Foreword

The object of this Yearbook is to present to the reader an insight into the activities of Government in 2008, including projects and major events as they unfolded during the year.

We hope it proves useful reference.

The Government Information Service wishes to place on record the precious contribution of ministries, departments and para-statal bodies in providing inputs for the production of this publication.

Editorial Team
March 2009
Contents

Prime Minister’s Office 9
Renewable Energy and Public Utilities 25
Tourism, Leisure and External Communications 35
Finance & Economic Empowerment 47
Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping 59
Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade 71
Industry, Science and Research 85
Housing and Lands 95
Local Government, Rodrigues and Outer Islands 101
Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare and Reform Institutions 117
Women’s Rights, Child Development and Family Welfare 127
Education, Culture and Human Resources 143
Agro Industry, Food Production and Security 159
Health and Quality of Life 171
Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives 179
Information and Communication Technology 189
Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment 199
Environment and National Development Unit 207
Civil Service and Administrative Reforms 213
Youth and Sports 223
The Judiciary 229
National Assembly 233
Foreign visits of the Prime Minister in 2008 - Highlights

Visit to India in the context of the Sixth Edition of the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD), New Delhi - 7 to 10 January

The Prime Minister was invited by the Government of India to be the Chief Guest of the 6th Edition of the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas. On that occasion, he was presented with the “Pravasi Bharatiya Samman”, the most distinguished award given to overseas Indians, by Smt Pratibha Devisingh Patil, President of the Republic of India. He also attended and addressed the GOPIO International Business Forum.

Visit to Bihar, India - 17 to 19 February

The main purpose of the visit was to consolidate the close ties of friendship between Mauritius and the State of Bihar, the ancestral home of many Mauritians. During his visit, the Prime Minister unveiled a bronze statue of Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam at Gandhi Maidan, Patna. He pledged a sum of US$ 250 000 to the Government of Bihar for the construction of a hospital, a high school and roads in the village of Harigaon, which he also visited. He also launched the book “From Bihar to Mauritius”, written by R. Nunkoo.

Mission to UK and France - 8 to 14 June

In UK, the Prime Minister attended a meeting of a representative group of Commonwealth Heads of State/Government to identify the underlying principles and actions to achieve reform of international institutions, like the World Bank and the IMF. He also met the British Prime Minister with whom he discussed the Chagos issue.

The Prime Minister also had discussions on the way forward with Mr Geoffrey Robertson, Q.C, a well-known Human Rights Lawyer, on the Chagos, particularly the human rights issue and with Mr Ian Brownlie, Q.C, our legal Consultant on the Chagos and Tromelin issues.
During a tête-à-tête with President Nicolas Sarkozy, the Prime Minister sought the assistance of the French Government to further empower the Police Force to fight criminality more effectively. Discussions also focused on the Tromelin issue and the proposal for ‘co-gestion’ of the island, as well as on the implementation of the “Maurice Ile Durable” project spearheaded by Mr Joël de Rosnay, French Expert of Mauritian origin, to make Mauritius less dependent on fossil fuel.

Three agreements were signed relating to cooperation in matters of internal security, the extension of the SSR International Airport and the supply of 130 000 tons of wheat annually to Les Moulins de la Concorde.

In Paris, the Prime Minister received the Prix Louise Michel, awarded generally each year to a high personality in recognition of his or her outstanding contribution in the political field.

**SADC Summit in South Africa - 16 to 17 August**

The Prime Minister participated in the 28th Summit Meeting of Heads of State and Government of the Southern African Development Community held in South Africa.

**Visit to Singapore – 8 & 9 October**

The Prime Minister had a working session with Mr Lee Hsien Loong, Prime Minister of Singapore, during which they exchanged views on a number of issues such as the international financial situation, the judicial system, global warming and its likely impact on small island States. A MoU was signed between the Government of Mauritius and Singapore Enterprise. Discussions also centered on bilateral and topical issues on the international agenda and paved the way for increased cooperation between Mauritius and Singapore.

**Mini Pravasi Bharatiya Divas – 10 &11 October**

The Prime Minister participated in the mini Pravasi Bharatiya Divas held in Singapore as Chief Guest Speaker.

**12th Francophone Summit of Heads of State and Government in Quebec - 17 to 19 October**

The Prime Minister led the Mauritian delegation. He chaired a Round Table on Environment which was attended by representatives of 14 countries, including the Prime Minister of Canada, the President of the Republic of Lebanon and the President of the Union of the Comoros.

**State matters -Highlights**

**Second Joint Working Group Meeting on Combating Terrorism and Related Matters - 11 to 12 February**

During the two-day Meeting, the Joint Working Group reviewed progress achieved in the implementation of the recommendations of the First Meeting in respect of terrorism and transnational crime. A MoU between the Financial Intelligence Unit (India) and the Financial Intelligence Unit (Mauritius) was also signed on 12 February 2008.

**Visit of Mr Thabo Mbeki, President of South Africa, 12 March**

Mr Thabo Mbeki, President of South Africa, was the chief guest for the celebration of the 40th Anniversary of the Independence of Mauritius in March 2008. Negotiations were also finalised regarding the MoU on economic cooperation between Mauritius and South Africa.
VISITS OF PM ABROAD - Snapshots

1. Welcome by French President Nicolas Sarkozy
2. Mauritius-France cooperation: signature of agreement on internal security
3. Meeting with Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh
4. With Baroness Ashton, European Commissioner for Trade
5. Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, Singapore: Addressing forum on Tourism and Hospitality
6. Tête-à-tête with Singapore PM Lee Hsien Loong
7. At 10 Downing Street with British Prime Minister Gordon Brown
SADC International Conference on Poverty and Development, 20 April

Mauritius hosted the SADC International Conference on Poverty and Development, the theme of which was “Regional Economic Integration: A Strategy for Poverty Eradication towards Sustainable Development”.

The main outcome of the Conference was the signature by the SADC Heads of State and Government of the “SADC Declaration on Poverty Eradication and Sustainable Development”. The Declaration identifies seven priority areas: food security, climate change, energy, trade, education, health and infrastructure development. It was also agreed that a Task Force on the current food crisis and comprising Ministers of Trade, Agriculture and Finance will be set up as well as Regional Poverty Observatory and a framework for the operationalisation of the SADC Development Fund and Public-Private Partnership Programmes and the harnessing of resources to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

Exchange of the Instruments of Ratification for the Treaty on Extradition between Mauritius and India, 23 June


Agreement between Mauritius and Madagascar on the Transfer of Prisoners, 26 July

The Agreement ‘Accord sur le transfert des personnes condamnées à une peine privative de liberté’ between the government of Mauritius and Madagascar was signed on 26 July in Mauritius.

Agreement between Mauritius and the Seychelles for the Delimitation of the Exclusive Economic Zone, 29 July.

Negotiations between Mauritius and the Seychelles for the delimitation of the Exclusive Economic Zone between the two States were successfully completed and the two countries signed an agreement to this effect on 29 July.

It was also agreed that the two countries would make a joint submission to the United Nations on the Limits of the Continental Shelf.

Circular Migration Arrangement with Australia - August

The possibility of establishing a Circular Migration arrangement with the Australian authorities was explored for the mutual benefits of the two countries.

Workshop on Circular Migration - 8-9 September

The workshop ‘Creating Development Benefits through Circular Migration’ was co-organized and co-funded by the Government of Mauritius and the European Commission. It was a follow-up to the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) held in Brussels in July 2007, where a session on circular migration was co-chaired by the European Commission and the Government of Mauritius.

