is presently no impounding reservoir in the South. The water demand for potable and irrigation purpose in this part of the country is being met from rivers and groundwater abstractions. The Southern region suffers from water shortages in the dry season and with the coming up of hotel developments and IRS projects this problem will become more acute.

To address this problem, Government has launched the feasibility study of the South Mauritius Water Supply. The study, which started in 2007, will cost around Rs 22 million. It is to be carried out in two phases and is expected to be completed within two years. It focuses on the possibilities highlighted in the CWA Master Plan Report (1991) regarding three potential dam sites namely, Chamarel, La Flora and Astroea and also on the conveyance, treatment and distribution of water within the project area. The Consultant is also studying the possibility of constructing a dam across Rivière des Anguilles.

The study will integrate downstream works such as the location of water treatment plant, conveyance systems and links with existing water distribution networks.
The objective of government in terms of wastewater management is to provide a high standard of sanitation to preserve public health and ensure a sustainable clean environment, thus maintaining the island's reputation as a dream destination.

The Wastewater Management Authority (WMA) was set up in 2001 and over the years, has proved to be a credible and efficient organisation winning the trust of Donor Agencies such as the World Bank, the European Union, the African Development Bank, the BADEA, the EXIM Banks of India and China, among others.

**Objective of WMA**

The WMA will connect 50% of Mauritian households to the public sewerage network by 2013. In 2001, the coverage was about only 13%.

By 2030, the island should possess a state-of-the-art sewerage system geared towards the protection of the environment, safeguarding public health and our lagoonal...
The Mauritian Government and Donor Agencies such as the EXIM Banks of China and India, the European Union, the African Development Bank and the BADEA have been continuously supporting the projects of the WMA, the latter satisfying their performance indicators.

**Ongoing Projects**

The Mauritian Government is also providing full support to the mega projects of WMA. More than Rs 7 billion will be disbursed to finance the Plaine Wilhems Sewerage network projects which will connect more than 32 000 households to the Sewerage System. The Authority is

waters and over 80% of the population will be connected thereto at that horizon.
also implementing the Baie Du Tombeau project at present and by 2009, over 3,000 households in that area will be connected to the public sewerage system. This will contribute in enabling the WMA to achieve its target of connecting 50% of the population by 2013.

**Treatment Plants**

Four treatment plants have been constructed since 2001 at Baie Du Tombeau, Grand Baie, St Martin and Montagne Jacquot. St Martin is one of the most modern sewerage treatment plants in the Indian Ocean region, having been equipped with the latest technological devices for ensuring an environmentally safe and cost-effective treatment and disposal of effluents.

**Capacity Building**

To be in line with the new exigencies and environmental changes, the WMA has revisited its organisational structure, setting up new support services such as Information Technology, Public Relations & Customer Care and strengthened its work force in key business areas. WMA has almost doubled its human capital during the last four years to attain more than 400 employees as at February 2008. In order to meet the new technological development in that specialised sector, an ongoing training program has been tailored to fit the needs of the organisation.

**Pre Independence Period**

The first wastewater pipes were laid in the year 1890s. By 1960, a sewerage system existed in certain regions of Port Louis, but with the increasing demography, the networks became overloaded. In 1964, Government decided to sewer the major areas of Port Louis. Works started in June 1968 and were completed in 1983, with 79.2% of Port Louis being connected to the sewerage system by then.
In 1959, Alfred Mc Alpine & Son Ltd was awarded a contract for executing sewerage works in the Plaines Wilhems region. By 1963, about 100 Km of pipes were laid and the project was completed in 1983, with 27.4 % of the population of Plaines Wilhems district being connected to the sewerage system.

**WMA - The Way Forward**

In February 2008, Cabinet approved the Wastewater Sector Policy Statement (SPS) for the period 2008 to 2013. The SPS includes proposals for reforms in the Sanitation Sector, with a view to ensuring the right level of protection, restoration and management of the environment.

The WMA is paving the way for a healthier and cleaner Mauritius. The Authority has adopted a holistic approach in order to make Mauritius an ideal destination for tourists and an attractive business destination.
On the 12 March 1968, Mauritius got a new Constitution which defined Mauritius as a sovereign and a democratic State. Over the last 40 years, Mauritius has remained a vibrant democracy and this is a cause for celebration for all Mauritians. When one compares the trajectory of many States which emerged in the wake of the decolonisation process in the 1960s, it is matter of great pride to find that in Mauritius there has not been any coup d’État, a one-party State, military dictatorship or the kind of trauma which we associate with a change in government in many countries where elections are either rigged or the verdict of elections repudiated.

In fact, over the four decades since 1968, Mauritius has had eight general elections and four Prime Ministers and more importantly, all the Prime Ministers had lost general elections. Elections took place peacefully and the transfer of power from one government to another has always been carried out smoothly and this goes to the credit of the population and the political leaders. Perhaps one of the great moments of
our democracy was the sight of the Father of the Nation, after conceding electoral defeat in 1982, climbing the steps of Government House to attend the opening of the National Assembly. Since then, all our defeated Prime Ministers have shown magnanimity in defeat in line with our deep democratic values.

The success of our young democracy can be attributed to a number of factors. Certainly our present democratic set-up has been patiently built over more than 250 years of history. Colonisation of the island by the French and the British has bequeathed to us a number of institutions and political values. Whatever be the imperfections of these institutions, they provided us all the essentials for state formation which is a basic prerequisite for the establishment of a multi-ethnic democratic State, namely a bureaucracy, the rule of law, representative institutions during the French revolutionary years and the development of a multi-racial society.

These institutions were consolidated under British rule, with the setting up of Councils of Government in 1825 and in 1831, the abolition of racial discrimination in 1829, the abolition of slavery in 1835, the setting up of an elective Municipal Council in 1850 and finally, the promulgation of the 1885 Constitution. The year 1885 ushered in a liberal system of government, liberal in the 19th century definition of the term. In spite of its many shortcomings, it established a limited representative government, provided the right to vote on a limited franchise, introduced regular 'general' elections in the country and fostered a civic culture among both voters and non-voters through mass meetings and an embryonic two-party system. Popular politics evolved from that time with the politicisation of the masses and competitive elite politics. The mass meetings of Manilall Doctor and Action Libérale, the riots of 1911 and the retrocession elections of 1921 show clearly the involvement of both the elite and the masses in politics and the emergence of a civic culture.

These developments, important as they are to account for the development of a political culture, are not sufficient to explain our democratic system. A whiggish interpretation of our political development would ignore the fact that history is about both continuity and discontinuity. For example, Ile de France became independent for some time during the French period but French colonial rule was restored afterwards. The rights obtained from the Colonial Assembly were withdrawn by General Decaen. Institutions can be set up and later abolished and laws too can be passed and afterwards repealed. But competitive elite politics have been an enduring feature of our political system since the late 19th century and has continued to the present day.

Competitive elite politics take place in every country and they do not guarantee the persistence of a democratic system. So it is not the elite or
competitive elite politics per se but also the nature of the elite and also the political culture of the masses which are crucial for democracy. So in Mauritius one may argue that the elite and the masses have over time developed, initially a liberal and later a democratic political culture. As the elite political culture, this was first developed by the Franco-Mauritian elite educated mostly at the Royal College and in British universities and the Inns of Courts right from the early years of the British rule and this path was followed by the coloured and Indian elite in late 19th century and early 20th Mauritius. After all, the early liberal institutions of the 19th century were established to enhance the role of these various elites on which colonial rule depended at various points in time.

Competitive elite politics resulted into wider political participation and mobilisation since 1885. Given the race and ethnic structures of Mauritian society, competitive elite politics largely reflected the racial division and alliances between white and coloured, and slowly the class interests of fragments of emergent classes, whether the bureaucrats or small planters, and increasing lower middle class and ultimately the working classes. From 1885 to 1940, and after 1947 to the present day elite competition, whether reflecting class or ethnic interests or even the coalescence both class and ethnic, in alliance with working classes or segments of working classes, have been the dominant feature of Mauritian politics since 1885 to the present day.

Competitive elite politics were shaped, and in turn shaped the political framework and such competition has been healthy for the functioning of the Mauritian democracy. It is so intense that all organisations from socio-religious organisations, trade unions to political parties have been influenced by it. It is this intense competition and lobbying which have made all political leaders complain that Mauritius is so difficult to govern. For some, this competition borders on factionalism and is detrimental to democracy. From another point of view, the multiplicity of interests among both elite and the masses has given rise to an oppositional culture. So deeply ingrained is the oppositional culture that it is not surprising that there is hardly a democratic organisation in Mauritius which has not split to form fresh organisations.

This tendency towards splinter groups has given rise to a multiplicity of parties so that government can only be formed by coalition of parties because no single party can aspire to form the government of the day. In this sense, Mauritian democracy is inclusive, and provides for the safeguard of all interests whether it takes the form of the protection of property rights in the Constitution, the rule of law, an independent judiciary with recourse to the Privy Council but also ethnic rights safeguarded by the best loser system. As an inclusive democracy, the present political system still does not satisfy small parties or other communities or gender, but these are concerns which
need to be addressed by either proportional representation or by a more rigorous implementation of human rights or equal opportunity legislation.

While the forces operating during the colonial times continued to operate, after independence the credit for making democracy work has rested with the politicians, particularly the party leaders. After independence in 1968, the economic strains could have been too strong for the State to survive. The LP and PMSD alliance after 1968 and the emergence of the MMM in 1969 provided a series of checks and balances which kept the island on the rails of democracy. The emergency saved the colonial State and Mauritius passed the test of democracy when elections were organised in 1976. Secondly, since 1976 politicians and political leaders have been skilful in crafting coalition governments which provided political stability for democracy to flourish, and political parties have in their allocation of seats during the elections and governments, through the distribution of patronage, have ensured that all interests were largely represented in the governments of the day. Juggling the different interests has also meant that very often only token recognition had been given to those who have battled for equity.

The prime importance we give to the elite in preserving a liberal democracy should not create the impression that a democratic culture was confined to that small segment of the population. No democracy can advance far if the population is not involved in the democratic processes. Popular political culture has long roots. Marooning among slaves and labour protest among Indian immigrants constituted the early forms of popular political culture. Their struggles and those excluded from the political processes were also fighting both liberty and for liberties. Even if we want to avoid idealising this form of political culture, it inevitably fed into other forms of later political action. Long before the masses were given the right to vote there was a popular participation of the people in elections since 1885.

Even more important and long before the unrest of the 1930s and 1940s, Mauritians were organised in innumerable parish organisations and socio-religious organisations which run in thousands. In later times the setting up of trade unions further increased participation of people and gave them an organisational culture. The setting up of a Registrar of Associations in Mauritius which dates from the early years of the 20th century meant that all organisations had to have an executive body which was elected annually and accountable to its members. The people had to follow procedures, debate issues, prepare minute books and conduct elections. In brief, they learnt to vote and air their views long before they voted at municipal elections or general elections. Finally, the mass mobilisation of political parties, before and after independence, meant that the people’s views could not be ignored for
long, especially at the approach of elections. Thus, a popular democratic culture had slowly permeated the population that it is impossible for an authoritarian regime to be put in place in Mauritius and survive for long.

To conclude, while recognising that the constitutional framework was important in providing the space for democratic processes to take place, democracy works because men and women make it work. These men and women over the centuries had combated authoritarianism with whatever means at their disposal. But once the elite was inducted in the functioning of a liberal colonial State, the interplay between the elite and the popular became so strong that one could not exist without the other. Competitive elite politics interpenetrated with popular political culture, whether based on class and ethnicity and resulted in a democratic culture long before independence and was consolidated thereafter. This has become so entrenched in post-independent Mauritius that it is today our unifying strength and it can only increase in the future.

By
Dr Sadasivam Jagnada Reddi
Adviser,
Ministry of Education and Human Resource
L'Éducation au Service de la Nation

Une main-d’œuvre qui a permis au pays de relever les défis des changements structurels de l’économie, tel a été l’apport de l’Education au développement du pays. Aujourd’hui encore, le secteur de l’Education est appelé à répondre aux besoins socio-économiques du pays pour une main-d’œuvre de qualité qui puisse participer à des activités à valeur ajoutée et innovantes, basées sur les connaissances et compétences.

Le système éducatif mauricien comprend les secteurs préprimaire, primaire, secondaire, technique/professionnel et tertiaire. Les écoles préprimaires sont gérées par le Pre-School Trust Fund (PSTF), des organisations religieuses et des particuliers. Les écoles primaires et secondaires sont administrées par le gouvernement, des institutions religieuses et des particuliers. Cependant, toutes ces écoles sont sous le contrôle du ministère de l’Education et des Ressources humaines. Le secteur éducatif est financé par le gouvernement et représente 13% du budget courant.
Historique

La première école voit le jour à Port-Louis en 1767 à une époque où l'éducation est l’apanage de certains enfants privilégiés. C’est en 1815 que le concept de l'éducation de masse prend forme à Maurice. Mais c'est seulement en 1950 qu'arrive le programme sponsorisé par le gouvernement, 'l’Éducation pour tous'. Dès lors, le nombre d'établissements gouvernementaux et subventionnés ainsi que le nombre d'élèves connaîtront une hausse conséquente.

Jusqu’au début des années 1970, l’enseignement secondaire est dispensé dans quatre collèges d’État et dans des établissements privés appartenant à des particuliers et à des organismes religieux. La Commission Ramphul, que le gouvernement institue en 1975 pour revoir tout le fonctionnement du système d'éducation secondaire, recommande que l’État apporte un soutien financier aux collèges privés.

Pour gérer l'aide financière apportée à ces collèges, le gouvernement met sur pied en 1976 la Private Secondary Schools Authority (PSSA).

L’année 1976 constitue une autre grande étape de l'éducation secondaire, qui devient gratuite. Du coup, un nombre accru de jeunes Mauriciens, qui jusque là n’auraient reçu que l’éducation primaire, se retrouvent sur les bancs du collège.

La PSSA est par la suite appelée à veiller à l’application de l’éducation gratuite au niveau secondaire tant en assurant les ressources financières nécessaires aux collèges privés qu’en normalisant les ressources humaines dans ces établissements.

Poursuivant son projet de démocratisation de l’éducation, l’État se lance aussi dans la construction de nouveaux collèges dans toutes les régions de l’île.

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Tableau comparatif du nombre d'écoles et d'élèves
**Type d’Éducation**

Le système éducatif mauricien est basé sur le modèle britannique. Le préprimaire est la première étape dans la scolarisation de l’enfant. Après deux années au préprimaire, les élèves sont inscrits dans les écoles primaires. Depuis 2006, a été mis en route le projet 'Bridging the gap' qui vise à assurer une transition sans difficulté des jeunes apprenants vers la section primaire pour une adaptation réussie dans leur nouvel environnement physique et social. Le projet prévoit l’aménagement de salles de classe pour créer une atmosphère et un environnement propices à l’intégration des enfants. Les activités créatives sont aussi organisées en vue de permettre aux enfants de développer leurs compétences et de travailler en groupe.


Le ministère s’est embarqué depuis 2005 sur des réformes pour offrir une
éducation de qualité de classe mondiale aux jeunes mauriciens leur permettant de trouver de l'emploi dans les nouvelles sphères de l'économie et d'être plus compétitifs. Une de ces premières réformes porte sur la révision du programme d'études dans le primaire. La révision a pour objet d'identifier les compétences que les élèves se doivent d'acquérir au niveau de chaque classe et dans chaque matière, les modalités pour l'évaluation des performances de même que des explications permettant de comprendre comment l'enseignant peut mobiliser les compétences avec efficacité. Déjà, de nouveaux manuels scolaires sont disponibles pour les standards I et II.


Dans le but d'améliorer la compétitivité du pays et pour répondre aux besoins économiques d'une main-d'œuvre qualifiée, des matières telles que les activités liées aux voyages et tourisme, la gestion environnementale et les aptitudes à la réflexion ont été introduites. D'autre part, de nouveaux programmes comme l'éducation physique, la musique avec une option pour la musique orientale, sont conçus actuellement suivant les spécificités mauriciennes.
En ce qu’il s’agit du secteur tertiaire, outre l’Université de Maurice, l’Université de Technologie, le Collège des Ondes, la SSR Medical School, l’Institut de Pédagogie, d’autres institutions locales et étrangères sont venues s’ajouter à la liste d’établissements offrant des programmes d’enseignement supérieur. Les Mauriciens peuvent maintenant choisir d’étudier à plein temps ou à temps partiel.

En décembre 2006, le nombre d’étudiants inscrits dans les programmes d'enseignement supérieur, y compris les cours par correspondance, était de 33 260. La majorité est inscrite dans les universités locale, privée et publique. Les projets concernant l'enseignement supérieur en 2008 portent sur la publication d'un livre blanc sur...
l'enseignement supérieur énonçant les politiques et stratégies à adopter pour une main-d'œuvre plus compétente.

L’Industrial Vocational Training Board (IVTB), créé en 1988 en vue de promouvoir et d’aider à la formation et l'apprentissage de ceux voulant évoluer dans les domaines commercial, technique et professionnel, est désormais une référence dans la région subsaharienne. Ainsi durant les deux dernières années, plus de 15 000 étudiants ont été formés dans les 12 centres tombant sous la responsabilité de l’IVTB.

Le ministère gère aussi les responsabilités liées aux ressources humaines et a publié le plan national pour le développement des ressources humaines visant à offrir un cadre politique pour l'éducation, les programmes de formation et la progression des carrières pour répondre aux besoins de compétences. C'est ainsi que le Human Resource Development Council a été mis sur pied en novembre 2003 dans le but, entre autres, de promouvoir le développement des ressources humaines selon les ambitions économiques et sociales du pays et d'encourager une culture de la formation à tous les niveaux - individuel, organisationnel et national.

Dans le même souffle, une évaluation pour déterminer les demandes en terme de connaissance et de compétence relatives à la main-d'œuvre dans les secteurs clés a été effectuée afin d'éliminer le décalage entre la demande et l'offre de la main-d'œuvre. Neuf secteurs ont été identifiés et comprennent, entre autres, l'agriculture, les services financiers, la technologie informatique, la fabrication et le tourisme. Cette année, un programme de formation est prévu pour 1 000 femmes afin de leur permettre de se familiariser aux différents rouages du secteur de la construction et en faire un métier.
Le gouvernement poursuit donc la mission d’offrir une éducation adéquate et appropriée pour le développement de l’apprenant mais aussi pour répondre aux besoins d’un monde en constante évolution demandant des compétences et des techniques adaptées et pratiques.
Since independence in 1968, the national welfare programme which includes the provision of free health services to the entire population continues to command an important position in public policies. Political leadership in Mauritius while recognising the fundamental relationship between health and development always considers that the improvement of people’s health should be a major objective of development.

Health has been consistently placed at the core of the socio-economic development agenda. The Government has always been committed to provide universal, accessible and efficient health services with due emphasis on the concept of “customer care” to the population. Present developments reflect the commitments spelt out in Government’s Programme for 2005-2010 to enhance the health services.

Health care, from primary care to hospital care including the delivery of high-tech medicine, is provided free of any user cost, at the point of use to the entire population.
The share of the health budget sector for both recurrent and capital expenditures in nominal value has continued to increase since 1968. The public health budget which was to the order of Rs 35.9 million during FY 1967-68 has increased to Rs 4.4 billion FY 2007-08, representing an increase of over 12.156% during the past forty years.

Health System

The health system in Mauritius provides the crucial interface between life saving, life enhancing interventions and the people who need them. The public health system comprises a network of primary health care institutions, district and regional hospitals, specialised health institutions, support services establishments and other ancillary services.

Primary Health Care

In 1968, there were only 43 dispensaries providing primary health care services throughout the country. The Primary Health Care network presently consists of 22 Area Health Centres, 2 Medi-Clinics, 2 Community Hospitals, 112 Community Health Centres, 157 vaccination/sub-centres and one mobile dispensary. These primary health care institutions are catering for more than 3.5 million attendances every year.

In line with the policy of Government to make primary health care services more accessible and equitable to the population, the opening hours of all area health centres and a few community health centres have been extended.

Three new dental clinics at Grand Baie, Rivière des Créoles and Midlands have been commissioned. X-Ray facilities have been made available at Belvedere and L’Escalier Mediclinics. Community Health Centres at Tranquebar, Lallmatie and Mare La Chaux have been extended. School health activities, screening activities for the early detection of non
communicable diseases and health promotion have been enhanced.

Besides, the primary health care service package has been reviewed and additional services added in order to attend to the rising incidence of non- communicable diseases and the re-emergence of certain communicable diseases like chikungunya for which an integrated response mechanism has been developed.

As regards avian influenza, Government has formulated a National Preparedness Contingency Plan to deal with the pandemic, if need arises. The risk of the disease being introduced in Mauritius exists mainly through illegal import of poultry products, migratory birds and incoming passengers.

**District and Regional Hospitals**

The hospital system of the country is a significant component of the socio-economic set-up of the nation, with more than seventy-five per cent of the health budget being allocated to public hospitals. Universal coverage, equity and free services continue to be the prominent cornerstones of the hospital services. To improve the quality of clinical management, up to date medical devices and equipment are being provided to the curative health institutions. Since the past 40 years, there has been significant development in the hospital sector.