Signature of Bilateral Agreement on Circular Migration between France and Mauritius - 23 September

France and Mauritius signed a bilateral agreement on circular migration, the “Accord entre le Gouvernement de la République Française et le Gouvernement de la République de Maurice relatif au séjour et à la migration circulaire de professionnels”. This agreement allows for skilled and low-skilled circular migration in 61 specific
sectors and the mobility of students, interns, young professionals and people with ‘compétences et talents’. The visa is for a maximum period of 15 months and is renewable.

Submission of reports to Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC) of United Nations Security Council (UNSC) - November

Pursuant to the UNSC resolution 1373 (2001), Mauritius has submitted six reports to the CTC, on the basis of which the CTC has prepared a Preliminary Implementation Assessment (PIA) to clarify the current status of the implementation of the UNSC resolution by Mauritius. Mauritius submitted its response to the PIA to the CTC at the end of November 2008.

General Framework Agreement between the Government of Quebec and Mauritius

A General Framework Agreement between the Government of Quebec and Mauritius encompassing several areas of cooperation is being finalized. The General Framework Agreement paves the way to foster closer collaboration on issues like circular migration, education, science/technology, environment and culture.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Participation of Mauritius in the Human Rights Council (HRC)

In the course of 2008, Mauritius was actively engaged in discussions on human rights issues at the level of the HRC, the principal organ of the UN system. The HRC held 3 regular sessions (in March, June and September 2008) and two special sessions in January and May 2008, dedicated respectively to human rights violations during the Israeli military attacks and incursions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and from the world food crisis.

Election of Mr. Dheerujlall Seetulsingh to the Advisory Committee of the UN Human Rights Council

Mr. Dheerujlall Seetulsingh, Chairperson of the National Human Rights Commission, was elected to the Advisory Committee of the UN Human Rights Council on 26 March in Geneva for a period of three years.

National Report for Review by the Human Rights Council (HRC) - Mid-October

Mauritius is to be assessed under the Universal Periodic Review Mechanism of the HRC at the fourth session of the UPR Working Group on 10 February 2009. In anticipation of this review, Government initiated, at mid-October, consultations for the preparation of a National Report, with the active participation of Ministries as well as of NGOs.

The National Human Rights Commission

- One-day workshop on Human Rights and Sex discrimination division, on 24 July, attended by some 55 Administrative cadre from different Ministries/Departments

- Three-day working session from the 13 to 15 October, on Police Oversight and Complaints Mechanism, attended by some 60 senior officers from Prime Minister’s Office, State Law Office, Supreme Court, ICAC, University of Mauritius, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Police and Prison Departments
Two-day working session (Training of trainers) to teach in Mauritian prisons and correctional centres to “Lir, Ekrir dan Kreol Morisien”, on 12 and 13 November for some 28 participants from NGOs dealing with education and rehabilitation of prisoners, Prison Officers and Prisons Welfare Officers

Workshop on Human Rights for some 37 newly recruited Police Officers on 9 December

POLICE

Special Mobile Force

Besides its day-to-day operations, the SMF was actively involved during search and rescue operations, events of national importance, cultural and religious celebrations, regional exercises, visits of foreign personalities and international conferences such as the SADC Conference on Poverty and Development.

The SMF also played a very prominent role during torrential rains in May and September, as well as during the floods in the wake of ex-Lola depression in March. Whenever required, members of the SMF reinforced regular police ranks.

National Coast Guard - Activities and projects

- Contraventions for illegal fishing within the Economic Exclusive Zone (EEZ) of Mauritius and for failing to keep licence onboard
- Search and Rescue Operations for people and boats in difficulty at sea
- Towing Assistance for vessels
- Torrential Rains - Warning the fishermen community and the public in general not to venture at sea and near the banks of rivers due to the risk of flooding
- Rescue operations and surface and underwater search operations during floods following ex-Lola
- Assistance to fishermen for recovering and towing drifted boats
- Joint Surveillance Missions (air and sea) in IOC waters
Joint Training with Foreign Naval Ships in Search and Rescue, Damage Control, Fire Fighting and Boarding Procedures and Operations

Joint exercises with Indian coastguard and with South African vessel

Training sessions on Oil Spill Control on board Indian coastguard vessel

Joint pollution response (POLRES) sea exercise conducted in collaboration with Indian coastguard

Security coverage at beaches and for personnel of the Mauritius Oceanography Institute during their surveys at sea

Joint search and rescue operations were also conducted together with Police Helicopter

Participation in Crack Down Operations

EEZ patrols (air and sea)

Operations for Medical/Casualty Evacuation and for turnaround of personnel in the outer islands

Maiden flight to Tromelin

Police Training School

A new recruit training package, which also provides for training of trainers, has been worked out. In that context, a Tutors scheme which responds to the quest of excellence in training and human resource development is being implemented. Some 28 Sub-Inspectors and Police Sergeants followed the course in May.

Other training sessions were organized in collaboration with friendly countries, national and international organizations for officers at various levels, including the SMF. Areas covered include: Forensic Awareness Training; Human Rights and Policing; Audition de Mineur; Money laundering; Road Safety Criminal Investigation; Police Oversight and Complaints Mechanism; Peace Keeping; Human Trafficking; Organised Crime.

IT Unit

The total number of personnel trained in Training in Computer Awareness/Cyber Crime for year 2008 was 426.

Projects

- Implementation of Crime Occurrence Tracking System (COTS)
  Main feature: Automating all processes from the lodging of a complaint at the Police station to the sentence of the court

- Automatic Vehicle location for all police vehicles (GPS)

- Turnkey Solution for Immigration and Border Control Systems at Passport and Immigration Office.
  Main features: No Embarkation/Disembarkation Card for Mauritian Citizens; No Embarkation/Disembarkation Card on Departure; A Disembarkation Card on arrival for foreigners only
- New building to house centralized Server Room and IT Unit
- E-Business Plan for computerization of Traffic Branch. The final report was officially submitted by the consultant in November

**Photo Robot**

During 2008, 30 portraits-robot were elaborated and helped in detecting many cases of larcenies and three important cases of rape.

**Firearm Index**

This project keeps track of the details of firearms in Mauritius. It is live as from 5 November 2008.

**Regular Police - Major Events/Achievements**

- Blood Donation at Line Barracks, organized by the SSU
- Opening of two new Police Stations in Rodrigues at La Ferme and Plaine Corail
- Opening of Bel Ombre Police Station
- Security Week at Rajiv Gandhi Science Centre, Bell Village
- Setting up of an Occupation Permit Office at the Passport and Immigration Office
- National Campaign against crime, with emphasis on tourist protection. Exhibition was held at Grand Bay
- Upgrading of Blue Bay Police Post
- Driving test now carried out in three stages, each part being conducted by a different examiner. Examiners start conducting driving tests as early as 07 30 hrs and work till 17 00 hrs

**Prisons Service**

**Activities and projects**

- Anti Tobacco Smoking Program - January to February
- Day Care and Substance Abuse Rehabilitation Program - January to December
- Psychosocial Support program for detainees living with HIV/AIDS - February
- Training Courses for Prisons Officers – April, May, August, September & November
- Induction Course and passing out parade for 106 Male Prison Officers - April
- Handing over of certificates to women detainees after ‘Leadership & Life skills’ course – May
- Phoenix Prison reopened in May after renovation and numerous facilities provided to detainees
- Study in Knowledge Attitudes Behavior and Practices (KABP) to obtain information on the HIV and AIDS epidemic and related issues from both detainees and prison officers - June
Commemorating International Day against Substance Abuse and Illicit Trafficking with emphasis on focusing mainly on raising inmates' level of awareness on the ill effects of substance abuse - June to July

Launching of Prison Dynamic Security Support Unit - July

Psychosocial Support Group for inmates on Methadone Maintenance Therapy - July to December

Reviewing of Capacity and HIV Service Needs in Prisons - August


Rabbit keeping, duck farming and bee keeping projects launched for detainees- August & September.

Launching of IEC campaign in all prisons on HIV/AIDS Prevention - August

HIV/AIDS Prevention campaign launched in all prison institutions so as to raise inmates’ level of awareness on the importance of early HIV test and on the risks of poor adherence to anti-retroviral treatment

Sexuality and Drug Educational Program initiated with the financial assistance of NATReSA - August – September - October

Foundation course on Substance Abuse Prevention for Prisons Officers – August, September & November

Nursery Project for Decorative Plants at Beau Bassin Prison Garden - September

Inner Change Freedom Initiative Program - October to November

Capacity building of HIV/AIDS service providers in prison – November

24 officers, including welfare cadre, medical and paramedical staff attended a four-day workshop in pre and post testing counseling and on management of HIV/AIDS cases in prison settings ran by an international consultant under IDF Grant of World Bank

Prison Youth Task Force initiated by NATReSA to allow young inmates to recognize their capacities and talents - November to December

World AIDS Day – Joint prevention program by AIDS and Drug Secretariats, focusing on the close reciprocal relationship between intravenous drug users and proliferation of HIV infection - November to December

Tremplin Industrial and Vocational Training School - November

The Petir Verger Prison has been preparing detainees for examination in “Gas Welding and Metal Fabrication” leading to the National Trade Certificate Level 3 at national level for the seventh time

Induction Unit - New Wing Prison (2008)

The Induction Unit caters for all admission to New Wing Prison. The Induction program is based on the principle of providing each detainee with all the necessary information so as to help him to settle down peacefully in serving his sentence, empower him in positive decision making and talking, rehabilitate himself from the criminal cycle and facilitate his integration in society
METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES

January
Training Seminar for Tsunami preparedness by American Experts

A training seminar for Tsunami preparedness was held at the Meteorological Services in January 2008. The Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO and the United States Geological Survey (USGS) conducted the training on Tsunami warnings.

Installation of Tsunami alarm system

An alarm system was installed at the Main Meteorological Office in Vacoas. It is triggered on a Personal Computer in order to alert working staff, if a Tsunami alert is received.

This system consists of fax, audio, email components. Emails can be received directly on portable phones.

March 21 – 22
Open day and exhibition on occasion of the World Meteorological Day

This year, the Mauritius Meteorological Services organized an open day and exhibition on that occasion. The event was celebrated as an outreach programe for general knowledge on activities of the Meteorological Services, related to Socio Economic Development.

April

Installation of photovoltaic cell for generating power at Agalega Meteorological Station.

Training on specialized software and Tsunami monitoring

May

Networking of seismometers with an array of same in the Indian Ocean.

The use of several seismometers placed in different parts of the globe is essential for the monitoring of earthquakes and Tsunamis.

October

Tsunami Emergency Scheme finalized.
The Tsunami Emergency Scheme was finalized under the leadership of the Mauritius Meteorological Services which is now incorporated in the Central Cyclone and Other Natural Disaster Scheme (under the aegis of the Prime Minister’s Office)

November

Networking of tide gauges in the Indian Ocean for monitoring of sea levels, specially for Tsunamis.
NATIONAL AIDS SECRETARIAT

January

A Procurement training as per World Bank operating procedures was conducted for the staff of the National AIDS Secretariat (NAS) and multi sectoral partners.

A competition open to the public at large was launched with a view to obtaining a national logo which would represent the national response against HIV/AIDS.

February

In view of the application for grants from the Global Fund to fight Tuberculosis, AIDS and Malaria (GFTAM), Round 8, a Mauritius Country Coordinating Mechanism (CCM) was set up in accordance with the GFTAM guidelines. The Mauritius CCM is a partnership consisting of representatives of the Government, NGOs/CBOs, Key Affected Groups, People Living with HIV, the Private Sector, United Nations Agencies, Faith Based Organisations, the Academic Sector and Trade Unions.

March

Activities in view of the preparation of a proposal to be submitted to the Global Fund for grant application were launched.

May

An Institutional Assessment of the national HIV/AIDS response was carried out.

A skills and Institutional Capacity Assessment for a multisectoral response to HIV/AIDS was carried out.
October

The new logo symbolising the national response against HIV/AIDS was officially launched by the Secretary for Home Affairs.

November

Following assessments carried out in August, a one-week training on Programme Coordination and management was carried out for the staff of NAS and stakeholders and Clinical management of HIV/AIDS in the prisons setting was also carried out for prison staff.

NAS, together with the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life organised the 7th Indian Ocean Colloque on HIV/AIDS a yearly three-day event which brings together all actors involved in the HIV/AIDS response in countries of the Indian Ocean Commission. 450 delegates attended this colloque.

Following official notification from the GFTAM that Mauritius’ proposal has been retained and accepted for funding for a sum of € 7 890 632 over 5 years, consultations and activities are initiated with CCM members and stakeholders on the way forward.

December

NAS in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life organised several activities in the context of the World AIDS Day 2008.
COMMISSION FOR THE DEMOCRATISATION OF THE ECONOMY

January

Launching of a Joint Venture between Shristi/SREL, an Indian Infrastructure Company, and the State Investment Corporation. Objective: broadening the infrastructure investment horizon of Mauritius and the inclusion of smaller companies.

February

Cooperation with the Ministry of Agro Industry for milk production – Pilot Project on “Proposition d’Implantation d’une Ferme Modèle – Filière Laitière.”

April

Preparation of the Terms of Reference for negotiations with sugar estates. Start of preparatory meetings with all stakeholders.

May – June

Meeting with Metayers, Mauritius Sugar Authority, Food and Agricultural Research Council, Agricultural Research and Extension Unit, Ministry of Agro Industry, Sugar Insurance Fund Board, State Law Office.

Start of negotiations with the Mauritius Sugar Producers Association.

Preparatory meetings with delegates of AADICON BIOTECHNOLOGY LTD, Pune, India, for the setting up of a multidimensional biotechnology project in Mauritius.

July

Finalisation and conclusion of review of conditions for metayers.

August to November

Research and preparation of Report on Individual Social Housing Scheme on 1 000 acres of Mauritius Sugar Producers Association Land.

Cooperation with the Prime Minister’s Office on the agreement between Government of Mauritius and the Mauritius Sugar Producers’ Association – Land under 2000 A Scheme.

Launching of works on the setting up of Organic Farming as an economic activity for small farmers in Mauritius and Rodrigues.
Maurice Ile Durable
Exploring sources of renewable energy
Optimising water resources
A healthy living environment
RENEWABLE ENERGY AND PUBLIC UTILITIES

Maurice Ile Durable

Exploring sources of renewable energy
Optimising water resources
A healthy living environment

MAURICE ILE DURABLE

The Maurice Ile Durable Fund was set up by regulations under the Finance and Audit Act as a specialized fund to finance, among others:

- Schemes for the preservation of local natural resources with a view to achieving sustainable development and adapting to climate change; and
- Projects to explore and harness all potential for local sources of renewable energy and to reduce dependency on imported fossil fuels.

Amendment and proclamation of Utility Regulatory Act 2004

The Utility Regulatory Authority Act 2004 was amended in order to provide for the appointment of Chairperson and Commissioners of the Utility Regulatory Authority. The amendment also provides for the Authority to examine and make recommendations to a licensee in respect of any Power Purchase Agreement proposed to be signed, or entered into by it and in respect of any management services contract, operation and maintenance contract or any other contract which it proposes to enter into in relation to water services or waste disposal services.