**Major Projects**

**Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam National Hospital**

Inaugurated in 1969, it was the first modern hospital commissioned in independent Mauritius. The SSRN Hospital is also the pioneer in the delivery of high-tech medicine in the country. The first open heart surgery was performed by Professor Hassan Raffa and his team from Saudi Arabia.
in 1984. This centre of excellence was also the venue to perform the first neurosurgery and renal transplantation cases in Mauritius.

**Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital**
The hospital was inaugurated in March, 1991. India contributed about Rs50 million for the construction and the equipment component of the project, representing about 40 per cent of the total cost of the 180-bed hospital.

**Flacq Hospital**
The district hospital of Flacq has been converted into a regional hospital. In the early nineties, an outpatient department and an administrative block were constructed. Besides, two operating theatres and four additional wards have been set up with the assistance of the Chinese government.

**New Central Outpatient Department at Victoria Hospital**
To cater for the increasing number of outpatient attendances and emergency cases, a new outpatient department at Victoria Hospital, Quatre Bornes has been constructed. The estimated cost of this project is Rs 246 million. This department is expected to be operational in the coming months.

**Souillac District Hospital**
A new building to accommodate Souillac Hospital has already been constructed and renovation works are under way to make the building fully operational.

**Mahebourg hospital**
The district hospital has been re-opened and endowed with renovated and new facilities viz. an operating theatre, a maternity ward and a ward for alcoholic patients.

**Specialised Care**

**Subramania Bharati Eye Hospital**
The district hospital of Moka was converted into a specialised eye hospital in 1971. The hospital offers a wide array of services which include cataract extraction with implant, corneal grafting and oculoplastics.

**ENT Centre**
The Royal Navy Hospital at Vacoas was converted into a specialised centre for the treatment of disorders associated with Ear, Nose and Throat in 1975. At present, the ENT Centre offers a multitude of services which include specialised paediatric services and audiology services with para tests.

**Cardiac Centre**
The Cardiac Centre, located in Pamplemousses, was established in 1990. It provides a national service for all aspects of cardiac surgery, including open heart surgery, invasive cardiology and paediatric cardiac surgery.
Mental Health Care Centre

A new psychiatric hospital with a bed capacity of 250 has been constructed alongside the old one at Beau Bassin.

Delivery of High-Tech Medicine

High-tech medicine at present forms part of the integral activities of regional hospitals. Services include neurosurgery, hyperbaric, endoscopy, colposcopy, haemodialysis, nuclear medicine, lithotripsy, arthroscopy, organ transplant services, maxillo-facial surgery, limb surgery, spinal surgery and neo-natal ICU services.

Other major developments have been the setting up of a Vitrectomy Unit at the Subramania Bharati Eye Hospital, undertaking of phaco surgeries and corneal grafts and the provision of...
intensive neonatal services and paediatric invasive cardiology services.

**Support Services**

All the health institutions of the island depend on a network of efficient support services. The main support services include the laboratory services, the blood transfusion unit, x-ray services, and ambulance services. Major developments in this sector include the following:

- Strengthening of the laboratory services at the Central Laboratory, Candos; opening of laboratory departments at the five regional hospitals for undertaking tests in the field of haematology, microbiology, parasitology, biochemistry and histology; the setting up of a virology unit. The Central Laboratory undertakes an average 6.5 million tests annually
- Improvement of the blood transfusion service
- Upgrading of the x-ray services through advances in imaging technology. To have more precise diagnosis outcomes, two Computed Tomography Whole body Scanners (CT Scans) and one Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) have been purchased at the cost of Rs 61 million to support treatment of NCDs and trauma
- Setting up of the ‘Service d’Aide Médicale d’Urgence’ (SAMU) at each Accident/Emergency Department in all the five regional hospitals

**Pharmaceuticals**

The National Drug Policy concentrates on the accessibility and affordability of drugs, quality assurance, rational use of drugs, drug information, adverse drug reaction surveillance, modalities of procurement and distribution.
Drugs in the public sector are supplied free of any user cost. Expensive drugs for renal patients who have undergone transplant surgery are also offered free to all patients. Anti-retroviral treatment is available to all persons living with HIV/AIDS.

**Training**

A comprehensive programme of continued professional education and training has been developed to meet the evolving needs of health professionals. The School of Nursing which has extended its training activities to SSRN Hospital offers courses for general student nurses, for student midwives and for Health Care Assistants. A BSc course in Nursing has been conducted, with the collaboration of the University of Middlesex and the University of Mauritius.

The Mauritius Institute of Health (MIH) which was established in 1989 operates under the aegis of the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life. The main functions of this institution are to conduct training for health personnel and to carry out health systems research.

**OTHER DEVELOPMENTS SINCE JULY 2005**

**PUBLIC HEALTH STRATEGIES IMPLEMENTED**

**Non Communicable Diseases**

Non Communicable diseases have reached epidemic proportions in Mauritius. Routine statistics indicate increasing rate of diabetes and hypertension. One out of every five Mauritians is diabetic.

The National Service Framework for Diabetics (NSFD) as approved by Government in March 2007 is being implemented.

A balanced diet to promote healthy living
The NSFD aims at:–
(i) improving services to drive up service quality;
(ii) developing a patient-centred service; and
(iii) improving health outcomes for people with diabetes.

The NSFD comprises fourteen standards. These standards are being developed to form the basis for improving the quality of care and they will be the main indicators for measurement of performance of the health services with regards to diabetes care. The key intervention areas relate to sensitisation and education, a prevention programme, an empowerment programme for people living with diabetes, screening and foot care, and training for health care personnel engaged in diabetes care.

Other measures taken to counteract the challenges of NCDs include dedicated diabetic clinics in all regions, targeted screening, introduction of a school health card project in secondary schools, a ban on the sale of aerated soft drinks in all educational institutions, screening for NCDs extended to the tertiary education institutions, and Glycosylated Haemoglobin (HBA1c) testing, which is the gold standard in the monitoring of glucose levels in diabetics, in all hospitals.

HIV/AIDS

Strong measures have been taken to reduce the prevalence of HIV/AIDS among the population and to cater for the needs of patients afflicted with this disease. Thus, the National AIDS Secretariat and the National Monitoring and Evaluation Unit are now operating directly under the aegis of the Prime Minister’s Office. The elaboration of a National HIV/AIDS Communication Strategy on sensitisation, education and information on a long term basis is underway.
The HIV and AIDS Act has been proclaimed. This Act makes provision for an effective legal framework to implement the Needle Exchange Programme, eliminate all forms of discrimination and assure the full enjoyment of human rights by people living with HIV/AIDS. Furthermore, Methadone has been introduced as substitution therapy for opiates since November 2006.

The Multisectoral National Strategic HIV and AIDS Framework (NSF) 2007-2011 is being implemented. The NSF includes priorities to review and intensify primary prevention efforts for groups with high-risk behaviour, and improve the quality of life of people living with HIV/AIDS through comprehensive care and support. Voluntary Counselling and Testing Services (VCT) have been decentralised and are now being provided in all regional hospitals. Testing for HIV is also now allowed in private clinics, while a mobile caravan has been made available for outreach activities.

From 1987 to the end of August 2007, 3,137 cases of HIV and AIDS have been reported in the country. This figure includes 149 cases among non-residents. 92% of new infections are among injecting drug users. This mode of transmission is a major concern for Government.

Present Health Profile

Significant investments in the public health sector have paid rewarding dividends to the nation. Infant Mortality Rate registered a dramatic favourable decline from 70.5 per thousand live births in 1968 to 14.4 per thousand live births in 2006. Under-five mortality rate which was 97.0 per thousand live births during the late sixties declined to 17.2 per thousand live births in 2006. Maternal mortality rate has also declined drastically from 1.50 per thousand live births in the sixties to only 0.17 per thousand live births in 2006. At present, nearly 100 percent of children and expectant mothers are covered under the Expanded Programme of Immunisation (EPI). Life expectancy of Mauritians which averaged 59 years in the sixties has increased to 68.7 years for males and for females, it is at present 75.6 years.

The country is fortunate to be free from the scourge of malaria which unfortunately is still a global problem in terms of economic burden and heavy toll of life. For the period under review, there have been no indigenous cases of malaria in the country. This success is mainly attributed to the enhanced integrated surveillance activities for communicable diseases. Other infectious diseases like schistosomiasis, measles, whooping cough, diphtheria, smallpox and polio are now diseases of the past.

Mauritius has been successful in achieving its demographic transition in a relatively short period. The country has been able to maintain the Gross Reproduction Rate (GRR) at the replacement level. In 1990, the United Nations Population Award was conferred
to Mauritius in recognition of its outstanding success in population control.

**Future Developments**

- Flacq Hospital is being converted into a full fledged regional Hospital. In this respect, an intensive care unit has just been set up. Two wards of the same hospital are being upgraded.

- The Hospital Pathology Laboratory Services (HPLS) is going for the Accreditation of Laboratory Services in line with ISO/IEC guide 17025.

- The Blood Transfusion Service is in the process of being computerised with a view to making the service more cost effective and is planning to implement Total Quality Management System in Blood Transfusion and make it an accredited service.

- In line with the policy of Government to develop the country into a medical and knowledge hub, the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life is working in close collaboration with the Board of Investment. The setting up of another private medical school and a private hospital is well under way.

- Dr A. G. Jeetoo Hospital caters for approximately 250,000 residential and commuted population. Over the past years, various extensions and innovations have been carried out. However, with the increasing demand of services, there is an urgent need to upgrade the hospital. A project for its complete rehabilitation has been initiated for the value of Rs 750 million.

- The Subramania Bharati Eye Hospital will be extended to accommodate the Casualty Department and other services.

- Specialised Hospital for Children and Women: Feasibility studies will be undertaken for the setting up of such a hospital.

- Pharmaceutical Services will be further enhanced.

- Laboratory Services: A cytology department for national cervical and breast cancer screening activities will be set up at the Central Health Laboratory. A Therapeutic Drug Monitoring (TDM) unit will be set up at the Biochemistry Department for assisting management of patients in Cardiac Unit and other medical wards.

- An NCD Institute will be set up.

- It is also proposed to establish three additional medi-clinics.
La sécurité sociale

Au service de la communauté mauricienne

Après 40 ans d’indépendance, la palette de services et de facilités offerte par le ministère s’est élargie pour mieux assurer, protéger et améliorer le bien-être social des Mauriciens, en particulier ceux qui sont les plus vulnérables, et promouvoir la solidarité nationale.

D’un département de bien-être social en 1953 au statut de ministère en 1965, le ministère de la Sécurité sociale, de la Solidarité nationale et du Bien-être des Personnes âgées et des Institutions réformatrices a évolué avec le temps afin d’offrir une meilleure protection aux couches démunies de la population dans le cadre de l’état providence, tout en consolidant le développement socio-économique.

Le gouvernement a accordé au cours des quatre dernières décennies une constante attention au bien-être de la nation et ce malgré les difficultés et les défis économiques auxquels le pays fait face. Maurice est souvent cité sur le plan international pour ses différents régimes de pension.
Actuellement, nos aînés ayant atteint l’âge de retraite de 60 ans touchent une allocation de Rs 2 571 mensuellement et ce jusqu’à l’âge de 90 ans. Arrivé au seuil des 90 années, l’allocation attribuée passe à Rs 7 647. Le palier des cent ans franchi, la somme octroyée atteint Rs 8 680. Ceci est bien loin des Rs 22 allouées au temps de ‘pré indépendance’.

En ce qui concerne les allocations familiales, en 1966, toutes les familles mauriciennes ayant au minimum trois enfants ou plus étaient éligibles à une subvention de Rs 15 par mois. Présentement, ce sont les veuves et leurs enfants, les handicapés et les orphelins de père et de mère qui bénéficient d’un soutien financier.

Les veuves ayant moins de 60 ans reçoivent Rs 2 315 mensuellement, et leurs enfants, selon qu’ils ont moins ou plus de 10 ans, Rs 750 ou Rs 804 par mois. Les handicapés, âgés entre 15 et 60 ans sont aussi éligibles au régime de pension mensuel, touchant Rs 2 315.

Quant aux orphelins de père et de mère, ils perçoivent Rs 1 283 chaque mois jusqu’à l’âge de 15 ans, et dans le cas où ils poursuivent leur scolarité, ils demeurent bénéficiaires de ce montant jusqu’à leur vingtième année. En sus, depuis 2006, ces orphelins ont droit à une subvention additionnelle de Rs 1 180 mensuellement pour leur scolarité. Les tuteurs de ces enfants disposent eux de Rs 565 par mois.

L’émergence d’une économie axée sur les services et l’introduction de nouvelles technologies ont conduit à des modes d’enregistrements et de paiement modernes qui sont venus s’ajouter aux dispositions déjà en cours pour ces différentes formes d’allocation. Les enregistrements peuvent maintenant se faire à travers l’Internet et les paiements sont déposés sur le compte bancaires des bénéficiaires, permettant une économie de temps tout en réduisant les files d’attente.

**Les structures auxiliaires**

Mais le rôle du ministère ne se cantonne pas à celui de distributeur de pension. Il a sous son aile la gestion de 54 centres sociaux, de 13 centres de jour - *day care centres* - dont deux pour les handicapés et les onze autres pour les personnes âgées.

Les centres sociaux répartis à travers l’île proposent à tous ceux habitant à proximité des activités relatives à la santé, aux loisirs, à l’éducation, bref tout ce qui encourage le développement physique, social, moral, éducatif, récréatif et intellectuel des Mauriciens. Le ministère y porte aussi une attention spéciale aux pauvres, aux personnes vulnérables à travers des programmes ciblés.

Au-delà de ces activités, les centres sociaux permettent aux Mauriciens ayant des intérêts communs de se regrouper. Outre les clubs de troisième âge, de jeunes, de femmes et d’enfants, il existe des équipes d’actions civiques, des clubs de lecture, de santé, de sport, de gym, entre autres.

Les centres de jour pour les personnes âgées offrent la possibilité à ces dernières d’échanger et de partager leurs
idées et expériences de même qu'à monter des activités visant à leur épanouissement.

De plus, les personnes âgées peuvent se retrouver au sein d'associations du troisième âge, Maurice comptant une soixantaine de ces associations. Le ministère s'assure de leur bien-être par son unité, la Welfare and Elderly Person's Protection Unit. Celle-ci a pour objet principal de fournir l'accompagnement nécessaire et d'autres services aux personnes âgées, et à les protéger de tout abus ou mauvais traitement.

Les deux centres de jour pour les handicapés se trouvent à Chemin Grenier et à Petite Rivière. Leur objectif principal est d'encourager l'intégration des handicapés dans la vie économique et sociale.

Il faut souligner l'importance particulière qu'accorde le ministère aux droits et au bien-être des handicapés. A travers des programmes et des organisations, les handicapés sont encouragés à être autonomes et à trouver leur place dans la société.

**Institutions spécialisées et ONG**

Alors que le Lois Lagesse Trust Fund répond aux besoins des malvoyants et des aveugles en terme d'éducation, de formation professionnelle, de matériel, d'accompagnement, les malentendants peuvent eux avoir recours à la Society for the Welfare of the Deaf. Avec le développement d'une langue des signes mauricienne, les malentendants peuvent suivre leur bulletin d'informations en langue des signes chaque semaine. Un dictionnaire est aussi disponible.

Pour encourager les handicapés dans leur étude, le François Sockalingum Award a été initiée. Cette bourse accorde une assistance financière pour inciter les étudiants ayant des handicaps à poursuivre leur scolarité. A ce
jour, quelque 200 élèves, collégiens, universitaires ont bénéficié de cette bourse.

Le pays aspire à se donner un nouveau visage économique en octroyant des facilités qui favorisent l’entrepreneuriat. Et les personnes handicapées peuvent également y prétendre notamment par le biais du *Training and Employment of Disabled Persons Board*, organisme fonctionnant sous l’égide du ministère.

Comment parler du bien-être des Mauriciens sans parler des Organisations non-gouvernementales (ONG) qui contribuent à apporter leur soutien aux plus nécessiteux de la société? Pour mieux canaliser tous ces efforts et pour une collaboration entre ces organisations, le *NGO Trust Fund* a été établi. Cet organisme, opérant sous l’égide du ministère, s’assure de la légalité de ces ONG et décide de leur entier ou partiel financement tout en veillant à une utilisation effective des ressources.

Le ministère de la Sécurité sociale, de la Solidarité nationale et du Bien-être des Personnes âgées et des Institutions réformatrices, au fil des ans, s’est donné comme tâche de se mettre au service des Mauriciens, avec une attention exceptionnelle pour les plus faibles. Le ministère a adhéré à plusieurs protocoles internationaux dans le but de s’aligner sur les meilleures pratiques mondiales et de poursuivre son travail de facilitateur pour l’intégration des personnes dans la société mauricienne.

D’autre part, le ministère a la responsabilité des institutions réformatrices de l’île. Il supervise, entre autres, les programmes visant à réhabiliter les pensionnaires de ces institutions à travers l’éducation et la formation.
Housing

‘Un Toit Pour Toi’, the guiding principle

Sensitive to the basic need of every individual for proper housing, the Government aims at providing a roof for every family. The formulation of housing policies is very much guided by the objective of “Un Toit Pour Toi”.

To attain this goal, Government has adopted a two-pronged approach: Providing housing facilities for the lower socio-economic strata of the population and encouraging increased private sector involvement, through appropriate incentives, in the provision for social housing, while at the same time reinforcing the traditional role of private companies in up market housing.

During financial year 2006-2007, some 1,713 families have become homeowners through the “Un Toit Pour Toi” programme of the National Housing Development Company Ltd (NHDC).

Social Housing

In fact, Government’s active involvement in the housing sector began in
In the 1960s, following cyclones Alix and Carol. A huge housing construction programme was initiated through the Central Housing Authority (CHA) to provide shelter to homeless families whose houses had been destroyed. Other types of houses commonly called EDC houses were built. More families were provided with housing units following cyclone Gervaise in 1975 and Claudette in 1980. At present, there are some 177 housing estates scattered throughout the island.

The “Right to Buy” policy was introduced in 1989 with the aim of encouraging occupants of houses within the CHA housing estates to become owner of their house at a nominal cost. The costs depended on the type of house and varied from Rs 500 to Rs 1 000. This measure reduced considerably the burden of management and maintenance costs incurred by Government on CHA houses. However, the land on which these houses were erected remained under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Housing and Lands.

Meanwhile, the CHA was closed down in 1993 and the Housing Management Unit took over the management of the CHA housing estates.

In March 2007, the “Right to Buy” policy was reactivated, this time to enable the sale of State Land on which stand the CHA houses to their owners. The State Land Act was amended in April 2007 to that effect. The specific objective was to promote home ownership among the low-income group and encourage house owners to become also owner of the land and hence, empowering them to take full responsibility of their assets. This has allowed some 20 000 families living in CHA houses to purchase, at a nominal value, the plots of State land on which their houses stood.

**The National Housing Development Company**

The implementation of social housing projects nowadays is undertaken by the National Housing Development Company Ltd (NHDC). The NHDC was created in March 1991 to implement the national housing programme of the government, with particular consideration for the lower income groups.

The following sponsored housing projects and schemes have been implemented.

- Construction of 5 000 very low cost housing units (*Firinga Type Units*)
- Sites and services projects
- Construction of 1 474 housing units financed by the Export-Import Bank of China (Exim Bank).

The *Firinga Type* housing projects consist in the construction of semi-detached units of 40m² each where a bathroom with toilet and a kitchen table with sink are provided. These units are destined to households earning up to Rs 8 500 per month.
Over the period 2000 - 2006, Government has constructed 5 000 Firinga Type housing units across the island. The Firinga Batch 4 Housing Units are expected to be completed shortly.

The Site and Services Project is a morcellement of State land with basic infrastructure such as roads, water and electricity. The extent of the lots is around 50 toises or 200 sq. metre. Households earning between Rs 7 500 and Rs 12 000 monthly and complying with other set up criteria are eligible.

The EXIM Bank project, financed by the Export-Import Bank of China, involves the construction of 1 474 housing units over 18 sites scattered around the island. These housing units are sold to householders earning Rs 7 500 or more monthly.
Government Grants

The 2007-2008 Budget has created a special programme in the Empowerment Programme to expand the scheme to provide sites for serviced plots by leasing 241 plots in all at Glen Park, Ville Noire and Souillac for a nominal fee of Rs 3 000 per year.

The grant under the roof slab casting scheme has been increased from Rs 55 000 to Rs 60 000. The scheme now also applies to the construction of a second housing unit built under “droit de surelévation” for another eligible member of the household.

From 2005 to 2007, Rs 335 million had been granted to 6 800 families in Mauritius and Rodrigues under the assistance for casting of roof slabs scheme. These schemes are managed by the NHDC.

For households earning a monthly income of up to Rs 5 000, the grant for the purchase of building materials for a house size of 50 m² has been increased from Rs 35 000 to Rs 40 000.

Other financing institutions

Housing finance is also available through banks and insurance companies, and through the Mauritius Housing Company. This institution proposes various types of loans for different income groups.

Household and household size projections

According to the Central Statistics Office, more than 100 000 housing units are needed for the period 2000-2020. Some 8 690 building permits were issued in 2006, out of which 8 122 were for residential buildings. Investment in the construction of these residential buildings amounted to around Rs 8 872 million.

It is estimated that the number of households will grow by over 40% over the next 20 years, from 296 300 in 2000 to

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<tr>
<th>2000 census</th>
<th>Projection year</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Island of Mauritius</td>
<td>287 700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Households</td>
<td>3.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Household size</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Rodrigues</td>
<td>8 600</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Households</td>
<td>4.16</td>
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<td>- Household size</td>
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<tr>
<td>Republic of Mauritius</td>
<td>296 300</td>
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<td>- Households</td>
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416 000 in 2020. This represents an annual growth rate of 1.7% over the projection period. Since the growth of households will be more rapid than that of population (projected population growth is 0.8%), a continuous fall is expected in the average household size. The table below shows a 15% decrease in the average household size, from 3.93 in 2000 to 3.34 in 2020.

According to the Ministry of Housing and Lands, the supply of residential land will increase through the updating of the various Outline Schemes and through the land exchange mechanisms under the Sugar Industry Efficiency Act and the Finance Act. In addition, large areas of land will be released for real estate development with the implementation of the Policy on Large Development Projects by the Town and Country Planning Board.

**Land Administration Programme**

Land administration is of particular importance to any government and the information infrastructure components related to land support a wide range of governmental functions. These include ownership of land, taxation of land, land use regulation, utility maintenance and construction, environmental compliance, any many others. Land administration functions involve a number of disciplines, ranging from law, valuation, surveying, land registration and land planning.

The Land Administration, Valuation and Information Management System (LAVIMS) Project is the first and major part of an ongoing reform programme that will deliver the essential building blocks for a modern Land Administration and Management System (LAMS) for the Republic of Mauritius. The three major components of LAVIMS for the islands of Mauritius are: a property valuation, a cadastre and a parcel-based Deeds Registration System. An improved land administration and management system is expected to foster confidence in the land market, minimise land disputes, support poverty alleviation and assist the Government in policy formulation and strategic decision making.

**PLANNING AND SURVEY DIVISIONS**

Apart from the Housing Division, the Ministry of Housing and Lands comprises the Planning and Survey Divisions.

**Planning Division**

Over the years, three strategic plans for the use of land were produced:

- Mission d’Aménagement du Territoire à L’Ile Maurice (MATIN) - 1977
- National Physical Development Plan (NPDP) - 1993
- National Development Strategy (NDS) - 2003
These set up a new way of looking at planning, i.e. the strategic view, as opposed to a local view.

Moreover, a modern legislation, the Planning and Development Act was enacted in 2004 to replace the 1954 Town and Country Planning Act, which no longer responded to present day needs.

All local authorities except Port Louis have an approved local plan (Outline Scheme) which is used to guide and control land development.

**Survey Division**

The Survey Division is responsible, among others, for the management and allocation of State land for development purposes and the acquisition of land for Government projects.

A Hydrographic Unit was set up in March 2002. Following a Memorandum of Understanding signed with the Indian government in the field of Hydrography in October 2005, a Bathymetric Survey on Agalega, Port Louis Harbour, Port Mathurin Harbour and part of Flic en Flac has been carried out in 2006/2007.

**Mauritius Housing Company Ltd**

The Mauritius Housing Company Ltd (MHC), incorporated in 1989, and formerly the Mauritius Housing Corporation, has been throughout the years a solid and reliable partner in the housing finance business.

In its early stages of operation, MHC catered mostly for people in the middle and upper income groups.

In order to encourage savings for the purpose of construction of a house, MHC introduced the Exceptional Savings Scheme in 1972 while the Plan Epargne Logement (PEL) was launched in 1988. The PEL savings scheme has remained a popular savings mode for all income groups and offers attractive interest rates at the time of taking loan with the company.

In the 1980s it became urgent to help people in the low income bracket towards owning a home. MHC therefore, within an Urban Rehabilitation and Development Program financed by the World Bank, became more actively involved in the financing of housing for low-income families.

In 2001, MHC launched the Housing Deposit Certificates, which term deposits proved to be very successful.
La Femme et la Famille

Au coeur du développement

Cantonnée au rang de bénéficiaire du développement jusqu'aux années 1970, la femme mauricienne a vu sa participation à la vie économique du pays prendre une dimension à la mesure de son potentiel. Elle apporte aujourd'hui une contribution active à tous les niveaux, que ce soit dans les entreprises ou les services, et on la retrouve de plus en plus dans des domaines longtemps ‘réservés’ aux hommes.

Dès 1957, la femme mauricienne obtenait le droit de vote et depuis, sa condition n’a cessé de s’améliorer. Elle jouit de l’égalité de chances au niveau de l’éducation et de l’emploi. Des réformes juridiques ont été effectuées pour éliminer toute forme de discrimination à son encontre, dont celles qui touchent aux régimes matrimoniaux, au divorce et à son statut d’épouse.

De pair avec les avancées légales et la volonté politique, la création de la zone franche dans les années 1970 et la proclamation par les Nations unies en 1975
de l’Année de la femme ont été les facteurs déterminants pour l’émancipation de la femme à Maurice.

La zone franche, qui pendant assez longtemps a reposé essentiellement sur une main-d’œuvre féminine, a favorisé l’entrée d’un très grand nombre de femmes sur le marché du travail. Par ailleurs, un ministère de la Condition féminine est créé en 1975. Le mécanisme est ainsi enclenché pour une dynamique en faveur de l’intégration de la femme au développement et pour l’égalité des droits. L’éducation gratuite au niveau secondaire, l’accès à des soins de santé accrus et le succès des programmes de planification familiale ont accéléré ce processus.

Un ministère des Droits de la Femme est créé en 1982. La mission du ministère est d’appliquer les politiques et de mener à bien les programmes axés sur le développement et l’épanouissement de
la femme, de l'enfant et de la famille, de sauvegarder les droits des femmes et des enfants et de les protéger contre les abus et les discriminations. Les différents mécanismes structurels mis en place témoignent des engagements pris par le gouvernement aux niveaux national, international et régional.

Actuellement, le ministère des Droits de la Femme, du Développement de l'Enfant, du Bien-être de la Famille et de la Protection des Consommateurs opère à travers cinq départements axés sur la femme, le développement de l'enfant, le bien-être de la famille, la planification et la recherche, et la protection des consommateurs.

**La Femme**

Plusieurs actions ont été initiées et mises en œuvre avec succès, allant de la mise sur pied des centres de femmes à celle d'autres institutions, notamment le National Women’s Council en 1985 et le National Women Entrepreneur Council en 1999. Les autres chantiers comprennent une révision des lois, l'adhésion aux conventions internationales et régionales, l'autonomisation des femmes à travers le renforcement des capacités, les programmes de formation, d'information, d'éducation et de communication et le développement de l'entrepreneuriat féminin.

Le nombre de centres de femmes a considérablement augmenté, passant de deux en 1982 à 14 à ce jour. Ces centres favorisent, à travers diverses activités, l'épanouissement de la femme mauricienne afin qu'elle puisse être partie prenante du développement, tout en assumant ses responsabilités familiales. Le dernier en date étant le National Women Development Centre à Phoenix qui a été inauguré en mars 2007. Ce centre est pourvu de facilités modernes et abrite notamment un Entrepreneurship Development Centre, un Information Technology Centre, un Home Economics Resource Centre, un Keep Fit Centre, un centre de formation, un Early Childhood Development Resource Centre et un Family Support Bureau.


Le gouvernement encourage la contribution active des femmes dans l'avancement de l'économie nationale. Ainsi, l’Empowerment Programme mis en place dans le cadre du budget 2007-08 comprend la formation des femmes dans les secteurs non traditionnels et vise à leur assurer une source de revenus. Quatre campagnes de sensibilisation ont déjà été menées, touchant quelque 2 500
femmes. À ce jour, elles ont été quelque 900 à démontrer un intérêt à être formées dans le secteur de la construction et de la menuiserie.

**Développement de l’Enfant**


L’amendement au *Child Protection Act* en 2005 a élargi le champ d’action légal par rapport aux cas d’abandon, d’enlèvement et de trafic d’enfants pour des peines plus sévères à l’encontre de ceux qui auront enfreint la loi. La législation mauricienne renferme aussi d’autres lois relatives au bien-être et à la protection des enfants. Elles sont, entre autres, l’*Institution for Welfare and Protection of Children Regulations 2000*; le *Child Protection Act (Foster Care) Regulations 2002*; l’*Ombudsperson for Children Act 2003*; et l’*Ombudsperson for Children (Amendment) Act 2005*. En mai 2006, un *Protocol of Assistance on Sexual Assault* a été signé entre le ministère de tutelle, la Police et le ministère de la Santé et de la Qualité de la Vie afin de formaliser les dispositions par rapport à une assistance aux enfants victimes d’abus sexuel.

The Struggle for Independence—
Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, the Architect

It is always apposite whenever we are celebrating the anniversary of Independence and of the Republic to remind the people of Mauritius of the gigantic achievements of the grand old man of Mauritian politics - Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam so that the young generation may better understand the man who bestrode the whole Mauritian political elite like a colossus and the reasons why he is and will be revered, by one and all, now and for generations to come as the father of the Independence of Mauritius. The following article is meant to be more of a panegyric than a critical appreciation of the work of Seewoosagur Ramgoolam.

The Early Labour Leaders

The struggle for the emancipation of the workers, first from a master-servant relationship with the sugar barons, then from the shackles of the British Colonial yoke, started with the foundation of the Mauritius Labour Party by Dr. Maurice Curé on the 23rd February 1936. The early pioneers of the Labour Party - Dr Maurice Curé, Emmanuel Anquetil, Dr. Jeetoo,
Assenjee, Dr. Jubhoo, Barthélémý Ohsan and Pandit Sahadeo were right to focus on the mobilization of the exploited workers - sugar cane labourers, artisans and dockers, and workers in general, and the formation of trade unions to help them militate for decent pay and working conditions. It should be reminded that in the 1930s the working classes, which constituted 90% of the population, were living in extreme poverty. The starvation wages which they obtained from the owners of the sugar industry meant that they could not even buy the very basic necessities of life. Hence the whole family - men, women, and children - had to toil in the scorching sun to earn barely sufficient wages to eke out a living.

Braving the fury of the planting community, Dr. Curé and Pandit Sahadeo held 57 meetings, during the period February 1936 to August 1937, near the sugar estates which culminated in the first General Strike of 1937. By the early 1940s, the mass of workers which was, to use a Marxist terminology, a class in itself before the foundation of the Labour Party, had become a class for itself. Workers of all denominations, communities, colour, faith and caste rallied under the banner of the Mauritius Labour Party. They had become so fully aware of their sufferings and exploitation at the hand of the sugar magnates that they were ready to say 'Enough is Enough' and to rise in revolt against the sugar oligarchy.

Seewoosagur Ramgoolam - the Fabian

Dr. Ramgoolam, who came back to Mauritius in 1935 after his medical studies abroad, did not quite agree with the strategy and revolutionary methods of the pioneers of the Labour Movement. The young Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, imbued with the philosophy of British Fabianism, through his friendship with the leaders of the Fabian movement, during his student days, namely Sydney and Beatrice Webb, George Bernard Shaw and Professor Harold Laski, was opposed to any revolutionary strategy to change the lot of the working classes. He believed instead in gradual evolutionary changes. Just like the leaders of the Mauritius Labour Party, he believed in an egalitarian society. The ends sought by the Labour Party and those of Dr. Ramgoolam were the same. However they differed on the means to attaining them. Dr. Ramgoolam believed that the way to achieve an egalitarian society in which the workers would obtain their dignity and rights was through the empowerment of the working classes. They must first obtain the right to vote that is, political power. The then Council of Government would be sympathetic to the cause of the downtrodden workers, only if it contained a majority of workers representatives. It would then pass the appropriate measures to bring social justice and fair play and, in the process, alleviate the sufferings of the workers.
The Struggle for the Vote

Up to 1948, the right to vote was the preserve of the rich sugar barons, merchants and other moneyed classes of Mauritius. The mass of the population - the sugar cane labourers, artisans and dockers - was completely denied of any form of participation in the political process. Only some 10,000 people voted in the 1936 election. The descendants of the Indian Immigrants and those of the former slaves did not have the right to vote. It was Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam who led the struggle for the workers to obtain the vote during the sittings of the Consultative Committee set up, by the Governor of the Colony in 1944, to review the old 1885 Constitution. While the sugar barons were adamant against any change in the Constitution of 1885 and, more importantly, to any extension of the vote, Ramgoolam was demanding the vote for all the workers, males and females, of the Colony. He was ably supported by the then Labour Party leader, Emmanuel Anquetil, and by all the progressists in his demand to obtain the vote for the workers.

As no agreement could be reached between the sugar barons and the progressists, the Governor of the Colony recommended that the vote be extended to all men and women, over the age of 21, who could pass a simple literacy test. The recommendation was incorporated in the 1947 Constitution. The test was conducted in any of the approved languages of the Colony, namely English, French, the Indian languages - Hindi, Tamil, Urdu, Marathi, Telugu, a Chinese language and (surprisingly) the patois Creole. Thus the Creole language obtained official recognition in the 1947 Constitution! As a result the number of voters increased sevenfold - from 10,000 in 1936 to 72,000 in 1948.

The 1948 election brought revolutionary changes to the nature of representation in the Council of Government. For the first time a substantial proportion of the workers obtained the vote merely by passing the elementary literacy test imposed by the electoral commissioner. A third standard textbook was used. Through the active work of the progressist politicians, baitkas, madrassas and kovils were opened up all over the island where the Indian population, who never had the opportunity of attending school, could obtain basic instructions in the Indian languages. According to the 1947 Constitution, there were to be 19 elected members on the Council. Never before in the history of Mauritius had the Council contained any representative of the descendants of slaves and Indian immigrants. It was no longer to be the preserve of the sugar barons and rich merchants. Most of the elected members were the representatives of the workers. They had for names - Guy Rozemont, Renganaden Seeneevasan, Edgar Millien, J. N. Roy, Sookdeo Bissoondoyal, Guy Forget, H. Vaghjee, Anauth Beejadhir, Emillienne Rochecouste, Raymond Rault and Dr. Seewoosagur Ramgoolam. Another grand première was the election in 1948 of the...
first woman to the Legislative Council in the person of Emillienne Rochecouste. She was one of the six elected members for the constituency of Plaine Wilhems/Black River. Henceforth the Council would reflect the colours of our rainbow nation. The new 'Honourable' Members spoke the same language as the cane cutters and dockers. They could therefore, fully empathize with the masses and understand their sufferings. They were indeed the genuine representatives of the people. There was a perfect chemistry between them.

**Ramgoolam, Leader of the Labour Party**

It must be emphasized that there were some seven independents elected to the Council of Government at the 1948 election. These independents included Sookdeo Bissoondoyal, J.N. Roy, Edgar Millien, Harilal Vaghjee, Anauth Beejadhur and Dr. Ramgoolam himself. The Labour Party in 1948 was led by Guy Rozemont who had succeeded Emmanuel Anquetil, the latter passed away in 1946. It was after 1948 election that Ramgoolam and all the above-named independents, with the notable exception of S. Bissoondoyal, joined the Mauritius Labour Party. Dr. Ramgoolam was a man of great intellect and a towering personality. From the very day he joined the Labour Party one could safely say that he became the de facto leader, although Guy Rozemont was still, officially, the leader until his demise in 1956.

It cannot be denied that the struggle for the Independence of Mauritius bears the indelible imprint of Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam. He was a man of great vision. He realised that it was politics which was the master science and that the political kingdom must first be opened to the masses before they could expect to gain their dignity and a betterment in their living and working conditions.

Adequately supported by Guy Rozemont, Renganaden Seeenevassen, Guy Forget, Veerasamy Ringadoo, Raymond Rault, Satcam Boolell and Abdool Razack Mohamed, Ramgoolam and the Labour Party pressed for adult universal suffrage, that is One man, One woman, One vote, along with a Ministerial System and Responsible Government. The sugar magnates, who since the early days of colonialism - French and English - had monopolised political power were opposed to any progressive changes in the Constitution. Their party, the Parti Mauricien led by an eminent lawyer Jules Koenig, was against one man one vote, contending that the masses were not mature enough to be able to use their vote with discernment. Further the party was averse to any form of Self Government, through a Ministerial System, claiming that with one man one vote the Hindus being the most numerous community, would obtain a majority of seats in the Council. The Ministerial System, it was argued, would further compound the problem by ensuring a majority of ministers for that community. The minority communities
would, according to the Parti Mauricien, be in grave peril as they would not have enough representatives to ensure the respect of their rights.

**Campaigning Against PR**

The British Minister for the Colonies in an attempt to allay their fears proposed a proportional representation system (PR) for the mode of election of MPs to the Council. However he had to backpedal on his proposal in the face of massive protest led by Dr Seewoosagur Ramgoolam whose party had not only been victorious in two elections in a row - 1948 and 1953 - but had also won the by-election held in Port Louis to replace the seat of Guy Rozemont. That by-election was almost a referendum. The Parti Mauricien was, as expected, in favour of the British minister's proposals while the Labour Party campaigned against any form of proportional representation. The victory of the Labour Party, in a by-election held in the capital city of Port Louis, made it clear to the British Minister that the people of Mauritius were solidly behind the Labour party and, therefore, were against any form of proportional representation.

**Internal Self Government**

In the early 1960s, the British minister for the Colonies conceded a large measure of autonomy to Mauritius. The country obtained adult universal suffrage, self government and the leader of the majority in the Assembly was styled first, Chief Minister, then, Premier of the island. Adult universal suffrage was first implemented at the 1959 election. The electorate rose from 93,000 in 1953 to 208,000 in 1959. The Labour Party, in alliance with the Muslim Action Committee, led by Abdool Razack Mohamed, and the Syndicaliste Travailliste won 31 out of the 40 elected seats in the Council. The Independent
Forward Block, led by Sookdeo Bissoondoyal won six seats, all in the rural areas.

The Parti Mauricien, for its part, won only three seats. Spurred on by its huge electoral victory, the Labour Party led by Dr. Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, the Chief Minister of the Colony, pressed for complete internal self government.

A partial transfer of power from the British authorities to the elected representatives of the people started in 1958 with the introduction of a Ministerial System. Following the 1959 election, a coalition government was formed with the Parti Mauricien, the Independent Forward Block and Muslim Action Committee. The 1963 election saw, once again, the victory of the Labour Party and Muslim Action Committee but with a reduced majority. On the other hand, the Parti Mauricien Social Democrate (PMSD) made some important gains in the urban areas. After the election, Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam became Chief Minister. By 1966 Mauritius had obtained a large measure of internal self government. However, Police, Law and Order, Defence and External Affairs remained firmly in the hands of the British Governor.

Independence Versus Association

The 1960s were dominated by the Independence versus Association/Integration with UK debate. The Mauritius Labour Party, allied itself with the Muslim Action Committee and the Independent Forward Block, demanded the Independence of Mauritius. The main opposition party, the Parti Mauricien, later Parti Mauricien Social Democrate (PMSD), led successively by Jules Koenig and Gaëtan Duval insisted for a closer association, better still, an integration of Mauritius with Britain. It was rightly argued by the PMSD that the then monocrop economy, based solely on the production and sale of sugar on the British Market at a preferential price, was too vulnerable. Further, Mauritius is cyclone prone. It was, therefore, contended that Mauritius could not stand on its own feet and consequently could not be Independent. Mindful of the fragility of the economy, the Labour Party under the leadership of Dr. Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, was already involved in massive diplomatic negotiations with France and with Britain - our two greatest European allies - in order that Mauritius could continue to obtain, after independence, a preferential tariff for its sugar from the European Economic Community.

The September 1965 Conference

The decisive Constitutional Conference on the future status of Mauritius was held in Lancaster House, London, in September 1965. All the leaders of political parties represented in the House were invited to attend the Conference. The LAB/MAC/IFB
pressed for the independence of Mauritius while the PMSD demanded an Association/Integration formula with Great Britain. It would seem, however, that the British Government had already made up its mind to grant Independence to Mauritius but the timing of Independence would depend on the passing of a resolution by the Council after the impending election.

The issue of Association/Integration was not even considered by the Conference. Instead the Conference drafted a constitution for an independent Mauritius. It was also decided that the electoral system which had always been a major bone of contention, would be thrashed out by a British Electoral Commissioner whose task would be to ensure that the various communities would have fair representation in the Legislative Assembly of an Independent Mauritius. As the timing of Independence would depend on the passing of a resolution in the Assembly, it followed that only if the independence forces won the election that the Assembly would pass the necessary resolution to give effect to the independence of Mauritius.