ENERGY SECTOR

Energy Policy

Government adopted the Energy report prepared by Kantor Group as the energy policy for the period 2009-2025 subject to recommendations outside the remit of the Ministry of Renewable Energy and Public Utilities being referred to the relevant Ministries for prior assessment and consultations and the Energy Policy for Rodrigues be submitted to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly for appropriate action.

Transmission and Distribution Network

The overhead network was extended by 216 km bringing the total overhead lines to 6 505 km inclusive of 257 km of transmission lines. During the same period, the underground network was extended by 14 km to take the total route length to 443 km.
Customer Service

The customer base reached 373,803 representing a 2% increase over 2006. Several projects were initiated, namely:

- Enhancement of Fraud Squad to mitigate non technical losses island wide
- The refurbishing of Customer Services Centres
- Daily invoicing for Ledger Category representing 55% of total revenue
- International benchmarking through adherence to the NESIS network

Information Technology

A new bill was launched on a pilot basis. This new bill was scheduled to be extended to all CEB customers in 2008 in view of positive feedback received. The communication lines were upgraded for operation 64 kbps to 128 kbps with links from Curepipe to Goodlands and Curepipe to Mahebourg offices respectively.

Corporate Planning and Research

Negotiation of Power Purchase Agreements under way: for (Mauritius) CT Power for the setting up of a 2x55 MW coal-fired plant at Pointes aux Caves and Gamma Energy limited for a 20 MW waste-to-energy power plant at La Chaumière.

Customer Data Base in Rodrigues

The customer data base reached 11,486 representing a 3% increase over 2006. Sales of electricity reached 24.7 GWh representing an increase of 0.4% over 2006.
Project to Overcome Barriers to Energy Efficiency in Buildings

The three-year project is intended to overcome barriers to energy efficiency in buildings in Mauritius and to stimulate the development of a market for and non-residential building energy efficiency in both existing stock and future buildings.

Review and Modernization of the Existing Tariff Structure

A bidding exercise was launched in November for obtaining proposal from consulting firms for the review and modernization of the existing tariff structure and rate.

Wind Farm in Rodrigues

EIA license obtained for the setting up of a new Wind Farm in Rodrigues of capacity of about 2 MW.

Solar Water Heater Project

The Solar water heater project was launched to encourage use of solar heating systems in households and ensure electricity savings. A grant of Rs 10 000 is being provided for the purchase of solar water heaters by domestic users together with a soft loan of Rs 15 000 provided by the Development Bank of Mauritius.

Grid Code

Tenders invited for recruitment of consultant under a UNDP funded programme to work on the grid code as from January 2009 with a view to enable small power producers to integrate the power generation system. The Grid Code shall define the rights, responsibilities and conduct of various parties having access to the power system. It shall establish standard procedures and technical specifications for interconnection and performance specifications.

Compact Fluorescent Lamps

Scheme launched to replace the conventional lamps by CFL lamps to encourage energy efficiency. CFL lamps sold to customers at a subsidized rate of Rs 40 for three lamps. The use of CFL lamps is expected to reduce energy consumption and alleviate expenditure of households on electricity.

Joint Project by the University of Mauritius and the University of Compiègne

Maurice Ile Durable Fund is financing a joint project by the University of Mauritius and the University of Compiègne for the development of a Maurice Ile Durable. A conference will be held with the participation of the University of Compiègne.

Energy Efficiency Bill

Tenders invited for recruitment of consultant under a UNDP funded programme to draft legislation including an Energy Efficiency Bill as well as an Energy Labelling Regulations and assist in setting up of an Energy Efficiency Unit at the Ministry.

25 MW Wind Park at Bigara

Project being implemented on PPP basis. Tender invitations for PPP project already issued.
Lighting in Schools/Hospitals and Public Buildings

Maurice Ile Durable Fund is financing a project to replace all conventional lightings in public buildings, schools, hospitals by economic compact fluorescent lighting systems in order to ensure energy savings and efficiency.

Street Lighting

Maurice Ile Durable Fund approved financing for the replacement of 15 468 street lighting in rural and urban roads at the cost of Rs 15m.

Union Vale Power Substation

66KV Substation project completed in December and commissioned.

Replacement of Traffic Lights

There are about 191 traffic signal equipment in Mauritius with some 1 569 traffic heads which use conventional lights – incandescent bulbs or halogen bulbs. The Maurice Ile Durable Fund is financing the replacement of all traffic lights by LED signal lights at the cost of Rs 17m. This would lead to an annual savings of Rs 4.5m. LED lights have the advantage of low maintenance, longer design life, better visibility and high light intensity.

CENTRAL ELECTRICITY BOARD

Launching of tenders for the installation of 2 x 2.5 MW diesel generators for Pointe Monnier Power Station

The tender was launched for meeting increasing electricity demand in Rodrigues and for replacing the old MWM engines operating on diesel oil.

Launching of tender for the installation of 2 x 15 MW diesel generators for the redevelopment of Fort Victoria Power Station

On account of delays sustained for the execution of the various IPP power projects, the Board of the CEB decided in early 2008 to revive the project for the redevelopment of Fort Victoria Power Station.

Launching of tenders for the mini hydro plant of 337 kW at Nicolière

The Project for the installation of one mini-hydro plant of 337 kW at La Nicolière fits into the overall plan of the Government to exploit renewable energy. The Contract for Civil Works was awarded to Sotravic Ltée, while Exmont-Energo of Czech Republic will design, supply, install and commission the electromechanical equipment.

Signing of contract with Vergnet for the installation of 2 x 275 kW Wind Turbine at Rodrigues

Following the successful operation of three wind turbines at Trèfles in Rodrigues, the CEB decided to install a wind farm at Grenade with ten wind turbines each with a capacity of 275 kW. The first phase, which comprises two units, has been awarded to Vergnet SA of France following a tender exercise.
Erection of 66 kV line Combo – Henrietta

The erection of the 66 kV line fits in CEB’s project to strengthen its transmission network and improve the reliability of supply in Black River and Le Morne areas where major developments in respect of IRS projects are in the pipeline.

Construction of Anahita substation

The construction of Anahita substation was intended mainly for meeting load requirement for Anahita Hotel and the associated IRS project at Beau Champ as well as coping with the increasing load in the Eastern part of the island.

Renovation of Customer Service Centre at Vacoas

Renovation of Customer Service Centres falls within the objective of the CEB to provide a modern, comfortable and high standard and more customer friendly offices.

Launching of CFL Campaign

In view of the success obtained in Reunion regarding the sale of CFL (decrease in the peak demand by the order of 15 MW), the CEB decided to embark on a similar project with the objective of reducing the peak demand and helping its customers to decrease their monthly consumption.

Distribution of CFL and Thematic Gifts to Secondary Educational Institutions

The distribution of CFL to secondary educational institutions, which did not form part of the CFL campaign as summarised above, was intended to sensitise students about the benefits of using low energy consumption bulbs (CFL) as compared to incandescent lamps and to raise their awareness about the environment.

Launching of World Day for Safety and Health

CEB launched activities in the context of the World Day for Safety and Health, in line with its objective to promote a culture of Safety and Health both at the workplace and at the national level.
Signing of Power Purchase Agreement with the (Mauritius) CT Power

The CEB signed a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) with the (Mauritius) CT Power on 23 December for the purchase of electricity from a 2 x 55 MW Coal Power Plant to be set up at Pointes aux Caves.