**Banwell's Controversial plan**

The British Electoral Commissioner, Mr. Harold Banwell, proposed a system of constant and variable correctives. There were to be eight best losers to ensure a fair representation of the different communities of Mauritius. Over and above that Banwell proposed that any party which obtained at least 25% of the vote in the election should get 25% of the seats. This was to be achieved by a system of variable collectives which would give sufficient additional seats to a party which had obtained 25% of the vote to ensure that the party obtained 25% of the seats. It was an attempt by the Electoral Commissioner to satisfy the demand of the PMSD and also to, ostensibly, ensure that the minorities would have adequate representation and the power to block any constitutional amendment designed to violate their constitutional rights. The PMSD represented the minorities. Sir Gaëtan Duval was hailed as King Creole.

Sir Seewoosagur was furious at Banwell's recommendation. It was, he said, designed to bring back proportional representation by the back door. Proportional representation, it will be recalled, had been rejected by the population of Mauritius in 1957. Ramgoolam called Banwell's proposals a 'diabolical' plan. He made a solemn pledge that the proposals would not be implemented, 'not over my dead body'. The Labour Party, under his leadership, carried out a massive campaign against the Banwell's proposals. The PMSD, on the other hand, was obviously very pleased with the Banwell report. Ramgoolam led such an intensive campaign against Banwell that the then British Prime Minister, Mr. Harold Wilson, had to send a Junior Minister of his Government, in the person of John...
Stonehouse, to arbitrate in the dispute over Banwell. Stonehouse recommended that the system of variable correctives should be scrapped. There were to be only eight Best Losers to ensure fair representation of the various communities. That was a huge victory for the Labour Party and for Dr Ramgoolam, in particular. So once again Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam had obtained his way despite fierce opposition.

The 1967 elections - The Independence Resolution

The 1967 election was the most crucial one ever to be held in Mauritius. Despite the British Government rejection of its proposals, the PMSD continued to press for an Association/Integration formula with Great Britain and to oppose Independence. The pro-independence forces pleaded the case for Independence. The pro-independence forces pleaded the case for Independence.

The August 7 election was almost a referendum - for or against Independence. Despite an aggressive campaign by the PMSD, it was the pro-independence forces, that is, LAB/IFB/MAC which won the election with 52% of the votes and 43 out of the 70 seats, leaving the PMSD with only 27 seats for 44% of the votes. While one cannot deny that it was a great victory for the pro-independence forces, one must also concede that the country was split right in the middle. Perhaps, never in the history of the world decolonisation had, as many as 44% of the people of a country, voted against its independence. An overwhelming majority of the second ethnic group of Mauritius - officially called the General Population - had voted with the PMSD and, therefore, against Independence.

At the first meeting of the new Legislative Assembly held on the 22nd of August 1967, Sir Seewoosagur proposed the following historic resolution:

“That this Assembly requests her Majesty’s Government in the United Kingdom to take the necessary step to give effect, as soon as practicable this year, to the desire of the people of Mauritius to accede to independence within the Commonwealth of Nations and transmit to other Commonwealth Governments the wish of Mauritius to be admitted to membership of the Commonwealth on the attainment of Independence”.

The PMSD opposition claimed that the moment was not opportune for such a motion as it had contested, through electoral petitions, in the Supreme Court the return of a few Labour MPs and that, therefore, the composition of the House was not final. It must also be placed on record that, soon after the election, the PMSD made a last ditch attempt to torpedo the project by attempting to lure the leader of Independent Forward Block, Sookdeo Bissoondoyal, and his MPs to cross the floor through promises of personal benefits and political advantage. However Sookdeo Bissoondoyal was not for sale. Nor was he tempted to usurp the
Prime Ministership from Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam. During the debates on the Independence resolution, Sookdeo Bissoondoyal castigated the Opposition for the manoeuvrings to stop the march of history, that is, the Independence of Mauritius. Faced with these strong allegations levelled against them - allegations which were never refuted - the Opposition and its leader, staged a walk-out.

In his speech on the resolution, Sir Seewoosagur paid homage to the 'great democrats - Anquetil, Rozemont and Seeenevassen who are not among us to the see the fulfilment of their valuable work'. He then added:

“These illustrious sons of Mauritius have brought history to the feet of our struggling people as offerings to be honoured and cherished. Our heart is full of gratitude for their performances, so replete with sincerity and love for our people. They will know in their graves today that the struggle has not been in vain”.

Following the walkout of the PMSD, the independence resolution was passed unanimously - by all those present.

Independence - SSR's Hands Joined by Thousands of Workers' Hands

Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam then stepped up negotiations with the British Government and it was jointly decided that Independence Day would be on the 12th of March 1968. The Opposition boycotted the Independence celebrations, as did the Municipalities under its control. They did not participate in the celebrations. Nevertheless Independence was celebrated with great pomp and patriotic fervour by tens of thousands of people present at the Champ de Mars for the historic occasion.

On the 13th of March, in his address to the Speech from the Throne, Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam thanked the representative of the British Government for handing over to him the 'Constitutional Instruments which Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth has so graciously asked him to hand over to me', and he continued his speech with intense emotion:

“I have been moved by the deepest emotions for my hands seemed to have been joined by hundreds and thousands of hands of labourers, artisans, social workers and political leaders who have sacrificed and suffered for the liberation of this country. The culmination of the struggle for Independence is a red letter day for us as well as for them. The country has kept its tryst with destiny”.

Yes, indeed, all the freedom lovers were present at the secret love rendez-vous with destiny! Independence was the culmination of a struggle which started in the 1930s. It was the fulfilment of the dream that the visionary Sir Seewoosagur made some three decades back!

Such was the grandeur of the grand old man of Mauritian politics, such was his statesmanship that he concluded a
coalition with the PMSD in December 1969, ensuring the participation of all the ethnic groups and of the Leader of the Opposition in the gigantic task of nation building. He was indeed the colossus that bestrode the world of Mauritian politics. Affectionately remembered as Chacha Ramgoolam, Sir Seewoosagur, more than amply deserves the revered title of Father of Independence and the no less respectful designation of Father of the Nation.

By
Raj Mathur
Professor of Political Science
University of Mauritius
Youth
Answering the aspirations of the Youth - Securing the future

The capacities of a country to mobilise and motivate its youth and answer their aspirations determine to a large extent the level of their contribution in shaping the future. Mauritius, sparing no effort to invest in its youth, can therefore look forward with confidence.

The Ministry of Youth and Sports (MYS) was set up in November 1969. At that time, very few recreational activities were available to young people among whom a relatively high rate of unemployment was noted.

The Youth Service

The objectives of the Youth Service changed over the years. With the primary aim of providing leisure activities to young people, the Service set itself new objectives which would answer the aspirations of young people and to the needs of the country. Young people were motivated to indulge in creative activities and self-help projects, to develop national consciousness and to work towards nation building.
The Youth Federations

Before 1969, various youth federations had been set up on a regional basis and covering the whole island as well as Rodrigues. For various practical reasons, a reorganisation along district lines intervened in 1977.

The Mauritian Youth was very willing and motivated to participate in sports and cultural activities. Though sports infrastructures of international norms were lacking, these factors did not prevent the Sports Authorities of the island and the sports men and women to get fully involved in sports for leisure as well as their participation in competitive sports.

Creative Arts Unit

In 1978, the Creative Arts Unit was set up for the promotion of drama and cultural activities. In the early eighties, within its policy of decentralisation, Government extended the services of youth centres across the Island.

After the creation of a new Ministry to cater for Arts and Culture and Leisure in 1982 and the split of Youth and Sports in two different sections, the Youth Service laid emphasis on Youth Development Programmes, “Animation sportive, culturelle et récréative”. In July 1982, the Unit was attached to the newly created Ministry for Arts, Culture and Leisure.

A New Orientation in the 1980s

In December 1983, conscious of the growing needs of the young people and the necessity to extend its services to a larger segment of the youth population, the Government opted for a new orientation, with special emphasis on a judicious use of resources, the unemployment problem and the decentralisation of activities.

The following six units were set up to attain these objectives:

- The Training and Research Unit
- The Rescue Programme for Unemployed Youth
- The Girls’ Development Unit
- The Duke of Edinburgh’s Award Unit
- The Socio-Educational Development Unit
- The Field Unit for Youth Promotion

Youth Centres

There are 22 youth centres located in various regions of the country. Many young people between the age of 14 and 25 years are members and they benefit from a wide range of activities organised at the centres.

Apart from providing leisure and recreational activities, the youth centres cater for the moral, educational and physical welfare of the youth. All youth centres are equipped with computers to...
enable the youth to familiarise themselves with the tool of development, in line with the computer culture which is being established among the new generation.

Vocational and training courses like leadership, music, dance, drama, handicraft, embroidery, Family Life Education and Entreprenariat Jeunesse are also imparted to the young people at the Youth Centres and district levels with a view to developing their inner creativity, hidden talents and promote a healthy lifestyle.

The setting up of a peer counselling service, regional youth councils, info-jeunesse centre, adolescent social integration programme and the orientation of youth towards small business enterprises are some of the programmes initiated to enhance the personality of young people and enable them to be skilful, patriotic, civil minded and responsible members, of our society.

Activities are also organised at regional levels namely in districts, urban and rural areas as well as in the various Youth and Community Centres. Such activities and programmes empower young people to meet the challenges of life in the social, educational and health fields amongst others.

The Ministry also addresses broader developmental needs of youth which focus more specifically on their expectations, aspirations and problems they face. Aggressive campaigns are presently being carried out to disseminate information and sensitis young people on issues of concern.

Moreover, action is also being taken for the reinforcing and establishment of networks for the smooth implementation of programmes/activities for youth empowerment.
Training of Youth Leaders

Training of youth leaders formed part of another major responsibility of the staff. Training was imparted either through talks in clubs or weekend leadership courses, seminars or conferences. Courses on the basic techniques of theatre were also imparted. The Pointe Jerome Training Centre, officially inaugurated in 1976, provide ample facilities for the holding of capacity building programmes.

National Youth Award

This programme, formerly known as the Duke of Edinburgh’s Award, was launched in Mauritius in 1966. It is a comprehensive and balanced non-competitive training programme of voluntary activities for young people aged 14 to 25 years to encourage their personal discovery and growth, self reliance, perseverance, responsibility and service to the community.

In Mauritius, the Award Programme has so far attracted more than 25 000 young people. With a youth population of about 220 000, this level of participation is highly commendable. The programme commands great respect in all areas and it has become a way of life among young people, strongly supported by parents, head of schools and employers.

The National Youth Award is and will remain one of the popular youth development programmes of MYS which instils in young people a deep sense of responsibility, the need for hard work, develops a spirit of dedication and nationhood. It also harnesses the drive and energy of young people towards creative and outdoor activities.

Population and Family Life Education

Rapid economic development has brought a complete change of lifestyles and habits amongst the youth. In the sexual and reproductive health field, issues like teenage pregnancy, abortion, prostitution, sexual abuse, HIV/AIDS, etc. were becoming a serious concern. The Ministry in collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) set up in 1994 a special Unit called Population/Family Life Education Unit to equip young people with information and skills to meet the challenges of everyday life.

Conseil National des Jeunes

A “Conseil National des Jeunes”, now known as the National Youth Council, was set up in 1992. The Council, which draws its membership from among School Certificate and Higher School Certificate students and from the youth centres, constitutes a national forum for young people selected by their peers to share their views and feelings for better development of youth activities within a framework of national consensus.
The National Youth Council Act was passed in the National Assembly in 1998 to provide a legal framework for the organisation of youth activities and a platform where the voice of young people is heard and parameters are set to further promote youth development.

**Entreprenariat Jeunesse Programme**

The “Entreprenariat Jeunesse Programme” was launched in 1989 on a pilot basis, in collaboration with the Conference of Ministers of Youth and Sports of French Speaking Countries (CONFEJES). The objective was to promote entrepreneurship among young people aged between 18 and 30 years and to ensure the active participation of the youth in the socio-economic development of the country.

Since its inception in Mauritius, more than 3 000 young people have been exposed to the programme and about 300 have participated in different workshops organised by the Unit. To date, more than 100 micro projects covering the economic sector have been submitted by Workshops participants and 23 of them have won the CONFEJES “Prix Bourse”.

In order to further encourage the spirit of entrepreneurship, a pilot programme entitled “Jeunes Entreprises” has been successfully implemented in certain Secondary Schools. The project aims at imparting practical business experience and promotes team work and risk taking behaviour among secondary school students.

**Carte Jeunes**

The Carte Jeunes which was introduced in October 1990, enables young people aged between 14 and 25 years to have access to a reduced rate to tourism, culture, leisure sport and a vast gamut of areas. Some 20 000 holders of “Carte Jeunes” benefit from the services of 1 250 prestataires. These include doctors, dentists, estheticians, libraries and a list of other professionals at a reduced tariff/price.

**Spécial Vacances**

The Spécial Vacances Programme was launched in 1985 with the following objectives:

- To provide healthy leisure activities for young people during the school holidays
- To give opportunity to young people to discover and learn about historical places
- To provide social exchange between youth
- To widen their horizon about development progress taking place in their region
- To brighten their interest about their environment
- To broaden their knowledge around their cultural heritage
Mass leisure activities such as carnivals, youth concerts, special vacances, beach games, camping or “A la découverte des régions” are often organised during school holidays.

**An integrated Approach**

Since 2005, greater emphasis is being laid on the decentralisation of youth activities across the island. Major activities organised in 2007 include the celebration of International Youth Day, on the theme “Tackling Poverty Together”, and the Youth Raid, an adventure programme for the young.

The Youth Services in collaboration with other stakeholders, are presently adopting a holistic and integrative approach to satisfy the needs and wants of the youth. The strategic areas of focus are:

- Youth Empowerment Initiatives
- Promotion of Youth Enterprise
- Targeting Youth in Colleges to combat HIV/AIDS, Drugs Abuse Alcohol and Cigarettes
- Promotion of the National Youth Achievement Award
- Leadership Training in all areas of major concerns to society
- Participation of our youth in decision making through the National Youth Council
- Development of artistic and cultural pursuits
- Development of ICT Culture among our youth
- Promotion of access to leisure facilities
- Literary activities among young students
- Youth Excellence Award
Mauritius has over the years invested massively in the construction of state-of-the-art sports installations of international standards and the country has emerged as a key regional hub for the hosting of major international sports events. At the same time, the policy is to promote a sports culture among all age groups by facilitating access to equipment and infrastructure and through health campaigns.

**Historical Evolution of Sports in Mauritius**

Most sports clubs in the late 1970s were known as Regional Youth Clubs and were affiliated to the Youth Service of the Ministry of Youth and Sports. Inter Youth Clubs Sports Competitions were organised every year which involved more than 10 000 participants. It is a fact that at that time the youth in general were more active in youth and sports activities compared to the present.

In the 1970s, the Government roped in the Sports Movement, namely the Mauritius Sports Association (MSA) to
further develop and promote sports to a wider population, including students.

The Inter College Games Competitions were among the most popular and attractive events and served as a breeding ground for high level sports.

The Olympic Movement

The early 1970s also witnessed the emergence of the Olympic Movement in Mauritius, and the setting up of the Mauritius National Olympic Committee (MNOC), though there were only a few Associations promoting sports. Mauritius participated for the first time in the Olympic Games held in Los Angeles in 1984. This was historical for sports in Mauritius.

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In view of the high demand for sports activities, the National Sports Training School (NSTS) was created in...
1979 to provide training to potential sports coaches in different sports disciplines. The courses dispensed were recognised by Government and subsequently, many coaches who received training had the opportunity to join and serve the sports movement. Many of them were also employed as coaches in secondary schools.

**Sports Legislations**

With the increasing importance of sports, there was a need to provide for a legal framework for further development and harmonisation of the sports sector. In 1984, a major change occurred with the promulgation of the Physical Education and Sports Act and the dissolution of the Mauritius Sports Association (MSA). The Act provided a framework for decentralisation, regionalisation and “décommunalisation” of sports as well as to encourage the emergence of new Sports Federations. Consequently, the few Sports Federations in existence at that time which had been operating under the umbrella of the MSA became each an independent entity. The number of recognised Sports Federations has now grown to 38.

In 1999, the Physical Education and Sports Act 1984 was repealed and replaced by the Sports Act 1999 so as to reinforce the spirit of regionalisation of sports following some sad incidents that occurred in football at that time. In 2001, the Sports Act 1999 was repealed and replaced by the Sports Act 2001. Amendments were brought to the new Act in 2002 and 2004 to bring some flexibility in the application by Sports Federations of the provisions relating to regionalisation of sports in Mauritius.

**International and Regional Cooperation**

One of the major structures set up by countries of the Indian Ocean Region was the “Commission des Sports de l'Océan Indien” (CSOI) in 1988 which catered for the development and cooperation in the fields of sports in the Indian Ocean. Cooperation among the neighbouring islands under the CSOI started with the organisation of the first football tournament for those under 15 years in Reunion Island. In 1992, the CSOI was enlarged and renamed Commission Jeunesse et Sports de l'Ocean Indien (CJSOI) to include youth activities as well.

Mauritius had the honour to host the First CJSOI Games in 1995 and the 6th Edition in 2006.

**Indian Ocean Islands Games**

Mauritius played an instrumental role in the creation of the Indian Ocean Islands Games and participated in the First Games held in Reunion Island in 1979. Mauritius had the privilege to host the 2nd and 5th Games in 1985 and in 2003 respectively. The country participated fully in the other Games held in Madagascar in 1989, in Seychelles in 1993, in Reunion Islands in 1997 and in Madagascar in 2007.
Participation in International Games

In 1984, Mauritius became a member of the Supreme Council for Sports in Africa. In 1987, at its first participation in the All Africa Games in Nairobi (Kenya), the country won its first Gold Medal in the 110 metre hurdles with Judex Lefou. Mauritius continued its participation in all the subsequent All Africa Games which are held every four years.

Mauritius also participates in the following international Games:
- Olympic Games
- Commonwealth Games
- Jeux de la Francophonie

Outstanding Performances of Mauritian Athletes

Since mid 1990s, a number of Mauritian athletes, among whom Richard Sunee, Stephan Buckland and Geraldo Thomasso, have achieved remarkable performance in major international sporting events, especially in Athletics, Boxing, Petanque and Martial Arts, thus projecting Mauritius in the forefront of international sports.

Hosting of Major International Sports Events in Mauritius

Mauritius now hosts major international sports events. The Mauritius International Meet in Athletics, Les Jeunes Dodo in Tennis, International Mauritius in Badminton have become an annual feature. In 2006, Mauritius hosted the Senior African Athletic Championships which met with commendable success in terms of organisational standard and the record number of participants and participating countries.

Sports Infrastructure

State-of-the-art sports installations of international standards include New George V Stadium, Anjalay Stadium, Serge Alfred Swimming Pool, Plaine Verte Swimming Pool, Marechal Swimming Pool in Rodrigues, Judo and Table Tennis Halls at the Beau Bassin Sports Complex, National Badminton Centre at Rose Hill, New Vacoas Sports Complex comprising Boxing, Wrestling and Weightlifting Halls, Basketball/Handball Gymnasium at Phoenix. Moreover, so as to provide greater access to the wider population, Government has put up many other sports installations across the country, including Rodrigues.

Assistance to High Level Athletes

The Ministry of Youth and Sports runs a High Level Sports Scheme whereby athletes achieving performance at regional, continental, international and world categories are granted financial assistance on a graduated scale ranging from Rs 1 000 to Rs 20 000 depending on the level of performance. The
allowance is paid on a monthly basis and is meant to provide support to the beneficiaries towards their preparation for specific international competitions. The objective is to encourage high level athletes to put in more effort to perform better.

Moreover, athletes who win medals in major international sports events are awarded Cash Prizes as recognition of their outstanding achievement. The amount of Cash Prize obtainable depends on the type of medal (Gold/Silver/Bronze) and the category of competition, namely regional, continental, international, world or Olympic. For example, the Cash Prize payable for a Bronze medal at regional level is Rs 4,000 whereas a Gold medal at Olympic Games may fetch up to Rs 600,000.

**Anti-Doping in Sports**

Mauritius was among the first 11 countries to have ratified in 2006 the UNESCO International Convention Against Doping in Sports. In recognition of its efforts in the fight against doping in sports and its involvement at the international level, in 2007, Mauritius, together with South Africa and Algeria, was chosen to represent Africa in the Foundation Member Board of the World Anti-Doping Agency for a period of two years.
Environnement

Maurice à l'Ère du Développement Durable


La République de Maurice s'est aussi embarquée sur cette voie écologique. Ainsi, au fil des années, les autorités ont opté pour une approche intégrée de la gestion environnementale plutôt qu'une approche sectorielle car par son statut de petit État insulaire, notre île a un écosystème fragile et demeure vulnérable face aux conséquences qui découlent du changement climatique. Dans cette optique, il est nécessaire que la population soit responsabilisée à la protection et à la préservation de l'environnement et à une utilisation judicieuse et écologique de nos ressources.

Dès lors, de nombreux projets ont été mis en œuvre et d'autres sont à prévoir pour encourager un environnement sain et propre comme moyen d'améliorer la qualité de vie de nos citoyens et pour préserver notre
environnement naturel. Le but ultime est de mener le pays vers un développement durable.