Water

Ebène Trianon Water supply

- Development of new boreholes, construction of new pumping stations and other water supply infrastructure to sustain developments in Ebene, Highlands and Valentina regions
- Feasibility and design completed in June 2008 and tenders invited in December 2008

Design of Meldrum Reservoir and associated pipelines

Project consists of construction of a new water storage tank of 2 500 m$^3$ capacity at Meldrum Street, Beau Bassin, construction of two new pumping mains of diameters 250mm and 300mm from the boreholes to the new reservoir, construction of service mains of diameters 250mm and 300mm from reservoir to the existing distribution systems. Project started in June 2008 and is ongoing.

South Mauritius Water Supply Project

Consultancy contract awarded and Phase 1 feasibility report submitted in August 2008, wherein the Consultant studied dam options on three rivers in the South, namely: Rivière La Chaux, Rivière des Anguilles and Rivière Baie du Cap. This dam is expected to produce some 50 million cubic metres of water annually, which will cater for domestic and irrigation water demand of that area up to year 2050.

Bagatelle Dam Project

Project will address problem of shortage of water supply in Port Louis by ensuring regular supply throughout the year while improving water supply in the Lower Plaines Wilhems. Contract awarded for Environmental Impact Assessment. Feasibility study completed.

Wastewater Management Authority

Grand Baie Sewerage Project

Project aims at collecting all wastewater in the region of Grand Baie and dispose of treated effluents in safe environmental manner. More than 1 808 house connections have been completed. Works are in progress at Pumping Station to connect 200 new premises.

Pailles Guibies Sewerage Project

Project consists in construction of main sewer lines and 1 600 house connections. Contract for way leaves awarded.
Baie du Tombeau Sewerage Project

Project consists in construction of sewerage reticulation for Port Louis North and Baie du Tombeau, pumping stations, long sea outfall, upgrading of wastewater treatment plant and house connections. 78% of works have been completed, including 217 house connections.

Plaines Wilhems Sewerage Project - Trunk Sewer

Construction of 24.8 km of trunk sewer and replacement of 11 km of CWA pipes. Works ongoing.

Plaines Wilhems Sewerage Project – Reticulation Network and House Connections

Project consists of 235 kms of reticulation including approximately 29 000 house connections. Works ongoing. Some 200 house connections carried out.

Works started in September on house connections in Quatre Bornes and in December for construction of reticulation networks and household connections in Rose Hill/Beau Bassin (4 000 house connections).

CHA and Low Cost Housing Sewerage Works – Phase IV

Contract awarded for feasibility study for provision of sewerage infrastructure on 27 sites. To be completed in May 2009.
MINISTRY OF TOURISM, LEISURE AND EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

Increasing the visibility of Mauritius
New niche markets
Sustainable tourism
Cultural tourism
New leisure facilities

Aviation security
Opening up of skies
The Port: A regional hub
Modernisation of infrastructure
The tourism sector has since been performing well recording positive growths in both arrivals and tourism receipts despite the current global financial crisis. Tourist arrivals for 2008 reached some 960,000 as compared to 906,971 for 2007, i.e representing an increase of +5.8%. Total receipts for 2008, amounted to Rs 443.3 million as compared to Rs 406.9 million for 2007.

Foreign Direct Investment stood at Rs 4.258 billion (provisional) as at June 2008, as compared to Rs 4.191 billion as at June 2007.

According to the Survey of Employment and Earnings, direct employment in hotels, restaurants and tourism establishments employing 10 persons or more stood at 28,129 at the end of March 2008, showing an increase of 6.9% over the figure of 26,322 for March 2007. Of this figure, 21,439 or 76.2% were engaged in hotels.

Taking into consideration the market diversification, liberalisation of air access and increased promotional campaigns in specific markets and based on a growth of 5.5% observed during the first semester of 2008, the Central Statistics Unit is forecasting a growth of 3.6%, i.e 940,000 arrivals over the figure of 906,971 in 2007, in spite of the financial crisis, which has affected our main source market. This performance is considered to be very satisfactory as compared to our rival island destinations, which seem to suffer more of this financial crisis on long haul travel.

Tourism Sector Strategy 2008-2015

A Tourism Sector Strategy Paper has been commissioned to support the objective of Government to develop Mauritius as an upmarket destination.

Hotel Development

The year 2008 witnessed the opening of three new hotels namely Grand Maritime, Four Seasons and Gold Leaf, with an investment of Rs 4.2 billion and a room capacity of 349.

During the same year, three hotels were reconstructed namely Valtur, Pearl Beach and Les Pavillons adding 335 new rooms and which necessitated an investment of Rs 1.9 billion.

In addition, seven hotels have been renovated and have added 254 new rooms at the cost of Rs 1.84 billion.
Tourism Signage Programme

As part of the strategy to enhance the attractiveness of the island, the Ministry implemented a Tourism Signage Programme with a view to facilitating visitorship to major places of attractions. The programme aims at providing useful information and guidance on places of attraction through the introduction of pedestrian and vehicular signs in line with international standards. This programme will also contribute towards promoting the local economy and increasing tourist expenditure outside hotels.

The signage programme is being implemented in phases since last year in identified routes. To date, directional and informational signs have already been placed in the routes covering the region Albion via Rivière Noire to Rivière des Galets and the regions Curepipe, Nouvelle France, Souillac Rochester Falls and Mahébourg.

This programme is now being extended to other designated routes covering the regions Port Louis to Grand Bay and Grand Bay to Poste de Flacq. The supply and placements of the signs in these routes are expected to be completed by March 2009.

Cultural and Historical Attraction

The tourism product portfolio is being diversified by developing and promoting sites including heritage buildings such as La Citadelle, which have a high tourism potential.

As regards La Citadelle, the historical fort is being restored and rehabilitated to render it more attractive. Some restoration works have already been carried out. These include the rehabilitation of the internal walls, the replacement of the metal windows and doors by wooden doors and shutters as per the original design and civil works in connection with water supply.

The construction of amenities and the renovation of part of the building for commercial purposes as well as roofing works are ongoing.
Upgrading of Beach Sites with Additional Amenities

Two coastal walkways are being constructed at Grand Bay and Trou D’Eau Douce. These places are highly popular among tourists.

The project consists of the setting up of platforms, steps, ramps and mooring facilities and amenities such as benches at viewpoints, handrails and lighting. This infrastructure will allow activities such as leisure walk, jogging, sightseeing at viewpoints etc.

The walkway at Grand Bay will stretch from Le Capitaine Restaurant to Sunset Boulevard over a distance of around two kilometres. The project is being implemented in phases. The first phase of the project which covers a distance of around 100 metres has been completed. The second phase has started and is expected to be completed by January 2009.

Consultancy services for the coastal walkway project at Trou D’eau Douce have been sought. The works are expected to start in May 2009 and to be completed by October 2009.

Reinforcing the Legal Framework

The Tourism Authority Act 2006 was amended in May 2008 to make the Act more functional and operative and to more effectively regulate the activities of the tourism sector. The main amendments pertain to:

- Ensuring better provisions to regulate the operation of tourist enterprises and in particular to enable the Tourism Authority to issue provisional pleasure craft licences and enforcement notices and define the base of operation and mooring place of pleasure crafts
- Empowering the Vice-Prime Minister to make regulations to implement a point system for suspension of skipper’s licence

Regulation and Control of Tourism-Related Activities

The regulation and control of tourism regulated activities form an integral part of the strategy to maintain the country as an upmarket destination. The aim is to promote the sustainable development of the tourism sector through a rigorous application of security standards, guidelines and code of practice.