Historique


Ce plan directeur pour la promotion du concept de développement durable à Maurice a accompagné la gestion environnementale durant les années 90. Les 32 projets du programme d’investissement ont presque tous été mis en œuvre. Ils recouvraient le renforcement légal et institutionnel, les secteurs clés de l’économie, la gestion foncière,
l'élimination des ordures solides et liquides et la préservation marine et terrestre. Ces projets ont abouti à la création d'un premier parc national pour les espèces en danger et de deux parcs marins, à une meilleure gestion des réserves naturelles et de certains îlots entourant notre pays, à la recherche pour une lutte intégrée contre les organismes nuisible, au développement d'un plan national pour la gestion des déchets solides, à la construction d'un site d'enfouissement sanitaire et à des recherches et contrôles à long terme.

Les années 90 voient aussi l’institution d'un ministère dédié à l'environnement. Le cadre légal du ministère permet une meilleure protection de l'environnement, une planification de la gestion environnementale, une coordination des actions sur les questions liées à l'environnement, une mise en œuvre appropriée des politiques gouvernementales et des dispositions légales pour faire appliquer la loi relative à la protection de la population et de l'environnement.

En 1999, la République de Maurice se prépare à entrer dans le nouveau millénaire avec un plan d'action et de stratégie national décennal. Reposant sur un cadre légal et un cadre d'investissement, le plan d'action présente des propositions de projets, des activités, les coûts et les responsabilités pour 72 projets échelonnés sur la période 2000 - 2010. Plusieurs de ces projets ont déjà été complétés, dont la révision complète de l’Environment Protection Act de 1990 afin d'avoir une législation susceptible de répondre aux défis environnementaux et la mise sur pied d'un système informatique sur l'environnement de même que des indices environnementaux.

D'autres projets sont en cours. Le ministère prévoit ainsi la révision de la politique, de la législation et de la stratégie nationale sur l'environnement. Sont également en préparation : le lancement du projet de la gestion intégrée des zones côtières étalé sur dix ans en vue de guider les développements à venir sur nos côtes et d'y permettre des interventions appropriées pour remédier et atténuer les problèmes environnementaux notamment l'érosion et pour la mise en œuvre du projet visant à protéger, préserver et encourager le développement durable des espaces sensibles comprenant, entre autres, les habitats des poissons et des animaux sauvages, les lacs, les réserves hydriques souterraines, les marécages.

**Rôles et responsabilités du ministère de l'Environnement**

Les études d'impact et les comptes rendus préliminaires environnementaux - Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) et Preliminary Environment Report (PER) respectivement - sont des mécanismes qui permettent au ministère d'assurer la protection et la gestion effective de l'environnement en encourageant l'intégration des questions environnementales dans la préparation et la planification de projets et d'activités de développement économique et l'adoption
de mesures de même que des stratégies de contrôle et de prévention contre tout risque de pollution.

Une équipe du ministère - la Pollution Prevention and Control Division - a pour tâche de suivre ces projets et activités après l'obtention des EIA et PER pour vérifier leur conformité aux normes et règlements établis. Le ministère traite aussi les doléances relatives aux pollutions de l'air et sonores, aux eaux usées et aux déchets.

La mise en application des différentes mesures et législations environnementales relève de la responsabilité du ministère, soutenu dans son travail par la police de l'Environnement. Dotée de 30 officiers, cette police a, depuis sa création en 2000, dressé 36 983 contraventions pour des délits tels que rejets de déchets et tapage excessif.

Pour une surveillance adéquate de l'environnement, le laboratoire de l'Environnement a été créé sous la tutelle du ministère. Equipé pour faire des analyses sur les différents composants de notre environnement : l'air, le sol, l'eau et les effluents, le laboratoire publie des rapports permettant d'établir des critères et des normes pour des politiques de développement durable, pour la prévention et le contrôle de la pollution industrielle, pour la planification des stratégies liées à l'environnement, pour l'évaluation des études d'impact et les comptes rendus environnementaux et pour la diffusion d'informations sur l'état de l'environnement.

Sur le plan de l'éducation et de la conscientisation de la population mauricienne à l'ère de l'informatique et des médias, le ministère met à profit les outils de communication - radio, télévision, Internet, brochures et affiches - pour conscientiser et éduquer enfants, jeunes et adultes. Au menu de ces programmes et de ces supports, les déchets solides, la préservation de la biodiversité, les changements climatiques la consommation et la protection responsables et durables, l'ozone, entre autres.

**Au niveau international**

La Conférence des Nations Unies sur l'environnement et le développement à Rio de Janeiro en 1992 a ouvert la porte à une plus grande coopération et à un partenariat plus étroit entre le gouvernement, le secteur privé et la société civile aux niveaux national et international. C'est ainsi que Maurice est signataire de 38 accords environnementaux multilatéraux.

Parmi se trouve le Protocole de Montréal relatif à des substances qui appauvrissent la couche d'ozone, ratifié par le pays en 1992. Maurice a, avec le soutien du Fonds multilatéral du Protocole, initié plusieurs projets ayant pour objectif la suppression progressive des substances qui appauvrissent la couche d'ozone. Le pays a pu, en conséquence,
procéder à l'élimination progressive des chlorofluorocarbures (CFC) en 2005, soit cinq ans avant l'échéance prévue. Cette suppression progressive a été rendue possible grâce à la collaboration du secteur privé évoluant dans le domaine des aérosols et de la réfrigération.

En outre, Maurice a été félicité récemment par le comité de mise en œuvre du Protocole par rapport à l'élimination progressive du tétrachlorure de carbone, autre substance susceptible d'appauvrir la couche d'ozone. Et 2007 a vu le bureau national d'ozone du ministère de l'Environnement obtenir le prix de la mise en œuvre du Protocole en reconnaissance des contributions et du travail entrepris par les autorités mauriciennes pour la protection de la couche d'ozone.

Le développement durable passe par une approche et une gestion intégrées de nos ressources, la préservation de la diversité biologique côtière et marine, la protection de notre écosystème notamment les forêts, les montagnes, et les développements agricoles et industriels, ruraux et urbains sains. Cela demande de l'engagement et une coopération entre les autorités et les partenaires. C'est un défi que Maurice se doit de relever pour parvenir à un développement durable et un environnement de qualité pour tous.
Travail, Relations Industrielles et Emploi

Préparer les Mauriciens à Évoluer dans le Nouveau Paysage Économique

Protéger les droits des travailleurs, veiller au respect des conditions de travail et des normes de santé et de sécurité au travail, pourvoir le cadre légal et institutionnel, et préparer le travailleur à pouvoir évoluer dans le nouveau paysage économique : Tels sont les grands axes autour desquels s’articule l’action du gouvernement en matière de travail, d’emploi et de relations industrielles, l’objectif étant de maintenir la cohésion sociale et la stabilité si nécessaires au progrès économique.

Au moment de l’indépendance, le nombre de personnes ayant un emploi était de 111 714 (86 399 hommes et 25 315 femmes), sans compter les quelque 13 000 ‘relief workers’. Aujourd’hui, ce nombre est passé à 515 000. D’une économie basée essentiellement sur le sucre, le pays est passé à un registre économique beaucoup plus vaste et varié, où une politique de formation et les capacités d’adaptation des Mauriciens ont aidé à garder l’économie sur les rails.

Le monde du travail a beaucoup évolué et l’environnement et le cadre de
travail doivent répondre à des exigences nouvelles. Aussi les lois cadres, qui s'imposaient dans des contextes particuliers, sont revus. Le Labour Act et l'Industrial Relations Act seront éventuellement remplacés par une nouvelle législation qui tient compte des nouvelles réalités économiques et sociales, tout en revalorisant l'employé et ses droits. La participation des travailleurs dans les entreprises, ainsi que leur représentation sur des comités de gestion, est aussi une pratique qu'encourage le gouvernement, de même que la formation continue. Ainsi, les travailleurs se retrouveront mieux armés pour évoluer dans un monde du travail où la mobilité et l'adaptabilité sont devenues les maîtres-mots.

La sécurité au travail est un autre aspect qui a toujours retenu l'attention des autorités. Au fil des ans, les mesures nécessaires ont été prises pour assurer la

Mais les seules lois ne suffisent pas, encore faut-il que tous ceux concernés soient sensibilisés aux enjeux. Aussi employeurs et employés sont tenus de respecter des normes et des règlements bien définis afin que la santé et la sécurité au travail soient assurées. Le ministère du Travail, des Relations industrielles et de l’Emploi intervient à deux niveaux: à travers des inspections sur les sites et à travers un travail d’information et de sensibilisation.

**Le Ministère**

Le ministère du Travail, des Relations industrielles et de l’Emploi est constitué de trois grandes divisions: Travail et Relations industrielles ; Santé et Sécurité au Travail ; et Emploi. Le ministère chapeaute aussi le Registry of Associations.

C’est la section Inspection and Enforcement qui est chargée de l’administration de la législation du travail se rapportant au paiement des salaires et aux conditions de travail. Elle le fait par des inspections sur des sites de travail par l’Inspectorat ou à partir de doléances venant des employés.

D’autre part, la demande pour la main-d’œuvre importée a entraîné la mise en place d’une Special Migrant Workers Unit qui est chargée de régler tous les problèmes auxquels les travailleurs étrangers pourraient faire face.

**Projets**

- Renforcement des capacités pour l’égalité des genres et l’empowerment des femmes pour promouvoir l’égalité des genres dans les domaines social, économique et politique à travers des politiques et des mécanismes de financement et l’adoption de législations appropriées
- Études sur les pratiques discriminatoires dans le monde du travail
- Suivi des travailleurs d’usines licenciés pour identifier et trouver des solutions aux problèmes auxquels ils font face
- Formation sur les techniques de négociation pour permettre à un plus grand nombre de femmes de participer au dialogue social et aux consultations
- Amendement aux Remuneration Orders afin d’éliminer la discrimination basée sur le genre pour ce qui est des conditions de travail et des salaires.

**L’Employment Division**

L’Employment Division est constituée du Service d’emploi et de la Work Permit Unit.
Le Service d’emploi offre à la population des informations sur les possibilités d’emploi et fonctionne aussi comme un service d’enregistrement et de placement. Cela se fait à travers les six centres régionaux connus comme les Employment Information Centres (EIC). Les services sont disponibles gratuitement tant aux demandeurs d’emploi et ceux à la recherche d’un nouvel emploi qu’aux employeurs.

**Projets**

- **Labour Market Information System**
  Un réseau informatique a été mis en place auquel sont connectés tous les Employment Information Centres. Les employeurs pourront y poster des informations sur les emplois disponibles. Les demandeurs d’emploi pourront, quant à eux créer leur profil personnel, qui sera accessible à l’employeur potentiel.

- **Espace des Métiers**
  Ce service donnera des conseils sur comment chercher un emploi, choisir un travail et/une formation et créer une petite entreprise.

- **Circulation migratoire**
  Ce projet permettra, en collaboration avec l’Organisation internationale pour les migrations, de placer des Mauriciens dans des emplois à l’étranger afin qu’ils puissent par la suite, quand ils reviennent au pays, partager l’expertise acquise et se lancer dans des entreprises.

- **One Stop Shop pour les entrepreneurs**
  Projet pilote lancé dans deux Citizens Advice Bureaux en 2006. L’objectif est d’aider les demandeurs d’emploi dans leurs démarches de lancer une petite entreprise en regroupant sous un même toit toutes les facilités.
**Organismes importants**

**Le National Remuneration Board**
Propose les salaires et les conditions de travail pour des employés du secteur privé autre que la zone franche par le biais de Remuneration Orders.

**Le Termination of Contracts Board**
Détermine, à la demande du ministère du Travail, si une notification de compression du personnel dans le secteur privé hors zone franche est justifiée.

**Industrial Relations Commission**
Se prononce sur les objections formulées contre la reconnaissance de syndicats.
Agit comme conciliateur entre employés, employeurs et syndicats.

**Tribunal d’Arbitrage Permanent**
Rouage important dans le mécanisme d’arbitrage en cas de litige industriel.

**Le Mouvement Syndical**
Il y a 358 syndicats enregistrés à Maurice.

Le mouvement syndical a toujours été à l’avant-plan du combat pour faire respecter les droits des travailleurs à Maurice et améliorer leur sort. Ainsi les syndicats sont un élément incontournable du mécanisme régissant les relations industrielles, faisant entendre la voix et les revendications des travailleurs auprès des entreprises et du gouvernement. Les syndicalistes bénéficient de certaines facilités pour se consacrer à leurs activités.

Un *Trade Union Trust Fund* a été créé par le gouvernement pour promouvoir l’éducation et la formation des travailleurs et des syndicalistes.
The Judiciary
Reform under way to enhance confidence and credibility

The Judiciary comprises, in the main, the Supreme Court, the Intermediate Court, the Industrial Court and the District Courts. Its prime responsibility, under the Constitution, is to uphold the law and deliver justice independently and impartially without discrimination of colour, creed, religion or sex, in a timely manner and in accordance with the rights and freedoms enshrined in the Constitution.

In 1997, Government, in view of the urgent need for a complete reform of the Judiciary, set up the Mackay Presidential Commission which culminated in 1998 in a report known as the Mackay Report. The present Judiciary is giving a new impetus to the reform agenda to make of the justice system in Mauritius a national and regional model of excellence. There is now a real synergy between the three arms of Government, namely the Judiciary, the Executive and the Legislature, for the implementation of the Mackay Report.

The guiding principle is to restructure the court system to enable it to be efficient,
effective and timely in its deliverables, thus bringing it in line with present day and future developments. It implies the re-engineering of the operations of the court system so that they include the concept of court service.

A first step has already been taken to expedite certain court cases. Actually, since January this year, there are two divisions of the Supreme Court - one Criminal Division and one Family Division - which hear cases daily.

Other major planks of the reform programme consist in developing alternative methods for resolving disputes at nominal or reduced costs especially in commercial and family matters; adopting innovative approaches in the management of cases with special attention to fast-track methods for run-of-the-mill cases, dedicated arrangements for complex trials and automated systems for repetitive processes; and creating training opportunities for judicial officers, court officers and para-legal staff.
Human Rights in Mauritius

Human Rights have always been the centre of concern of all governments and they cannot be dissociated from the concept of democracy.

When Mauritius became independent in 1968 it was endowed with a Constitution that has a chapter on fundamental rights - inspired from the European Convention on Human Rights and Political Freedoms of 1950. Separation of powers, the rule of law, universal suffrage were entrenched in the Constitution together with an electoral system which seeks to ensure the representation of minorities. The office of the Ombudsman was created to enable citizens to complain against maladministration.

Our original Constitution has survived for 40 years, a rare feat for a developing country, with regular, free and fair elections guaranteeing political stability and the primacy of democracy. The voting age was reduced from 21 to 18 in 1975.
The transition to a Republic in 1992 was a smooth one, replacing the Queen by a President elected by the National Assembly, severing the umbilical cord with the former colonial power. However, Mauritius retained the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council as its final Court of Appeal.

While Chapter II of the Constitution refers more explicitly to civil and political rights, the indivisibility of human rights permeates the system. Economic, social and cultural rights are very much present in the protection from discrimination clause, in freedom of expression, in freedom of conscience, in freedom to establish schools, in freedom of association and the protection from compulsory deprivation of property. An array of laws maintains and consolidates the Welfare State, whether it is in the area of free education, free health services, social security benefits, old age pensions, subsidies on food and housing and other measures to combat poverty.

Since Independence Mauritius has adhered to the major international human rights instruments:

- The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights 1966 (CCPR) on 12 December 1973
- The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965) (CERD) on 30 May 1972
- The Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment 1984 (CAT) on 9 December 1992
- The Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture in 2005

Mauritius also signed and ratified important regional human rights treaties:

- The Protocol to the African Charter setting up the African Court of Human and Peoples' Rights in 2006
As a small island state, Mauritius has largely abided by its international obligations, thereby earning the respect of more powerful countries. Mauritian personalities have been elected members of the Human Rights Committee, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the Sub-Commission for the Protection of Minorities. Mauritius has been a member of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights and is at present a member of the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva.

Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, as Prime Minister of Mauritius, was awarded in 1973 the United Nations prize in the field of Human Rights instituted by the General Assembly. In 1981, his government carried out major reforms in the Civil Code, making equality between men and women a reality.

Subsequently, Governments have consolidated the rights of women to protect them from domestic violence and have enacted laws to guarantee the rights of children. In 2003, the office of the Ombudsperson for Children was set up.

Mauritius has adhered to several International Labour Organisation (ILO) Conventions, for example, the Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labour and the Convention on Equal Remuneration. The exercise of consolidating the rights of workers is pursued relentlessly.

The Protection of Human Rights Act was passed in 1998 leading to the setting up of a National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) in 2001 to deal with violations of human rights and complaints against the police.

The Sex Discrimination Act of 2002 added a Division to the National Human Rights Commission to receive complaints of sex discrimination and sexual harassment.

The NHRC abides by the Paris Principles and is independent of the Government. Its Chairperson is a former Judge of the Supreme Court and its members represent a wide cross section of society.

The Ministry of Education is in the process of integrating human rights education in the school curriculum.

Mauritius has already integrated third generation rights like the right to development and right to a clean environment in its official policies. Constant efforts are made towards the progressive realization of many of the Millennium Development Goals by the year 2015.

While the world celebrates the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights this year, the concern for human rights is real in Mauritius to enable all Mauritians to live in dignity and peace.
Local Government

Democracy at Regional Level

The Constitution provides for a local government to manage local matters. For this purpose, Mauritius is divided into towns, districts and villages. There are five Municipal Councils in the urban areas and in the rural areas there are four District Councils under which fall 124 Village Councils. The main link between the central government and the local authorities is provided by the Ministry of Local Government.

Councilors are elected in accordance with the Representation of the People Act and they remain in office for a period of five years.

Historical background

The existence of local government in Mauritius can be traced back to the middle of the 18th century when the island was still under French rule. The island was then divided into “Quartiers”, administered by the “Conseils de Commune”. These were later replaced by “Municipalities”, then by “Commissaires Civils”.

In 1850, Port Louis was granted municipal charter and district boards were later set up in each district. These were eventually abolished and their powers gradually taken over by Government departments.

The Municipality of Port Louis was the first elected local authority under British administration. It was granted City Status by Her Majesty the Queen and the Letters Patent were handed over by the Governor on the 25th August, 1966.

In Plaines Wilhems, three Boards of Commissioners were instituted—the Curepipe Board in 1890, the Beau Bassin-Rose Hill Board and the Quatre Bornes Board in 1895. These Boards became Town Councils in 1950 with the majority of the Councilors elected. A Town Council for Vacoas-Phoenix was created in 1963. After independence, all the Town Councils became Municipal Councils.

Civil Commissioners were appointed in 1946 to take charge of the southern districts of Grand Port and Savanne. Civil Commissioners were subsequently appointed in Pamplemousses and Riviere du Rempart (1947), in Moka-Flacq (1948) and in Plaines Wilhems-Black River (1955).

On the other hand, Village Councils were constituted in 1947. At the end of 1952, District Councils were set up in each of the three Civil Commisioners's districts and in Plaines Wilhems-Black River in 1958.

The problems of rural administration were reviewed in 1955 and a Sessional paper was passed in the Legislative Council to provide a sound basis for rural development.

The Local Government Ordinance (No. 16 of 1962), was passed to give effect to the main recommendations of the Sessional Paper, and the new elections were held in accordance with the revised legislation and on the basis of universal suffrage. The primary object of the Ordinance was to substitute one comprehensive Ordinance for numerous existing ordinances. Significant changes were made in local government policy in the rural areas to introduce a number of provisions to keep up with the stage of development reached by Local Government bodies in Mauritius and more appropriate to their further development.

In 1989, a fourth District Council was created for Black River.

**Local Authorities**

Democratically elected, the local authorities are responsible for a wide range of public services which include: the building and maintenance of roads, bridges, markets. They also cater for the well-being of the inhabitants and provide leisure and sport facilities, manage public gardens and organise a regular refuse collection service.
The five Municipal Councils are those of Port Louis, Beau Bassin-Rose Hill, Quatre Bornes, Vacoas-Phoenix and Curepipe. Municipal elections are held every five years in each of the five Municipal Council areas. Each town returns 24 councilors except for Port Louis, which returns 30 Councilors, making a total of 126. Each Municipal Council consists of a Mayor, a Deputy-Mayor and Municipal councilors, except for Port Louis which elects a Lord Mayor and a Deputy Lord Mayor.

The four District Councils of Mauritius are: Pamplemousses-Rivière du Rempart; Moka-Flacq, Grand Port-Savanne and Black River. Every District Council consists of 36 Councilors, except Black River which has 24. Members of the District Councils are selected among Village Councilors, such that all villages are represented. The Chairman and the Vice-Chairman are elected by the members of the District Council.

The Local Government Act provides that every Village Council shall consist of 12 members elected in accordance with the Representation of the People Act. A Village Council is distinct entity in the sense that, just like a Municipal or a District Council, it is a body corporate. It is the smallest unit of local government but has its own constitution and powers to carry out certain functions.

District councils however have a say in the running of Village Councils. They are empowered to appoint a secretary and a treasurer or a secretary-treasurer to one or more village councils in their district. A District Council may allocate, for specific and general purposes from its fund, such sum of money as it shall decide to each of the village councils falling within its jurisdiction.

The Local Government Service Commission (LGSC), set up in July,
1983, is responsible for the appointment of all local government officers.

**Beach Authority**

The Ministry of Local Government is also responsible for the proper control and management of some 89 proclaimed public beaches through the Beach Authority, which is a parastatal body set up under the Beach Authority Act 2002. The mandate of the Authority is to implement projects relating to public beaches. Priority intervention areas are the conservation and protection of the environment, upliftment and landscaping works, providing leisure and regulating activities and ensuring the security and safety of users of public beaches.
From RDU to NDU

Social Amenities to Cater for Emerging Needs

The National Development Unit is an essential link between the population and the Government. It allows the people to have a say in policy and project formulation for community and development projects, with the ultimate objective of improving quality of life. It also acts as an interface between the community and the authorities to assist people in accessing information regarding routine formalities.

Creation of RDU

In the wake of several development strategies in the 1970s, particularly the creation of the Export Processing Zone and the then Development Works Corporation, the standard of living of people in all regions of Mauritius started to improve. People began to have new needs and aspirations which called for a more balanced and proper development across the island.

The Regional Development Unit (RDU) was created for a better distribution of growth gains in terms of infrastructure and social amenities to cater for those
emerging needs. Operating under the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development, the RDU set itself the objectives of creating infrastructural assets, self-help productive schemes and electricity/water supply. It is worth pointing out that in the early 1970s some people had to walk long distances and to queue up for hours to have a pail of water. Some regions were even deprived of electricity and water supply.

The RDU provided support to those in dire needs by installing more public water taps and by assisting in the wiring of remote villages to the electricity network. With the financial assistance of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the Unit had also been involved in self-help productive schemes which covered cultivation, livestock rearing and establishment of small scale industries.

**Restyled as NDU**

In 1988, the RDU was restyled as National Development Unit (NDU) to bring about integrated development achievements across the island. With the appointment of Parliamentary Private Secretaries (PPSs) an added dimension was given to the development programme of the NDU to widen its scope of activities through a more participative approach. In the same vein, the network of Citizens Advice Bureaux (CABx) was set up in 1989 as a complementary arm in both rural and urban areas to act as a direct linkage with people with a view to providing necessary guidance and advice right at their doorstep. The Citizens Advice Bureaux, 35 in number today, have been instrumental in bringing State facilities and development to the doorstep of the citizens.

The NDU can be considered as a showcase of a vibrant democracy where
the voice of people at grass root level is not only heard but also taken into consideration while formulating policies and programmes. The objective is fulfilled through the channel of CABx where the PPSs, Officials of the Ministry and citizens meet to discuss priorities and at the same time to participate in development activities. All the infrastructural projects executed by the NDU are basically meant to meet the needs and aspirations of one and all.

**Innovative Approaches**

The National Housing Development Corporation (NHDC) slab grant project operating from CABx is one of the first innovative approaches to help poor citizens to get out of the poverty cycle. The CABx also work hand in hand with the Ministry of Industry, Small and Medium Enterprises, Commerce and Cooperatives to promote the culture of entrepreneurship in Mauritius. Under a pilot programme, arrangements have been made for CABx of Plaine Magnien and Rivière du Rempart to serve as one-stop-shop to facilitate enterprise development and lead to employment creation.

In many regions, the absence of a proper road network and traffic centres gives rise to heavy traffic jams and hardship to people in their mobility. To promote a smoother circulation of vehicles, the NDU has resurfaced and constructed hundreds of kilometres of roads and traffic centres like those at Goodlands, St Pierre and Mahebourg.

Very sensitive to people’s need for recreational activities, the NDU has constructed a series of community centres like those at Baie du Tombeau, Rivière des Anguilles, Quatre Bornes and Coromandel, to name a few. Sports facilities with lighting such as those at La Clémence and Cité Martial were put up in several regions to enable the youth to practise their favourite sports after school or work.

The NDU has also constructed multipurpose complexes such as at Plaine des Papayes, Petit Bel Air and market fairs at Pamplemousses and Pte aux Sables provide essential amenities in out-of-reach areas.

Flooding due to heavy rainfall normally gives rise to a lot of hardship and damage to crop property. The Government, being sensitive to problems of flooding, faced by people in flood prone areas, has set up a comprehensive Land Drainage Programme in the year 2003 to bring relief to people. Responsible for coordination of the Land Drainage Programme, the NDU has implemented in collaboration with the Local Authorities major land drainage schemes. Important drain schemes have been undertaken in areas such as Morc. Foondun/Terre Rouge, Ville Noire (Mahebourg), Canot (Petite Rivière), Batimarais (Camp Diable), Quatre Bornes, Grand Bois, Grande Rivière Noire, Cité Atlee, Petit Verger, Allée Brilliant, Vallée des Prêtres to alleviate the plight of residents and improve living
conditions in general.

Anybody travelling from North to South and East to West would invariably notice the imprints of the achievements of the Unit. The NDU is committed to provide its contribution and support in almost all walks of life to the extent possible within its limited means. Its contributions pave the way for improving the quality of life of people.
The Civil Service

Reollections And
Points To Ponder

It is a fairly common and recurrent human tendency to take things for granted, and to forget or ignore BASICS. Beyond biological realities, the birth of a child is a wonderful miracle. Beyond spearheaded constitutional development realities, the birth of a country is a glorious and unique event. And it is an indelible reality that we owe the freedom, the sovereignty, the dignity, and the democracy of our country to the Father of the Nation, the late and regretted Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, supported by his close fellow Party companions, and by Sir Abdul Razack Mohamed and Sookdeo Bissoondoyal.

When the flag of Sovereign Democratic State of Mauritius was raised on 12 March 1968, it was the signal that the people and institutions of our newly born independent country had henceforth to show that the great confidence placed in their ability to deliver all the goods expected from them, individually, and collectively, was indeed merited.
The arrival of a child tests the sense of responsibility and accountability of parents, and thus the quality and seriousness of their parenthood. Independence tested the patriotism of the Mauritian man and woman, and their believed-in potential to each contribute their share to assist the country in taking off into self-sustained growth, and in its transformation process. The Civil Service was foremost among institutions. The Civil Servants were foremost among the people who needed to be the willing agents of change.

Unlike Civil Servants in some African countries, following UHURU, ours did not really have to lift themselves up from their bootstraps following 12 March 1968; nor did they have to rise from the ashes of internecine wars. The Father of the Nation had ensured that, unlike Africa which was in search of democracy, Mauritius started off from the very first day of freedom with entrenched democratic principles and values, and with a generally resilient and adaptable Civil Service that could transform its colonial mindset into a progressive and evolutionary mindset. The more so as the Father of the Nation, constitutionally responsible for the Civil Service, had succeeded in cascading his vision down to the grass roots. He thus charted what, in real terms, were the “Elements of a Long Term National Change Process” along the following lines:

**Elements of a Long Term National Change Process**

- Knowledge
- Decode Current strategies
- Analyse Key decisions
- Create a sense of urgency

- Diffusion
- Develop vision
- Create guiding coalitions

- Results
- Communicate vision
- Create broad-based actions
- Generate Short term wins
- Verify achievement of goals

- Institutionalize changes
The post-independence period

The early post-independence period was extraordinarily momentous. I can safely say so from my very long experience in the Prime Minister’s Office. I joined the Administrative Class in the early days of 1969, from the Royal College of Curepipe, following success in an Open Competitive Examination by the PSC for entry into this class, and I was posted to the Prime Minister’s Office which and where I served during my whole career in the Civil Service. But, prior to this posting, I had already been involved to some extent in the preparations for 12 March 1968. For example, I was, along with Lindsay Lingaya and Moksda Kistoe-West, chosen by Prime Minister Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam through his Office to vet the wording of our National Anthem.

Indeed the post-independence period was one of achievers and of achievements, with Simpson as the first Secretary to the Cabinet and Head of the Civil Service turning the Civil Service around to ensure achievement of set objectives in the context of the national change process, and Burrenchobay steering the Prime Minister’s Office towards greater heights, advising Prime Minister Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, following his directives, and implementing his decisions in the national interest.

The very foundation for a professional Civil Service was laid, and the reform process was initiated. New talents were injected therein, and solid teams were created to accelerate the process of management by objectives, of capacity building, of “professionalizing” the decision-makers, of timely delivery of concrete quality service to the public.

On the occasion of the 40th Anniversary of Independence, it is certainly fit and proper to pay tribute to
the vast majority of the thousands of Civil Servants, of all ranks and status, most of whom anonymous, who have been contributing in no small measure to the overall development of Independent Mauritius. Admittedly, much more could have been achieved had all necessary resources, human, capital, and logistics been readily available, and had all external factors been favourable. These deficiencies, however, constituted in themselves challenges and opportunities for the Civil Service which under the guidance of imaginative and resourceful leadership, at the level of the administrative machinery, and particularly at the level of political leadership of Government, constructively explored ways and means to first consolidate the country's comparative advantages, and then move on necessarily towards focus on the country's competitive edge. Indeed, the Civil Service generally has, since 12 March 1968, been a willing party to the transformation of the country on its way towards the creation of prosperity through innovation and competitiveness. And it is a historical fact that it was the Father of the Nation who initiated and spearheaded this vital transformation process.

Prime Minister Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam did also see to it that insular mentality was replaced by a simultaneous inward and outward looking mindset, inculcating in the Mauritian psyche the everlasting need for friendship with all countries, with all peoples of the world. This need was fully understood by the stalwarts of the Civil Service who contributed to the firming up of a foreign policy that was and that remained alive to internal realities. And these stalwarts contributed significantly to nation-building.

It is certainly not possible during the time and space of a short article to do full justice to all those patriots in the Public and Private Sectors who, under the
enlightened, sagacious, visionary, and inspiring leadership and statesmanship of Prime Minister Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, fashioned the destiny of our country. But to do them some justice, it is pertinent that, on the occasion of the 40th Anniversary of our Independence, we show our gratitude by remembering them fondly, and by thanking them for our freedom and dignity as a Nation.

And the Civil Service, learning from those historic moments, will ever remember that it ought to be at all times loyal to the Government of the day, that serving the people, and serving them well and productively through the people's elected Government is the finest form of service, and that national development must always prevail over personal development. The noblest form of gratitude to the Father of the Nation is to ever put country before self.

By Sir Bhinod Bacha,
KT, CMG, FMIM
Former Head of Civil Service and Secretary for Home Affairs
Arts and Culture

Mauritius, Unity in Diversity

Mauritius is not only referred to as an island-paradise and known for its beautiful sandy beaches or the hospitality of the local population. It is also cited as a land where different cultures co-exist and flourish peacefully. Indeed, the diverse cultures from Europe, Asia and Africa make of Mauritius a unique place in the world.

The concept of unity in diversity in our pluricultural, mutilingual, multi-religious and multi-racial society is the cornerstone on which rest Government's policy and actions. Thus, with the support of Government, many cultural centres have been set up, which allows the adepts of the different cultures to keep these alive and not to lose their roots. Moreover, many religious festivals such as Spring Festival, Divali, Eid-Ul-Fitr and Christmas are celebrated at a national level with government's active participation in the organisational aspects.

The preservation of our national heritage is another main area of focus. The National Library, the National Gallery, the
National Heritage Fund and the Archives Department have a prominent role to play in this endeavour.

**Ministry of Arts and Culture**

The Ministry of Arts and Culture is responsible for the preservation, promotion and propagation of all aspects of arts and culture in Mauritius. Its role can be better assessed through the multiplicity of services and assistance provided and the activities organised to meet the artistic and cultural aspirations of the Mauritian society.

**Infrastructure for cultural activities**

- Serge Constantin Theatre
- Pointe Canon Open Air Theatre
- Centre de Formation Artistique at Vacoas. Provides short-term courses in about a dozen art forms
- Centre de Lecture et d'Animation Culturelle (CLAC)
- 15 CLAC Centres provide reading facilities to children and adults. Educational activities, leisure, games and computer studies are also available. Cultural and literary activities are held regularly. Activities in the field of drama, arts, music and dance are organized as well
- Film and Stage Play Classifications Unit. Issues permits for the importation of films and is responsible for the classification of films for projection to the general public and also for the classification of stage plays
- Archives Department. Facilitates research for students, historians and the general public

**Cultural Agreements**

Mauritius has signed Cultural Agreements with many friendly countries for the establishment of Cultural Exchange Programmes (CEP).

Under the CEP, both parties mutually agree on various aspects of technical and cultural cooperation. Cultural Exchange Programmes consist mainly of:

- Exchange of cultural troupes.
- Enlistment of services of resource persons.
- Participation in seminars and workshops.
- Short-term scholarships and training.
- Other forms of assistance, such as donations.

Cultural Exchange is more vibrant with countries from where present-day Mauritians originated.

**Anti-Piracy and Copyright**

The Mauritius Society of Authors acts as a watchdog to ensure that the rights of Mauritian artists are protected.
Amendments to the Copyright Act 1997 are being worked out in collaboration with the relevant stakeholders in order to make a new law in line with International Conventions such as the WIPO Copyright Treaty and the WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty. The amended law will also include reinforcement of border control measures and other enforcement measures to facilitate the tasks of the Police, Customs as well as Copyright owners.

**World Heritage Sites**

The Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage Sites List in July 2006.

The Nomination Dossier of Le Morne Cultural Landscape, submitted to the World Heritage Centre of UNESCO in January 2007, will be examined at the 32nd Session of the World Heritage Committee to be held in July 2008 in Quebec, Canada.

**UNESCO International Conventions**

Mauritius is a signatory-party to the following International Conventions:

(i) ICCROM (International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property). Affiliate of UNESCO

(ii) ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites)

(iii) World Heritage Fund

(iv) Convention for World Heritage

(v) Cultural Diversity for Dialogue & Peace

(vi) Inter-Governmental Committee for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions
Fisheries have always been an indispensable source of animal protein for the people and contribute to food security. The sector, which has undergone major changes in the last years, is being called upon to play a new and dynamic role in the bid to make Mauritius into a seafood hub.

The artisanal fisherman has not been neglected in the process, the setting up of a Fisherman Investment Trust in 2007 being a concrete example of Government's commitment to improve the lot of the fishing community. The object of the Trust is to promote investment in fishing activities, processing activities, marketing, and other activities related to the fishing industry through the empowerment of the fishing community at large.

The fisheries sector has always contributed to the nation's socio-economic development, generating national income and foreign exchange. The subsector encompasses the artisanal, bank, chilled fish, sword fish, tuna and the deep-sea demersal fisheries, the tuna fishery being the major
industrial one. The development of aquaculture limited by fresh water resources and coastal areas, high production costs (including costs of inputs), and competition from imports is now gathering momentum through the development of marine aquaculture. This potential has come to light after a successful venture by a private sector operator to produce fish in floating cages on a commercial scale.

The policy objective of the Government is to transform Mauritius into a world class seafood hub by developing value-added fisheries and seafood-related activities including transshipment, storage and warehousing, light processing, canning, and ancillary services. Its modern port infrastructure, readily available freeport facilities for seafood storage and processing, investment friendly environment, competitive services for fishing vessels and an interesting package of incentives to freeport companies make of Mauritius the ideal platform in the Indian Ocean for the transshipment and processing of seafood.

Sustainable use of existing resources

Exploitation of traditional resources has attained its limits. The emphasis is currently on sustainable use of existing resources and maximizing returns through value addition, mainly by maximizing value from the landings of catches in the region, and encouraging re-exports. In 2006, some 35% of total exports of fish and fish products were re-exported.

Additionally, opportunities to increase production are being explored for limited and cautious development of under-utilised resources and diversification into marine aquaculture production.
An Aquaculture Master Plan has been prepared with a forecasted production ranging from 23,000 tonnes to 39,000 tonnes over a medium to long term with focus on marine fish production. An Aquatic Business Activities Bill is being formulated to provide the legal framework for aquaculture development.

In order to reduce fishing in the overexploited lagoon, Government continues to encourage fishing in off lagoon areas around fish aggregating devices (FADs). Government is also providing incentives and training to fishermen willing to operate around FADs and in offshore areas. The use of nets is being discouraged and the Ministry of Agro Industry and Fisheries continues to implement a buy-back programme for the reduction of net fishing due to its negative impacts on the lagoon ecosystem.
Mauritius takes pride in having one of the oldest co-operative movements in the southern hemisphere. Following recommendations made by a Royal Commission instituted in 1909 by the British Colonial Government, co-operative credit societies were launched in 1913 to reduce the dependence of small cane planters on unscrupulous moneylenders and brokers. In Rodrigues, the co-operative movement started in 1924.

Up to 1945, the legal framework limited the activities of the co-operative movement to the sugarcane sector only. The 1945 Ordinance paved the way for the diversification and expansion of the co-operative movement. Consequently, the local co-operative movement expanded to various sectors of the economy including consumers, savings, livestock, fishing and transport.

Furthermore, in the post independence period, many agricultural projects at the national level requiring group actions were implemented to enable planters, fishermen and breeders to benefit from economies of
Large-scale agricultural diversification and irrigation projects were put up for the planting community and support services were provided to breeders and fishermen through “Maison des Éleveurs” and “Maison des Pêcheurs” respectively.

The creation of a separate Ministry in 1970 to look solely after co-operatives and co-operative movement served as a catalyst for the rapid development of this movement.

**Significant changes in the legislation**

Significant changes were incorporated in the Co-operative Societies Act 1976 to extend the co-operative system to other sectors of the economy.

In 2005, the Act had to be amended again to respond to the exigencies of the time and to facilitate the emergence of autonomous and professionally managed co-operatives. Smooth registration procedures of co-operative societies with minimum of five individuals for the registration of a primary co-operative society were provided. The Act was further amended in 2006 to provide, among others, for the registration of a co-operative society with either limited or unlimited liabilities and to clear practical impediments in the Co-operatives Act 2005.

The co-operative sector contributes today significantly to the economic development of Mauritius. It plays a vital role for some 150,000 co-operators and for the economy at large.

**Main sectors**

Apart from a number of societies engaged in sectoral economic activities, credit societies, consumer co-operative societies and co-operative credit unions...
constitute the bulk of the cooperative movement. The main sectors which are serviced by the co-operative movement are:

- **Sugar sector**
  The co-operative societies have successfully grouped over 50% of planters and had in the 1980s contributed 15% of national production.

- **Food crops sector**
  Agricultural marketing co-operative societies are playing a significant role in the production of onions, potatoes and other vegetables. There are about 50 co-operative societies accounting for more than 60% of the national food crop production.

- **Thrift and savings sector**
  Some 130 Co-operative Credit Unions are actively inculcating a spirit of thrift and savings habit to members and provide them with financial services at a competitive price.

- **Consumer sector**
  In the post independence period, around 100 consumer store societies have been instrumental in providing consumer goods to their members at fair prices while guaranteeing them a patronage benefit at the end of the financial year.

- **Other sectors**
  Co-operatives also operate in other sectors such as fishing, pig breeding, cattle breeding, transport and handicraft.

The Mauritius Co-operative Movement is today organised on a three-tier basis with some 600 co-operative societies at the primary level, 13 federal organisations at the secondary level (co-operative federations) and the Mauritius Co-operative Union Ltd as an apex body.

In recent years, women co-operative societies have been promoted with a view to inculcating the culture of entrepreneurship among unemployed women and to providing opportunities and facilities to members. Some 90 women co-operative societies have been registered and a federation of women co-operative societies has been launched.

**The Sector at a Crossroad**

Although the latest turnover of the Mauritian co-operative movement for 2006/2007 was around Rs 3.8 billion, the co-operative sector seems to be at a crossroad with new challenges such as globalisation of the world economy and the rapid changes in technology calling for business efficiency.

In order to survive in this competitive globalised world economy, co-operative societies are being guided to review their management style and improve the capacity of their leaders. To this end, the Co-operatives Division of the Ministry of Industry, Small & Medium Enterprises, Commerce and Co-
operatives is leaving no stone unturned. Various training programmes are being conducted by the National Institute for Co-operative Entrepreneurship (NICE) with a view to consolidating the capacity of the co-operators to manage their societies. A series of incentives and support schemes such as ISO certification competition, agricultural and cow breeding schemes and computerisation schemes are being presently implemented to promote co-operative societies.