Licensing of Tourism Establishments

The Tourism Authority, which is responsible for the regulation and control of tourism enterprises, issued 2 823 Tourism Enterprise Licences and 1 832 Pleasure Craft Licences for the period January to September.

During the same period, the Authority issued some eighty contraventions.

Improving Safety in Tourism Establishments and at Sea

The Tourism Authority has increased inspection visits in bungalows, villas and tourism establishments to enforce safety and security standards.

It also organised training courses for skippers to ensure that the latter have the necessary knowledge and skills to manoeuvre pleasure crafts safely.
Zoning of Lagoons

The objective behind zoning of lagoons is to provide for the safety and security to sea users and enhance their touring experiences in the lagoon and around islets. It also aims at diversifying the tourism product by promoting nautical activities in a safe environment. In this context, this Ministry has arranged for the demarcation of swimming zones through the fixing of marker buoys. These speed limits are being enforced by the National Coast Guard.

Speed limits for pleasure crafts have also been introduced by way of regulations in highly popular beaches such as Flic en Flac, Trou D’Eau Douce, Bel Ombre and Le Morne. To this end, marker buoys have been fixed in the lagoons of these beaches.

In addition, permanent moorings have also been placed at diving sites to protect the marine eco-system.

Measures to Prevent Aggression Against Tourists

A series of measures have been taken to reduce the number of aggressions against tourists. These include:

- Regular patrols by Police du Tourisme in touristic areas
- 24-hour policing in northern and western divisions by Police du Tourisme
- Close monitoring by National Coast Guard at sea
- Installation of cameras and security alarm in tourist residences as well as hotels as a condition for granting licences
- Setting up of CCTV in regions of Grand Bay and Flic-en-Flac

Nautical activities for tourists in a safe environment
**Anti-poster Campaign**

In August, the Ministry organized an anti-poster campaign throughout the country in order to sensitize the population on the need to have a clean environment to strengthen the image of our country as a quality and upmarket destination. The main activity of the three-day campaign consisted in the removal of illegally affixed posters across the country.

The Ministry has also caused the Environment Protection Act 2002 to be amended to provide for severe penalties in respect of the illegal affixing of posters. In parallel, the Ministry has installed pollution-free poster panels in a few regions such as Moka, Curepipe and Quatre Bornes.

**Promotion of the Destination**

The Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority upgraded its market consolidation and diversification campaigns to meet the challenge of a global economic environment which started to show signs of slowdown during the first quarter of 2008. The focus of the campaigns was to consolidate and redynamise our traditional source markets in Europe and South Africa while pursuing our diversification strategy in the new and emerging markets with quick potential such as the Middle East, Eastern Europe, China, India and Australia.

**Rodrigues**

MTPA, together with the Rodrigues Tourism Office, participated in the following tourism fairs: BIT (February), MAP (March) and Top Resa (September). E-marketing, radio and press campaigns were organized in Mauritius and Reunion island and a joint promotional on-line campaign was conducted with Escape 2 in Ireland.

**MTPA’s Website**

MTPA commissioned a search engine optimization exercise in June to increase the visibility of its website. The existing website was also revamped and is now available in the following languages : English, French, Italian, German, Spanish and Brazilian Portuguese.

**Festival International Kreol**

MTPA actively participated in the organization of the Festival International Kreol 2008, the key event of the year. Over sixty journalists from overseas attended the event with the objective of showcasing the kreol culture to the outside world.

**Country Branding**

A branding exercise for Mauritius is being spearheaded, in collaboration with the Board of Investment, the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority, Enterprise Mauritius and other private and public sector organizations.

The objective of developing a strong brand for Mauritius is to obtain maximum international recognition and to better project our image not only as an established tourist destination but also a preferred location for investment and business.

**Promotion of Leisure**

This Ministry aims at being a leading agency in the provision and promotion of leisure, entertainment and recreational activities to eventually contribute towards a harmonious and stress free society.
During the year, the Ministry sponsored a list of active and routine leisure activities to give an opportunity to the public in general to spend their leisure outdoor. The activities, carried out on a frequent basis, included hiking, mountaineering, island tours and visits.

**Festival International Kreol**

The Ministry organised the third edition of the Festival International Kreol from 6-13 December 2008. This year the theme of the event was 'Liberté-Fierté-L’Égalité'. A series of activities was organised to valorise the creole culture that forms an integral part of our multi-cultural society, such as ‘Selebre La Fam Kreol’, ‘Sware Metis’, ‘Sware Tipik’, and ‘Sware Poesie’.

A popular attraction of the event was the all night concert which saw the participation of international, regional and local artists.

This mega event was attended by around 100,000 persons and was covered by the international press, thus providing international visibility to our destination.

**Welfare of Employees of the Tourism Sector**

The Tourism Employees Welfare Fund (TEWF) has been set up under the TEWF Act 2002 to provide for the social and economic welfare of employees of tourism enterprises and their families. The objectives of the Fund are to set up schemes and projects and carry out such other activities as may be considered desirable for promoting the welfare of employees of tourism enterprises and their families.

Since its inception, the Fund has been running a host of schemes.

During this year, the following additional schemes have been introduced:

- Best employee of the year award to promote excellence in the Tourism Sector
- TEWF Scholarship to sponsor the best student in Diploma in Hotel Management Course conducted by the IVTB/ SGD Hotel School of Mauritius

The Fund organized, in collaboration with other stakeholders, a Tourism Family Day for all its members on 28 September to commemorate the World Tourism Day.

A football festival was organized with a view to promoting sport activities among its members. The festival was open to all hotels, restaurants and tour operators.

The Fund organized the Waiters Race in collaboration with the Municipal Council and the Rotary Club of Quatre Bornes on 15 June.

**Blood Donation**

The Fund, in collaboration with La Pirogue Hotel, organized two blood donation campaigns together with free medical check up for employees of tourism enterprises of the Flic en Flac region as well as for the staff of the Sugar Beach resorts on 25 and 26 September respectively.
EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

Aviation security
Opening up of skies
The Port: A regional hub
Modernisation of infrastructure

CIVIL AVIATION

International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) – Universal Security Audit Programme (USAP)

ICAO carried out a Universal Security Audit in order to assess the degree of compliance of the aviation security system in Mauritius with international standards. A new Civil Aviation (Security) Regulations 2008 was promulgated and came into force during the month of February. The new regulation included measures for the definition of aviation security task and the allocation of the task among aviation security stakeholders.

ICAO – Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme

In March, the Department of Civil Aviation submitted to ICAO a corrective action plan which addresses all the findings of the Universal Safety Oversight Audit carried out by ICAO in October 2007. The aim of the audit was to assess the preparedness of Mauritius in discharging its responsibilities as a Contracting State to ICAO, with regards to the safety oversight functions of the Department of Civil Aviation as the regulatory body.

Non-Radar Area Control Training

Fourteen Air Traffic Control Officers and Air Traffic Control Supervisors were trained and rated in the provision of Area Control Service. The Course was conducted in the Area Control Centre in Mauritius by Air services Australia.

Aerodrome Licensing of Sir Gaetan Duval Airport

In March, the Department issued an aerodrome licence to Airport of Rodrigues Limited for the first time to enable the latter to operate the Sir Gaetan Duval Airport.

Supply of Liquid Crystal Display (LCD) Monitors for Air Situation Display Project

Consoles in the Control Tower and Area Control Centre for Air Traffic Control were equipped with the Cathode Ray Tube (CRT) monitors to visualize traffic in our Flight Information Region.
Electrical Installation Works, Including installation of a New Standby Generator at Bigara Transmitter Station

A project comprising of upgrading the electrical installation (including replacement of CEB transformers and installation of a new standby generator, was implemented. The objective is to provide a secure and reliable power supply for the operation of communication equipment based at the station.