Other programmes and projects aiming at consolidation of the co-operative societies will be put in place this year and a co-operative sector strategy paper will be prepared so as to optimise the use of scarce resources and maximise benefits to co-operators.
Mauritius arrived on the world stage as an independent and sovereign State on 12 March 1968 when east and west were locked in a cold war signaled by the Churchill's famous iron curtain speech in 1946 and which was to last four decades until the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989. Conducting foreign affairs during those years was actually walking on a tight rope, because countries that belonged to one camp were not supposed to have any relations with the other. As we all know, Mauritius was not to walk on a tight rope. The list of guests invited to celebrate our independence at Champ de Mars, if we take a close look at it, points to the direction in which Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, the Father of the Nation, wanted Mauritius to go. He wanted Mauritius to be non-aligned. The VIPs represented not only the Western countries with whom we were already attached, but also the Eastern and Communist blocs he wanted to develop ties with. Other guests came from important economic sectors like airlines and banks we would need for the economic development of the country.
Looking back, we can sincerely consider that Sir Seewoosagur made the right choice and set the country on the right tract from the very beginning. We never had cause to disown or reject the decisions he made. Successive governments could only be grateful to have inherited the road map he put in place at independence. We therefore cannot help saying how lucky our country has been to have such a visionary and humanist leader of a newly-born nation.

Our First Minister of External Affairs

Our first Minister of External Affairs at Independence was Prime Minister Ramgoolam himself. A man of far-sighted vision, he immediately saw the importance of Africa for mauritius and long before taking the opposition on board to form a government of national unity, his very first initiative was to take mauritius to OCAM (Organisation commune malgache et mauricienne) at Kinshasa in January 1969, and to look to France to take mauritius through the EAMA into the EEC (European Economic Community). At the time, there were at most a dozen trained diplomats, former education officers selected by the Public Service Commission for training at Oxford or Geneva, or sponsored by the Commonwealth or the Carnegie Foundation for International Peace. The professionals were there to assist in the setting up and running of Missions (Embassies and High Commissions) that were headed by politicians appointed by the Prime Minister, and who were either members or the Labour Party or idealists who shared his generous vision of a Welfare State. For the Prime Minister, foreign or local policies served the same purpose of providing work, education, security and perhaps prosperity for all Mauritians, irrespective of their ethnic origins, caste or religion.

At the United Nations

Sir Seewoosagur’s very first masterstroke on the international scene was to take with him his arch rival, the Leader of Opposition, the man who fought against independence for the country, Sir Gaëtan Duval to the United Nations at its very first session that he attended after having had Mauritius admitted as a member of UN and the Commonwealth within weeks of Independence. Bringing your opponent and challenger with you, by your side was no small feat. It was not only high politics in the noblest sense since Sir Seewoosagur wanted to win over another patriot to help him build the country, but also a lesson of humanism and wisdom which drew immediate attention and acclaim. U. Thant, the then Secretary-General, could not help expressing his admiration for this piece of statecraft and humbly said: “We have to learn from you how to achieve harmony. His magnanimity became a subject of conversation in the UN circles, which all too often was quite familiar with petty politicians bent on grabbing power only to serve their own inflated egos!”
Mauritius Embassy in France

Foreign Affairs, then meant showing the world that there was a new independent country, Mauritius, on the world map. No one knew about the existence of Mauritius, our lovely beaches, and gentle people when Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam landed in France for his first meeting in February 1969 with the French President, General De Gaulle.

At the time, our Embassy in Paris, the first one to be set up overseas, was only six months old. We had just moved to the magnificent building at 68 Boulevard de Courcelles from Hotel Castiglione just opposite the Palais de l’Elysée where we had started operating.

Raymond Chasle, First Counsellor, and myself, First Secretary, were the two diplomats to assist our Ambassador, Sir Guy Forget, a great humanist and former Minister of Health, who occasionally dabbled in poetry. He loved to say in a very humble way that there were three and a half poets at the Embassy, the half being SGF himself and the whole ones being Chasle, myself and Jean-Georges Prosper, author of our national anthem “Motherland”... We spent the first months building contacts and getting to know the Officials, top civil servants at the Palace of the President, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at Quai d’Orsay. Then we were busy preparing the first State visit of our Prime Minister in France. Sir Seewoosagur commanded respect as a responsible and wise statesman and such was the impression made on the French leaders that they most readily wanted to do everything they could for Mauritius in all spheres, they added.

The next day, the news of the Mauritian Prime Minister’s visit was splashed in the papers. Our francophonie endeared us to the French people from the start. They were delighted and pleased to discover and welcome from the English-speaking Commonwealth a Prime Minister of Indian origin who spoke French and loved France. Mauritius was received with warmth, something like a lost relative coming back to the fold. Our goodwill capital had just been created.

The French people were keen to know more about Mauritius and its people, the languages we spoke, the religions we practised, and above all, how we were able to live peacefully together despite all our wide ranging differences. We met with the journalists several times a week. A youthful Patrick Poivre d’Arvor came to us for help on a project on Mauritius that was to launch his career. We responded profusely to their enquiries. We were considerably helped by news agencies like Reuters and AFP. Le Figaro carried interviews and Le Monde had a special page on Mauritian poets and writers.

A sort of love affair had started. The French public who wanted to discover our séga invited our ségatiers to perform at Confolens. Most of them remained in France to start a new career in the show
business. Visiting the Paris Fair where we had a stand for the first time, French President Pompidou attracted attention on Mauritius by staying longer with us, asking questions about our products, took one of the exhibits in his hand and was asked some questions by the press. He was stressing the special ties France now had with our country.

The main strategy at the Embassy was to take advantage of this breakthrough. Contacts were established with the business sector, meetings were held, among others, with Air France, or the Compagnie Havraise Péninsulaire de Navigation to transport French donation of flour to Mauritius. Gilbert Trigano agreed to set up a Club Méditerranée in Mauritius.

On 1 December 1969, Sir Seewoosagur reshuffled his cabinet making Gaëtan Duval his successor as the new Minister of External Affairs, also responsible for Tourism and Emigration. Always in good humour, witty, brilliant with a prodigious memory, quick at grasping any complex situation and making the right decisions, it was indeed a pleasure to work with Gaëtan Duval. He had such great confidence in Chasle and me that he often signed blank letter headed paper trusting us to fill the page as directed. Always seeing the bright side of things he saw no obstacle that would stop him. He was above all pragmatic and to say the least, unconventional.

Apart from diplomatic work proper, meaning official interaction with the French Government, the Embassy was extremely busy doing a lot of consular work, which consisted mainly in establishing contacts and pleading with the relevant authorities at relevant Ministries and Préfecture de Police to prevent deportation and obtain work and residence permits for the hundreds of our countrymen arriving illegally in France, many without adequate financial means. Also requiring help and assistance were students arriving for the first time in France for their University studies, many of them beneficiaries of scholarships now being granted by the French Government though a new Cultural agreement with Mauritius. Receiving full support back home and most professionally from Régis Fanchette as Director of Tourism, and working with the network of tourism and travel agencies in France, the Minister won the Etoile d’Or du Tourisme, on 19 December 1971.

His most important new assignment, however, was to take over the work started by Sir Seewoosagur, with the same road map to France, Francophonie, Africa and the EEC. The Minister first came into contact with all the African French speaking leaders gathered at Niamey for the setting up of a French-speaking international body comparable to the Commonwealth Secretariat in the English speaking world. I met him at Bourget airport where I accompanied Raymond Chasle to see him off and at the Salon d’Honneur, our colleagues from other African Embassies were also there with their Ministers and delegation,
wishing them a safe trip. Minister Duval must have realised that he was going to be a one-man delegation with no one to advise him on spot and after the meeting, to do the reporting and the follow-up. All of a sudden, he asked me to accompany him. I boarded the plane without my passport, with no luggage and no money. And also no problem entering Niger, being welcome at the Salon d’Honneur where nobody cared to check my identity. Thus as a second member of the Mauritian Delegation, I was able to participate in a momentous and historic event: the birth of ACCT, or Agence de Coopération Culturelle et Technique. On the way back, I encountered no problem either at the Bourget Salon d’Honneur. Again, as at Niamey airport, no immigration officer asked to see my passport. Today, it would be impossible for such a situation to happen.

Little is known or has been said about what the experience of the first diplomats and other officers settling overseas. Like true pioneers, they actually led Spartan lives. Who would believe that at the time the First Secretary could not afford Christmas or New Year presents for his children? The explanation was that we had a new Ministry with no one there with proper knowledge of the environment or the cost of living in a developed country where our officers were sent out to live. So HQ was still working out the right quantum of the various allowances for the officers overseas and finalizing the terms and conditions of service of its staff overseas. True, the difficulties and hardships caused immense frustration and made the officers wonder whether back home they cared and would want to understand. I can confirm, however, that every evening, after a whole day’s work, the feeling of having done our best for the country and our countrymen gave us immense satisfaction. Sir Seewoosagur always had the gentle attention or the caring word that draws the best out of you.

**How to be Non-Aligned**

The world was bipolar, but the Bandung meeting encouraged non-alignment. In the case of Mauritius, the choice was not a difficult one, considering that throughout our history we have been associated with the West, speaking both English and French, the languages of our former Colonial masters, and brought up in the Westminster tradition of Government and having had our doctors and lawyers trained in UK. For us the obvious choice was to side with the West, with careful pragmatism and foresight.

Despite this choice, our interests were not identical with those of UK, France or the US. We are culturally different from these countries, so we have different needs. First and foremost, having inherited two of the world’s richest and millennia-old cultures which have been nurturing the majority segment of the Mauritian population, with no interruption ever since they set foot on the island a most obvious decision would be to consolidate ties with India and China. India poses no problem so the ties...
were consolidated. But that was not the case with China, as we shall see later.

Any new leader on the world scene cannot ignore the existence of the USSR and China and as far as Mauritius is concerned, apartheid next door in South Africa and the UDI (Unilateral Declaration of Independence) in Southern Rhodesia.

One little known decision made by Sir Seewoosagur being a man of peace and reconciliation may surprise, but he made it in the higher interest of peace and human dignity. At the first CHOGM (Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting) on 13 January 1969, he attended as Prime Minister of Mauritius, he seconded the proposal by Tanzania to utilise force against the Smith Regime in Southern Rhodesia.

Now our newly independent country needed professionals, doctors, engineers, scientists and lots of scholarships were on offer from the USSR for training in the satellite countries in Central or Eastern Europe. Both sides of the iron curtain were determined to win the minds and hearts of the youths of developing countries. Sir Seewoosagur’s Government did not turn down the offer and it was through MP L. Badry that the scholarships were channeled, which earned him the nickname of the Moscow Man. Indeed thanks to Badry and those scholarships, hundreds of Mauritians had the chance of receiving tertiary education and climb up the social ladder. Another indirect by product of the scholarship scheme has been the creation of a new ethnic community issuing from couples that were formed during the student days. Today, the new tourists from Russia and Central Europe are delighted to meet with Mauritians familiar with eastern european culture, who speak their languages and help them feel more at
home away from their countries, which is indeed a positive outcome of the Cold War scholarship war.

Being a man of vision, Sir Seewoosagur thought well ahead of his time, that too at a time when China was not admired as today but an enemy that had waged a war against the US in Korea and so had to be avoided. So despite advice to the contrary, on 15 February 1972 he went on a State visit to China. (He returned home with an offer of an interest free loan of Rs 230 million to build a second airport in the North. Unfortunately internal politicking killed the project). This was followed by the signature of an Accord of mutual recognition and the establishment of diplomatic relations on 15 April.

China like India is a country with a rich past and a very long memory that fills the present. That country and its leaders will never forget that in times of need Mauritius was one of the rare countries to have resisted pressures and chosen to recognise China and establish relations with it. Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam made the courageous decision without expecting any benefits then. He knew he was looking very far ahead, and this reminds me of what he told me once: “Whatever you do, think of the consequences in the next twenty years”.

But today, after forty years, at the present juncture of our history, when the Lomé Accords have dried up, leaving the country in dire need of a helping hand, who would have known that China would step in with massive investments and beat back the threats of unemployment and an uncertain future for our children?

We are in duty bound to tell this to the younger generations, so they know that our economic development placing us ahead of so many developing countries is not the product of chance but of the overarching vision of a great man.

**Africa**

Sir Seewoosagur was a great man indeed not only for Mauritius, but known and admired also by his peers and the younger generations of ministers and diplomats who had the opportunity to be in his company. This I came to know having had the chance of forming part of his delegation to numerous international meetings in France, Africa, namely Senegal, Kenya, Ethiopia, to OAU Summits. Of all the nice comments I heard, I will never forget this one I heard from a Mauritanian colleague: “Ton Vieux-là, il me fait penser à un dicton berbère: Le vieillard allongé voit plus loin que le jeune homme debout”. He meant that in the desert, the Old Man lying on his carpet could see more things on the horizon than a younger person standing up. He meant Sir Seewoosagur had experience and vision.

How fantastic and profitable that he decided to look to Africa, and had both OCAM and OAU hold their Summits in Mauritius. Chairman of OAU, he first
won their trust and now we have access to a market of hundreds of millions.

The question may be asked: What did Africa gain in giving us so much, first by taking us on board the EAMA and then to the markets of the EEC and to the generous Sugar Protocol that helped us not only survive but put up truly exotic hotels and top market textile industries? Africa gave without a string attached; Mauritius also gave back spontaneously and generously.

What Mauritius gave to Africa can be summed up in the word: reconciliation. When negotiations started in Brussels, with francophone Africa countries already inside the EAMA and English-speaking Africa outside it, there were lot of uneasiness, mistrust and suspicion. The Francophones were worried that without substantial increase of FAC (Fonds d'Aide et de Coopération), now to be shared to a larger group of beneficiaries, they would be receiving a thinner slice of the cake. So they disliked the English-speaking Africa. This group that was already a member of the Commonwealth looked down on the Francophones they considered as valets or lackeys of France, and if the actual words were never used openly, they came out in unmistakable remarks, in the body language or in very private circles. Dialogue between them was nigh impossible, even if EEC translators were around and doing their job quite well they would not be available at odd hours for private conversations, which also happened to be part of the job. And this is where the Mauritian delegation stepped in.

Negotiations were carried out at different levels, first among the experts to reconcile positions within the Francophone and English-speaking groups, separately, then within the African group with both linguistic groups, and the other regional groups from the Caribbean and the Pacific. ACP countries now in the ACP have to agree among themselves and harmonize their positions before meeting the EEC experts, to sort out plenty of issues. There were ongoing meetings of the Committee of ACP Ambassadors to hear from the Group of experts and give them new directives or instructions. This Committee finalised all the documents and papers that were then submitted to Council of Ministers, which then met with the EEC Council of Ministers, where they only have serious matters of political importance to sort out and agree on.

I can safely say that at the Expert group meetings where they got down to the nitty-gritty to prepare what finally became Lomé I, the role of Mauritian diplomats and officials from home can never be overestimated or ignored. The Mauritian delegation comprising diplomats and experts from home equally at ease in both English and French were not only negotiators for their own Government but also interpreters and translators for their ACP colleagues.
Fishing facilities to the Russians - Why?

On 14 July 1969, Sir Seewoosagur announced an Agreement to grant fishing facilities to the Soviet trawlers at our Mahebourg harbour. This had the effect of a bombblast.

The Foreign and Colonial Office commented: "Mauritius and Soviet agreement had implications for the overall defence in the area."

No one will believe Sir Seewoosagur had no knowledge of the defence implications of such an agreement or that it would not upset the UK and the US. Why that move, then? Was it to express his displeasure at having been stripped of Diego Garcia? Was it to mean that Mauritius neither should nor be taken for granted? What is the complete story behind this decision, for which we have no satisfactory explanations yet?

Once at the Mission in Brussels, at the end of a discussion with the staff, he turned aside and said to me: "This I've learnt from the President of Tanzania who told me: If it's in your country's interest, just do it."

Since he did it, the question is: Where lies the Mauritian interest? We will continue to speculate until some day researchers have access to all the official documents and find out.

That cloud was allowed to float for several months until November when our External Affairs Minister made a statement in UK: "Mauritius remains firmly linked to the West." What had been going on during the time behind the scene?

There was another problem between the Prime Minister and his External Affairs Minister: the China issue. Gaëtan Duval was opposed to the establishment of ties with PRC. The matter came to a head: on 18 November, he walked out on the Cabinet, only to come back some days later on 10 December, proving thereby that Sir Seewoosagur had been right.

Conclusion

We can say in conclusion that Mauritius has been very fortunate indeed to have benefitted from the greatest patriot called Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam.

The choice he made to look both East (India and China) and West (Africa and France), has been at the basis of our economic take-off and development. With hindsight, we have to recognise that Sir Seewoosagur was very intelligent and wise in using the economic diplomacy paradigm for the smooth and fast sustainable social, economic and political growth of a nation with scarce natural resources.

By looking to Africa and Europe, he brought us Lomé and the Sugar Protocol.
SSR could not have been more far-sighted than to inviting Shrimati Indira Gandhi as the first Head of Government to visit us. With India that recognizes Mauritius as her younger sister, we know we can always rely on that country always to stand by our side and will never let us down in moments of need.

By recognizing China at the wrong moment, and inviting Ambassador Hwang Hua to our first Independence Celebration in 1968, Sir Seewoosagur endeared us to this great economic power today whose friendship has no price.

When in the eighties the EPZ was slowing down, it was Hong Kong that helped us out by coming back to Mauritius to invest and put up factories. At the time, it must be remembered many HK investors were uncertain about their fate in the event of HK reverting back to China. So they came back to where they had been welcomed before in the sixties.

Again today, the Sugar Protocol has come to an end, and as a result no more protected income but threats of unemployment. Even before we start realising the consequences of such a disaster, China appeared on the scene, offering billions to create work and jobs for more workers than we can supply.

Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam was not only Father of the Nation, Father of our economic development but also Father of our economic diplomacy.

By
Joseph Taang Mang Kin
Former Career Diplomat in Paris and Brussels
The Meteorological Services work round the clock using state-of-the-art technology to provide accurate and timely weather information to the population.

The basic function of the Meteorological Services is the assessment of weather conditions and the provision of timely forecasts. The ultimate objective is to ensure the safety of life and property on the territory of Mauritius.

The Meteorological Services also assist in ensuring safety of air traffic and navigation, in providing inputs for sustainable economic growth and protection of the environment and in enhancing quality of life.

The service relies on a highly skilled professional cadre to achieve its objectives. Other essential resources include the development of key infrastructure using new technologies resulting in computerized services, the establishment of a network of automatic weather stations and space-based technologies.
To improve its products, the station is continuously involved in the timely acquisition of real time climate and remotely sensed data, the archiving of such data, the preparation of climatological statistics, the constitution of an up-to-date databank and the monitoring of space-time evolution of weather in the South West Indian Ocean. It works in close collaboration with other meteorological stations of the region.

Besides the established function of providing cyclone information to the population, the Meteorological Services are now involved in awareness campaigns on tsunamis and the dissemination of real time warnings and in the monitoring of seismic activity in the Indian Ocean region.

It was in 1968 that Mauritius became a full member State of the World Meteorological Organisation and in view of its regional and international activities, the Meteorological Department became the Meteorological Services. As such, the Meteorological Services were called upon to bring their contribution in the fields of agro-meteorology, hydrology, oceanography, climatology and the protection of the environment, besides forecasts for the public, civil aviation and maritime services.

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**Some landmark dates of the Meteorological Services**

- **1977** Installation at Trou aux Cerfs of weather radar to track tropical cyclones.
- **1993** Installation of a Meteorological Distribution System through the Meteosat European Geostationary Satellite to enable acquisition of latest information from world meteorological centres.
- **1995** Upgrading of satellite picture receiving systems with high resolution picture transmission system and principal data user system.
- **1997** Computerisation of main Meteorological Office.
- **2004** Migration to new meteorological satellites with latest technology operated by METEOSAT.
- **2005** Establishment of a tsunami warning centre at the Meteorological Services.
- **2006** Opening of a Regional Meteorological Training and Research Centre at the Meteorological Services.
- **2007** Installation of a seismometer.
Rodrigues

Integrating the island within the mainstream of development

Major decisions have been taken since Independence to satisfy the increasing aspirations of the local population in Rodrigues. The most marked one has been the change in the status of the island in 2002 and the formal recognition of its specificity with the advent of autonomy. The aim was to enlist the full participation of the local population in the development of the community and, in a wider perspective, to integrate the island within the mainstream of the economic and social development of the State of Mauritius.

Rodrigues has witnessed considerable progress in all fields of life with numerous infrastructure projects thus enhancing the quality of life in the island.

Governance and Institutional Set-Up

In 1976, a Ministry was set up for the formulation and implementation of policies and programmes for the development of the island and the well-being of its population. The elected members of the constituency of

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Rodrigues occupied ministerial post on several occasions.

A major step forward was taken with the enactment in 1991 of the Rodrigues Local Council Act. The objective was to bring about a greater participation of the Rodriguans in the development efforts in the island. The 21 members of the Rodrigues Local Council (RLC) were appointed by the Minister for Rodrigues from among Non-Governmental organisations (NGOs).

The first Council supervised the execution of development projects as the provision of public amenities and community development projects relating to health, education, agriculture, public transport and the environment. Besides a grant for its operating expenses, the Rodrigues Local Council (RLC) was provided Rs 5 million annually for the
execution of community development projects. The term of office of the members was not extended and the Council ceased to exist.

The next landmark was the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act 2002 enacted by Parliament to provide for devolution of powers of the State in 47 areas of responsibilities to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly. A Regional Assembly was established and an Executive Council set up.