Non Radar Approach Control Training

Thirteen Air Traffic Control Officers were trained and rated in the provision of Area and Approach Control Service. The course was conducted in the Area Control Centre in Mauritius by Air Services Australia.

Reduced Vertical Separation Minima (RVSM)

RVSM refers to the reduction in the vertical separation standard used by Air Traffic Controllers to separate aircraft in upper airspace (between 29 000 feet and 41 000 feet) from 2 000 feet to 1 000 feet.

The initiative has the effect of providing six additional levels to assign to aircraft flying between 29 000 feet and 41 000 feet thereby increasing the capacity of upper airspace and facilitating the task of the air traffic controllers and ensuring that more aircraft can be accommodated at their preferred flight levels.

The introduction of RVSM was the result of a coordinated effort between all countries of the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) Africa/Indian Ocean (AFI) Region.
Training

A refresher training for 13 Air Traffic Control Officers in anticipation of the forthcoming implementation of RVSM in the Mauritius airspace was carried out and run by two senior Air Traffic Management staff who had been previously trained as trainers.

Training in RVSM was also conducted for eight Approach Controllers.

Signature of Letters of Agreement

In order to establish procedures to coordinate air traffic movement with neighbouring Flight Information Regions - Air Traffic Coordination, letters of agreement were signed with neighbouring States like Australia, Maldives, India, Reunion, Seychelles and South Africa.

Civil Aviation Manuals

There is a requirement to issue a manual containing technical standards for licenses such as aircraft operator or aerodrome operator to comply with. In this context and pursuant to the Civil Aviation Regulations 2007, the Department of Civil Aviation issued a document namely the Civil Air Navigation Requirements of Mauritius (CANRM) which contains all the technical standards and requirements for aerodrome and heliport operations.

Aircraft Accident and Incident Investigation

Through the participation of the Department at the Accident Investigation and Prevention (AIG) Divisional Meeting of the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) held in Montreal, Canada, during the period 13 to 19 October, Mauritius contributed significantly in the formulation of amendments to the International Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) on the subject of “Aircraft Accident and Incident Investigation” as contained in Annex 13 to the Convention of International Civil Aviation.

Mauritius Air Traffic Management Contingency Plan

There is a need to have Contingency Plans to ensure that international flights continue to transit safely in the Mauritius FIR in the event of a complete failure of services such as air/ground communication. A draft Contingency Plan has been circulated to neighbouring States and to ICAO Regional Office for their review and comments. The Contingency Plans are activated in the event that air traffic and support services normally undertaken by the Mauritius Area Control Center become unavailable.

Awards

The Department of Civil Aviation has during the course of the year 2008 been conferred different awards namely:

- The Commonwealth Association for Public Administration and Management (CAPAM) 2008 International Innovators Award. The Department of Civil Aviation was among the semi-finalist and was awarded the Certificate of Hazareeing New Technology

- The award for the Best Anti-Corruption Framework - The Department of Civil Aviation was ranked 1st and assigned as the best anti-corruption bureau
MAURITIUS PORTS AUTHORITY

As the primary facilitator of the country’s international trade, Port Louis harbour is now geared to offer a world class service to shipping lines operating in the region. With its strong commitment to provide seamless service to its customers, the following infrastructure developmental projects have been accomplished in 2008:

- Strengthening of security measures through a new fencing system, improved gate controls and installation of an appropriate CCTV surveillance system implemented since April
- Commissioning of a new Harbour Radio Station in April with modern radio/communication and vessels’ tracking system so as to provide a better maritime service and enhance navigational safety
- Inauguration 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 in November
- Completion of 95% of the corrosion protection to steel piles at Port Louis Harbour and Port Mathurin

Cargo Handling Corporation Limited

Two Ship to Shore (STS) cranes were commissioned in April and started operations from then on. These two cranes will boost the capacity of container handling by 200 000 additional containers and also improve ship productivity.

CHCL also embarked on a project for acquiring the following yard equipment to match the extra capacity being generated with the commissioning of the three STS cranes:

(a) Four rubber tyred gantries;
(b) Fourteen tractors and fourteen trailers; and
(c) Four reachstackers

LT Field

The CHCL is an active partner in the new Port Community System. The Mauritius Cargo Community System Ltd (MACCS) has been set up with Government and private sector shareholding to manage the Cargo Community System.
FINANCE AND ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

- Integrating the global economy
- Democratisation of the economy
- Developing new pillars of growth
- Economic empowerment
- Resilience
- Fighting poverty
- Knowledge economy
FINANCE AND ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Integrating the global economy
Democratisation of the economy
Developing new pillars of growth
Economic empowerment
Resilience
Fighting poverty
Knowledge economy

**Investment Promotion:** The Board of Investment (BOI) and the Economic Development Board of Madagascar (EDBM) sign on 14 January a Memorandum of Understanding to promote and facilitate investment between Mauritius and Madagascar.

**Renewable energy:** Government agrees in January to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the “Agence Française de Développement” (AFD) providing technical assistance for promoting renewable energy technology in Mauritius and for diversifying our energy mix.


**Financial services promotion:** The Board of Investment in collaboration with the Commonwealth Secretariat organises, on 23 January, a four-day Symposium on enhancing value addition in the export of financial services.

**National Savings Fund:** The National Savings Fund (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations and the National Savings Fund (Collection of Contributions) (Amendment) Regulations promulgated under the National Savings Fund Act to provide for an increase in the minimum and maximum salaries on which contributions are payable to the National Savings Fund (January).

**COMESA Fund:** The COMESA Fund Committee meets for the first time on 31 January at Le Sirius Hotel in Port Louis. The objective of this meeting is to set the COMESA Fund on solid foundations and ensure its credibility vis-à-vis development partners.

**Financial and business hub:** Government makes a bid for the relocating of the Headquarters of the African Export-Import Bank (Afrexim Bank) in Mauritius in view of Government’s vision to make Mauritius a financial and business hub in the region.

**World Bank:** The World Bank opens on 12 February an office in Mauritius so as to underscore its commitment in terms of partnership and enhancement of efficient and effective engagement towards the country.
DTAA: A Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement with Tunisia was signed on 12 February in Tunis.

National Sewerage Programme: The Fifth Joint Donors’ Ministerial and Technical meeting on the Wastewater sector is held on 14 February. It aims at bringing together development partners to participate in a dialogue session with local decision makers on the implementation of the National Sewerage Programme.

Empowerment Programme: The Empowerment Programme organizes on 16 February, Job fair 2008 at the France Boyer de la Giroday SSS Plaine Magnien to inform job seekers on-the-job opportunities available in the emerging sectors and broadening the circle of job opportunities to each Mauritian while reducing unemployment and establishing social justice.

Integrated Resort Scheme: The SIT’s Hotel - Villa and IRS project is launched on 28 February at Le Bouchon at Eureka, Moka as a joint venture of the SIT and O.A.S.I.S/Crombie Partnership (O&C). This project is in line with the policy to democratize the IRS so that the benefits of that scheme can be spread more widely.

Empowerment Programme: The Empowerment Programme organizes on 23 February, Job Fair 2008 at the Lady Sushil Ramgoolam SSS Triolet informing job seekers on the job opportunities available in the emerging sectors and broadening the circle of job opportunities to each Mauritian while reducing unemployment and establishing social justice.