The socio-economic policies of the regional Executive Council comprising a team of professionals are geared towards higher economic growth through support to the major engines of economic growth, namely tourism, agriculture and SMEs.

A central theme of the Government programme is economic independence. The development of the private sector is high on the agenda of the Regional Government. Various measures have already been taken to boost local and foreign Investment through:

- The streamlining of procedures to establish private business
- The establishment of a Business and Investment Promotion Unit (BIPU) now restyled Invest Rodrigues, and an Economic Planning and Monitoring Unit
- The speedy processing of land lease for projects which are financially viable
- The provision of loans at concessionary rates and better terms and guarantee system at affordable cost, and promotion campaigns to increase tourism
- The implementation of these policies coupled with better support from the Central Government is having a significant impact with better socio-economic results.

*Invest Rodrigues* is aimed at the promotion and facilitation of private investment. Its functions include, among others:

- Policy formulation for promoting investment in Rodrigues
- A fast-track one stop shop for all types of businesses
- Promoting entrepreneurship and business skills
- Assistance to entrepreneurs in Business Plan preparation and sourcing of finance

**Sustainable Integrated Development Plan for Rodrigues**

The UNDP is partly financing the Sustainable Integrated Development Plan for Rodrigues” (SIDPR). The project which started in February 2006 is nearing completion. A Diagnostic Report has been prepared and the Draft Strategy and Action Plan are being finalised. The Plan will contain a Vision Document over a long term period and a short term Action Plan. The Plan has been prepared in
close consultation with the population at the grassroots level in line with the Integrated Development Planning approach.

**Facts and Figures**

**Population**

The population of the island of Rodrigues has increased from 18,335 in 1962 to 24,769 in 1972 to 31,527 in 1982 and 37,079 in 2006. The demographic indicators for the island has evolved favourably as follows:

![Table showing population data](image)

The life expectancy of males which was 62 years in 1970-74 has increased to 70 years in 1998-2002 while for females it has risen from 64 years to 76 years during the same period.

**Labour Force**

In 2006 the labour force which was estimated at 15,435 were involved in occupations as follows: Agriculture and fishing (5,070), manufacturing (1,030), construction (1,465), wholesale, retail trade restaurants and hotels (1,380), transport, storage and communication (920), financing, insurance, real estate and business services (270) and community, social and personal services and Government (3,480).

**Agriculture**

The Rodriguan economy is essentially based on agriculture, livestock rearing and fishing. The implementation of Agricultural Development Programme, the "Management of Agricultural and Natural Resources Project" followed by an Anti-Erosion Programme financed partly by the European Development Fund (EDF) have contributed enormously to the development of irrigation, the pastures and the valleys, the construction of access roads and the establishment of infrastructure facilities. The Agricultural Extension Services have also been strengthened.

**Livestock**

Rearing of cattle, sheep, goats and poultry is a traditional occupation and source of income for many Rodriguan...
households. New breeds of cattle and pigs have been introduced to upgrade the herds of local producers. A piglets production project has been launched and a programme of pasture development has been carried out with the participation of the farmers. The Veterinary Services at Citronelle are distributing vaccines free of charge to farmers.

**Forestry Development, Environment and Physical Planning**

Though in the past years Rodrigues has suffered from deforestation, new forests have been created in different regions for an ecologically sustainable development. The Commission for Environment is monitoring all environmental-related projects and overseeing the implementation of the provisions of the Environment Protection Act in Rodrigues as well.

**Fisheries Development**

The island is surrounded by a shallow lagoon of about 200 Km2 which is exploited by both professional and occasional fishermen. The number of registered professional fishermen has increased over the years. The following developments have taken place in the fisheries sector:

- Training of fishermen in the techniques of outer lagoon fishing
- Establishment of Fishing Aggregating Devices (FADS) on the coastal belt of Rodrigues
- The introduction of motorised fibre glass vessels and some game fishing vessels

**Tourism**

The tourist industry is now taking-off. Major hotels and guest houses have been established so that the number of rooms has increased since the early 1990s. Many tourists, mainly from Mauritius and Reunion, visit Rodrigues. The figures for 2007 are 33,298 for Mauritius and 15,118 for other countries.

**Manufacturing and Small Enterprise Development**

Many small enterprises, namely in sectors like stone crushing, baking, metal works, woodwork, garment making, shoe making and small agro-industries have been set up. These enterprises produce primarily for the limited local market.

Many financial institutions have opened their offices in Rodrigues. Five commercial banks have set up their branches there. Support institutions include:

- The Development Bank of Mauritius Ltd which has opened an office in Rodrigues and has set up two industrial buildings at la Ferme and Camp Du Roi.
- SEHDA which supports artisans and the development of SMEs
Airport Infrastructure

Extension of the runway and modernisation of the airport. The Plaine Corail airport now caters for a 72-seater ATR which provides daily air service between Mauritius and Rodrigues. Major developments include:
  - Installation of runway and approach lights that enable night flights
  - Construction of a new terminal building
  - Resurfacing and extension of the existing runway to cater for larger planes
  - Provision of sophisticated communication and fire fighting equipment

Port Development

The channel and port area at the Port Mathurin harbour has been dredged on two occasions and a new quay, container park and an administrative cum terminal building have been constructed. In addition, there is now a new warehouse for the storage of rice and other basic commodities.

Road Construction

Significant progress has been made in the reconstruction and resurfacing of existing roads and the construction of new roads. Major projects include:
  - Port Mathurin - Plaine Corail Road
  - Petite Butte - Songes Road
  - Mont Lubin - Cotton Bay Road
  - Port Mathurin- Baie Du Nord Road

Regulation of Public Transport

With the establishment of a sub-office of the National Transport Authority in Rodrigues in 1993, the public transport system has been regulated and regular bus services are available thus connecting most localities. Moreover, taxi services have been extended to major conurbations of Rodrigues. Road signposts have been installed and a modern Traffic Centre at Port Mathurin became operational in 1998.

Electricity

The electricity network has been extended throughout the whole island. Production capacity has gone up with the increase in the number of electrical generating sets and the construction of a new power station at Point Monier close to Port Mathurin.

Water

Water availability has always been an important factor constraining the socio-economic development of the island. In an attempt to alleviate the problem, the following projects have been implemented over the years:
  - Construction of small service reservoirs and distribution networks
  - Rehabilitation of existing dams
  - Construction of concrete and prefabricated reservoirs
  - Establishment of filtration plants and chlorinators at several sites
  - Drilling of boreholes.
n Installation of new water distribution network
n Surveys and geological studies to determine the sites for dam construction (Pistache)

**Extension of Telecommunication Services**

The number of connected subscribers has risen. At January 2008, there were about 8,000 fixed line subscribers. External communication has improved with the establishment of an earth station at Pointe Venus. Other measures to improve access to telecommunications services include:

n Introduction of cellular phones
n Establishment of a Consumer Service Centre at Port Mathurin
n Introduction of phone cards and sales points
n Extension of services throughout the island
n Internet services

**Enhancement of Broadcasting Coverage**

Both Radio and Television coverage have improved. Television which was introduced in the island in 1987 now broadcasts over a 24 hour basis, with the possibility for Rodriguans to receive Digital TNT. The variety of programmes caters for both educational and entertainment requirements.

**SOCIAL SERVICES**

**Medical and Health Services**

The island has witnessed significant infrastructure improvements in the Health Sector. Major developments include:

n Extension in the nineties of Queen Elizabeth Hospital at Crève Coeur with the construction of another block to house the Outpatients Department,
the Pharmacy, the X-Ray Department, the Laboratory, the Dental Unit and the Administration Section. A new 1400 m$^2$ wing is under construction at Queen Elizabeth Hospital to accommodate a Maternity and Paediatric Department.

- Setting-up of a paediatric ward, a Haemodialysis Unit, a Physiotherapy Unit and an Intensive Care Unit at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.
- Construction of concrete buildings at Mont Lubin and La Ferme to replace the old buildings of the Area Health Centres at these locations.
- Construction of new Community Health Centres and the improvement of existing ones, bringing the number of such centres to fourteen.

The Medical Services have been upgraded by the creation over the years of posts of medical, dental, nursing and other para-medical Officers. Over 75% of the para-medical posts are now held by Rodriguans, who continue to be trained in their respective fields.

Better treatment is now available with the posting in Rodrigues full-time medical staff consisting of 10 general Medical Officers, two dental Officers and medical specialists in the fields of paediatry, orthopaedics, surgery, gynaecology and anaesthesia. There is a schedule of regular visits of other specialists in ENT, Oral Surgery, Ophthalmology, Psychiatrics, etc.

Adequate provision is made in the Recurrent Budget of the Health Services to send to Mauritius by air (on Air Mauritius flights available every day) patients whose treatment is not available in Rodrigues.

Arrangements are now made for regular home visits by Medical Officers to elderly and handicapped persons.

Traditional food processing
A mobile Non-Communicable Diseases (NCD) Unit and an HIV/AIDS Unit are now operational. A special Health Project has been set up for students of colleges with a close monitoring and follow-up by the NCD Unit.

The main hospital at Crève Coeur as well as the two Area Health Centres are adequately equipped and medicines are available at all times. The ambulance service (including SAMU) is available round the clock and now consists of ten vehicles. Two new and well equipped ambulances are expected to join the fleet this year.

**Education**

Several pre-primary schools have been constructed and new primary schools established at Batatran, Terre Rouge. Consequently, gross enrolment rates have increased at pre-primary, primary and secondary levels.

There are 13 primary schools with an enrolment of 4,906 and the number of secondary schools has reached five with a total of 3,725 students, against only one formerly. The new secondary schools are Grande Montagne College, Le Chou College, Citron Donis College and Marechal College.

An improvement has also been observed in the CPE, SC and HSC Pass rates.

**Training**

The Le Chou Multi-purpose Training Centre of the Industrial and Vocational Training Board (IVTB) was inaugurated in January 1994. Depending on the demand of the economy, courses are dispensed in subjects such as Electrical Installation Work, Motor Mechanics, Welding and Metal Fabrication and Cabinet Making.

**Antenne Universitaire**

A University antenna was set up at Citronelle. It offers certificate courses in agriculture and in environmental studies. This was followed by the establishment of a Human Resource Centre which runs post-A level courses based on the local demand.

**Housing**

The cité houses which were established after independence have been rehabilitated and new core housing units, complete with all basic amenities, have been constructed under the Government housing programme. Some of them were implemented on a self-help basis with Government providing the materials and some labour.

**Youth and Sports**

Existing facilities and infrastructure have greatly helped in stimulating sports development. In recent years, residents of Rodrigues have excelled in several national and regional competitions.
The following projects have contributed to upgrade the sports infrastructure:

- A gymnasium of international standard at Malabar
- Four Youth Centres
- A stadium at Camp Du Roi with its synthetic track and a modern swimming pool at Marechal
- Sports complexes in densely populated areas

**Reform Institutions**

The Prison at Pointe la Guele has been renovated and extended by the construction of an administrative block. The compound has recently been fenced and a watch tower erected for more security. The Prison Staff has reached 41, all posts being held by Rodriguans. The probation and After Care Unit is now manned by three full-time Officers holding the Diploma in Social Work and having received proper training in the relevant field.

**Fire Services**

In the eighties, the old wooden building which housed the Fire Station was pulled down and a new station has been built at Camp du Roi. The Staff wholly consists of Rodriguans.

The Fire Services attend regularly to the discharge (from vessels calling at the harbour) of petroleum products to the filling station of Port Mathurin. They also provide back-up to the fire fighting crew stationed at the airport.

**Co-operatives**

Agro-industry, fishing, animal farming and handicrafts are the main areas where the cooperative movement is most active.

The Co-operatives Division organizes regular meetings with the 43 co-operative societies and carries out sensitization campaigns. It also motivates Rodriguans to become entrepreneurs and trains executive members of co-operative societies in the sound management of their businesses and good governance.

**Community Development**

Over the years, 51 Community Centres have been built in various localities. The Authorities hold frequent meetings with the Rodrigues Council of Social Services, Village Communities and Non-governmental organizations working for community development.

The above institutions receive appropriate support, advice and guidance as to the methods and financing of community projects in various fields of activity, especially those geared towards entrepreneurship. The local authorities also meet the executive members of village communities to stress the need for transparency and good governance in the management of their organizations.
The atoll of Agalega is situated at around 1,000 km north of Mauritius and consists of two islands: the North Island and the South Island. They cover a total area of 2,600 hectares. The atoll, which has a population of 275, is mainly planted with coconuts.

Agalega’s most important activity over a long period of time was to supply Mauritius with coconut oil and copra. The atoll was once known as *La Perle des Iles à Huile*.

Up to 1975, Agalega was managed by the private sector. After that, the atoll returned under government administration and was administered by the Agalega Corporation under the Agalega Corporation Act.

In 1982, the Agalega Corporation Act was repealed and replaced by the Outer Islands Development Corporation Act to include all outer islands within the state of Mauritius other than Rodrigues.
Agalega faces its own specific problems caused by such factors as smallness, remoteness, geographical location, frail ecosystems, lack of regular transport and communication, poor natural resources, limited fresh water supplies and heavy dependence on imports from Mauritius.

Despite all these problems, a lot of progress has been made over the years. A concrete example is housing. The housing project initiated in 1996 was to get rid of slums that previously existed and to give way to nice concrete dwellings. The house is rent-free, however a sum of Rs 150 is charged for maintenance.

**Infrastructure**

Water used is from rain water collected from the roofs of buildings stored in fibre glass tanks for drinking purposes and underground water from
shallow wells for other purposes. Since December 2005, electricity is provided to the three villages of Agalega on a 24-hour basis. The Corporation is considering reactivating the solar system which exists on the island.

Telephone facilities are available only on North Island. At present, there are only four telephone lines available. Arrangements are being made to extend the service to South Island as well as to provide Internet facilities.

**External Communications**

The islands are serviced four times yearly for the transport of goods and other stores materials.

The 'Dornier' plane of the National Coast Guard lands at Agalega only for emergency cases. Top priority is being given for the resurfacing of the airstrip.

**Economic Activities**

The islands were monetized in July 2002. The Mauritius Post & Cooperative Bank has a branch in Agalega. The Corporation also runs two shops, one on each island, where the inhabitants get all their requirements.

The only resource available on the islands is coconut. With its 2 600 hectares of land, Agalega has around 20 000 standing coconut trees distributed over an area of 500 hectares or around 20% of the total surface area.

The Corporation is now engaging in a relatively new activity, the exploitation of sea cucumber. It is also carrying out, in collaboration with the University of Mauritius, a project on the exploitation of seaweeds.
Education

There are two nurseries and two pre-primary schools in Agalega, run by the Corporation. As regard primary schools, each island has one. The students after their CPE examinations come to Mauritius for secondary education. They live with foster parents, relatives as well as in foyers.

However, a MEDCO Lower Secondary School has been set up in January 2008. The School is to run classes from Forms I to III. It also has a prevocational section.

At the beginning of each academic year the Corporation provides each student with uniforms, shoes, bags and books. A stipend of Rs 1 500 monthly is allocated to each of them to cater for their meals during school days.

Leisure

There are three Community Centres, one on each island, equipped with parabolic antenna, which enable the inhabitants to receive MBC TV1, TV2 and TV3 as well as radio programmes. There is also a library in each of the islands.
## Statistics

### Some figures indicating the leap forward

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<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>1968</th>
<th>1985</th>
<th>2006</th>
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<td>Population</td>
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<td>1 020 528</td>
<td>1 219 208</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gross Domestic Product (market prices)- Rs Mn</td>
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<td>16 618</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gross National Income (market prices)- Rs Mn</td>
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<tr>
<td>Per Capita Gross Domestic Product (market prices) Rs</td>
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<td>16 284</td>
<td>164 367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per Capita Gross National Product (market prices) Rs</td>
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<td>165 671</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Motor vehicles registered</td>
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<td>75 595</td>
<td>319 440</td>
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<tr>
<td>Buses for public transport</td>
<td>657</td>
<td>1 369</td>
<td>2 612</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education (primary) no. of pupils (Mtius &amp; Rodrigues)</td>
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<td>140 714</td>
<td>121 387</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education (secondary) no. of pupils (Mtius &amp; Rodrigues)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of schools (secondary) (Mtius &amp; Rodrigues)</td>
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<td>Special Hospitals (mental diseases, leprosy &amp; tuberculosis)</td>
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<td>Public dispensaries</td>
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<td>Television sets/Viewers' licenses</td>
<td>11 118</td>
<td>105 000</td>
<td>269 166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural production:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar cane (000 M/Tons)</td>
<td>5 152</td>
<td>5 583</td>
<td>4 749</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tea (Green Leaf Processed) (M/Tons)</td>
<td>11 062</td>
<td>42 651</td>
<td>7 649</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tobacco (Leaf) (M/Tons)</td>
<td>742</td>
<td>835</td>
<td>298</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish (M/Tons)</td>
<td>2 199</td>
<td>7 054</td>
<td>8 623</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Security: no. of beneficiaries of old age retirement pensions</td>
<td>41 760</td>
<td>74 168</td>
<td>126 344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism Sector:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of Hotels</td>
<td>N.A</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of Tourists</td>
<td>N.A</td>
<td>148 860</td>
<td>788 276</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Manufacturing Industry (no. of persons employed) 7,675 56,113 91,021  
Agriculture and Fishing (no. of persons employed) 56,431 48,292 35,613  
Employment (labour force) Males 83,122 278,000 360,300  
Employment (labour force) Females 23,776 105,500 205,600  
Total Labour Force 106,898 383,500 565,900  
Employment in Sugar Industry (no. of persons) 51,162 42,882 15,805  
Employment in Government Services (no. of persons) 45,944 55,028 95,488  
**Roads:** Length of roads (km) 1,316 1,783 2,021  
  - Motorways (km) 15 27 55  
  - Main roads (km) 544 840 N.A  
  - Secondary roads (km) 757 577 N.A  
  - Other roads (km) N.A 339 947  
  - A class Roads n n 227  
  - B class Roads n n 792  

* N.A - Not available  
* n - Not applicable
Constitutional Evolution of Mauritius

1715 - French occupation begins.

1722 - 1765 - Administration of Isle de France by French East India Company. A six-member Provincial Council headed by a Governor is set up. It is later known as the 'Conseil Supérieur'.

1767 - Royal Government till the French Revolution. Setting up of a Colonial Assembly made up of 24 elected members.

1810 - The British capture the island.

1814 - Treaty of Paris signed ceding Mauritius to Great Britain

1825 - Establishment of First Council of Government, made up of the Governor and officials.

1831 - Council of Government so as to admit non officials.

1885 - New Constitutional amendment to make provision for elected representatives to sit on the Council through limited suffrage.

1933 - A majority of non officials sit on the Council. Two non officials admitted to the Executive Council.

1948 - Extension of the franchise - hitherto restricted to persons within a certain income bracket and to proprietors and to all adults who could pass a simple literacy test. The number of electors subsequently rose from 11 799 to 71 723. General elections held in August 1948. The First legislative Council, comprising 19 elected members, 12 members appointed by the Governor and three officials met on 1 September 1948. The Constitution makes provision for a majority of non officials in the Executive Council.

1951 - Three members of the Executive Council appointed 'Liaison Officers'.
1955 & 1957 - The second and third Constitutional Conferences lead to the introduction of the ministerial system.

1958 - Following recommendations of the Trustram-Eve Commission, the island is divided into 40 single-member constituencies.

1959 - For the first time, elections are held on the basis of universal suffrage. In addition to the 40 elected members, 12 members are appointed by the Governor to sit on the Legislative Council.

1961 - A new level is reached with the Constitutional Review Conference which provides for two stages in the constitutional development:

1. Appointment of a Chief Minister, who should be consulted by the Governor on certain matters.
2. Self-rule after the elections of 1963.

1963 - The second level is reached after the general elections when the Chief Minister becomes Premier.

1965 - Visit of Mr. Anthony Greenwood, Secretary of State. Constitutional Conference held in September in London where the Secretary of State declares that the island should move to independence after the general elections based on a new electoral system to be recommended by a Commission.

1966 - Banwell Electoral Commission and subsequent visit of Mr. John. Stonehouse, Under Secretary of State to adjust certain recommendations of the Commission considered anomalous.

1967 - General elections held on 7 August on the basis of 20 three-member constituencies for Mauritius and a single constituency of two members for Rodrigues. Eight best-loser seats are allocated to ensure adequate representation of each community according to its population strength. On 22nd, the Legislative Assembly approves a Resolution requesting Her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom to take the necessary steps to give effect to the desire of the people of Mauritius to accede to Independence within the Commonwealth.

1968 - 12 March - Mauritius becomes an independent State. Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam becomes Prime Minister.

1970 - First Mauritian Governor-General, Sir Raman Osman, appointed.

1975 - Age of legal majority lowered to 18.

1982 - Constitution amended to provide for the function of Deputy Prime Minister.

1992 - 12 March - Mauritius attains the status of Republic. Sir Veerasamy Ringadoo becomes President.