World Bank: The World Bank approves on 28 February a $30 million Development Policy Loan (DPL) for Mauritius. The loan is granted by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) under the Trade and Competitiveness programme to support on-going reforms to increase growth and competitiveness.

European Commission: A Small Grants Window Scheme is launched on 4 March under the Decentralised Cooperation Programme. Funds amounting Rs 52.4 million is allocated by the EU to finance the Small Grants Window.

Circular Migration: Mauritian nationals leave Mauritius on 7 March to work in Canada under Circular Migration project of the Empowerment Programme.

Financial Services: The IMF/World Bank conducted in February 2007 a Financial Sector Assessment Programme. Mauritius was assessed on its compliance to international norms like IAIS for insurance, BASLE for banking, IOSCO for capital markets, etc. The report has been approved and published on the website of the International Monetary Fund.

Anti-money laundering: The IMF/World Bank was in Mauritius in September and October 2007 to assess the anti-money laundering and the combating of the financing based on the FATF 40 plus 9 recommendation using the 2004 IMF Methodology

Business opportunities: The 2nd Africa–America-Asia business summit opens on 17 March at the Swami Vivekananda International Convention Centre at Pailles. The Summit serves as a platform to group policy makers, captains of industries, strategic investors as well as academicians.

Combating tax evasion: The Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA) in collaboration with the Commonwealth Association of Tax Administrators (CATA) organizes a Workshop for middle management tax officials from 17 to 28 March at its Headquarters in Port Louis. The topic of discussion is Combating Tax Evasion in Developing Economies.

Customs: The Customs Department of Mauritius Revenue Authority and the Association of Professional Freight Forwarders sign on 26 March in Port Louis a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) which aims at strengthening cooperation between the two organisations.
A Customs Mutual Administrative Assistance Agreement between the Republic of Mauritius and the Kingdom of the Netherlands was signed on 13 March in Port Louis.

Highlands Project: The Vice Prime Minister, Minister of Finance & Economic Development attends the “2008 Marchés International des Professionnels de L’Immobilier” (MIPIM) in Cannes with a view to promoting Mauritius as a top end of the market real estate destination and creating interest in the Highlands Project being promoted by State Land Development Company.

9th European Development: Mauritius and the European Union (EU) sign on 14 April, a financing agreement under the 9th European Development amounting to nearly Rs 800 million. This money represents grant funding that Mauritius received as compensation due to adverse fluctuations in its export earnings for 2006 and this is termed as FLEX in the EU terminology.

Sale by Levy: Modalities adopted to provide financial assistance from the Sale by Levy Solidarity Fund to deserving families who have lost their only residence through sale by levy (April).

SADC: Heads of State and of Government of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) attend on 20 April, the SADC International Conference on Poverty and Development held in Mauritius.

Finance and Audit: Introduction, on 25 April, into the National Assembly of:

- The Finance and Audit (Amendment) Bill which amends the Finance and Audit Act; and
- The Public Debt Management Bill which amends, consolidates and modernises laws relating to public loans, Treasury Bills, bonds and similar instruments and Government guarantees for a better management of public sector debt.
Technical Assistance Facility: A Technical Assistance Facility is set up on 2 May at the Ministry of Finance & Economic Development with the assistance of the UNDP and our major development partners to assist all Ministries and Departments to prepare sector strategies to align their programmes and projects to the reform agenda and to undertake feasibility studies with a view to developing a pipeline of projects which would constitute the Public Sector Investment Programme.

Funding from China: A delegation of the All-China Federation of Industry and Commerce meets on 5 May the Vice Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development and shows keen interest to invest in two major projects. They are namely the expansion and development of the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport and the construction of a dream bridge in Port Louis to relieve traffic congestion.

National Pay Council: The recommendations of the National Pay Council for the payment of salary compensation are approved (23 May).

Tax Reforms: The tax reforms have taken 36 000 individual income earners out of the tax net, lowered the tax burden of close to 25 000 persons, slashed corporate tax rates and reduced maximum personal income from 30% to 15% and significantly improved the fairness and efficiency of the tax system.

Empowerment Programme: The Empowerment Programme has placed and trained more than 4 000 unemployed, given technical support to some 100 SMEs from various sectors, trained some 500 retrenched women, assisted 4 160 planters overcome damage caused by cyclone Gamede, helped 493 pig breeders recover from devastation due to the swine fever epidemic and given access to finance to more than 480 entrepreneurs through the booster and quasi equity loan schemes. It has also come up with a financing scheme to allow over 1 000 in-lagoon fishers in Rodrigues to move to alternative sustainable economic activities.

National Empowerment Foundation: As the Empowerment Programme continues to be scaled up and requires more professionalization and a more permanent administrative structure, it is now being run by the National Empowerment Foundation, a state-owned, not-for-profit company.
**PRB:** The implementation in toto of the recommendations made by the Pay Research Bureau in its Report on Pay and Grading Structures and Conditions of Service in the Civil Service, Parastatal and other Statutory Bodies, Local Authorities, the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and Private Secondary Schools is approved to take effect from 1 July 2008.

The 2008-2009 Budget is presented on 6 June in the National Assembly by the Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development. This is the first Budget which has been presented and appropriated by the National Assembly on the basis of Programmes.

**Census:** The Central Statistics Office (CSO) announces on 2 July that it will conduct a Housing and Population Census in the Republic of Mauritius in 2010.

The 8th Session of the Seychelles-Mauritius Commission on Bilateral Cooperation (SMCBC) met on 10 July to strengthen cooperation and bilateral relations.

**Salary compensation:** 11 July: The National Assembly passes the Additional Remuneration Bill which provides for the payment, with effect from 1 July, of salary compensation for increase in the cost of living, as recommended by the National Pay Council, to all employees of the private sector.

**NSF and NPF:** The National Savings Fund (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations, the National Savings Fund (Collection of Contributions) (Amendment) Regulations, the National Pensions (Amendment of Schedules) Regulations and the National Pensions (Collection of Contributions) Regulations have been amended to provide for an increase in the minimum and maximum salaries on which contributions are payable to the National Savings Fund and the National Pensions Fund respectively.

**DTAA:** The Republic of Mauritius and the State of Qatar sign on 28 July a DTA agreement for the avoidance of double taxation and the prevention of fiscal evasion at MRA Headquarters in Port Louis.

**Pensions:** The National Pensions (Increase in Pensions) Regulations, the National Pensions (Pension Points) (Amendment) Regulations, the National Pensions (Industrial Injuries) (Amendment) Regulations and the National Pensions (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations have been promulgated to provide for the annual increase in Contributory Pensions, Disablement Pension and Survivor’s Pension to prevent erosion of the purchasing power of beneficiaries.

**Financial Services:** The new premises of the Financial Services Commission (FSC) in Ebène are inaugurated on 13 August by the Prime Minister.

**DBM:** The Development Bank of Mauritius Ltd raises the ceiling for loans under the quasi-equity scheme from Rs 400 000 to Rs 500 000. It also increased the limit on the booster loan scheme from Rs 75 000 to Rs 100 000.

Setting up of the following Funds, with their respective resource envelope:

- Maurice Ile Durable Fund (Rs 1.3 billion)
- Food Security Fund (Rs 1 billion)
- Human Resource, Knowledge and Arts Fund (Rs 1.05 billion)
- Local Infrastructure Fund (Rs 305 million)
- Social Housing Development Fund (Rs 500 million)
- Manufacturing Adjustment & SME Development Fund (Rs 500 million)
**Business Facilitation:** In the area of business facilitation which is crucial to investment and to attract foreign businesses, Government is finalising the Guidelines for permanent residence to be issued to eligible investors, professionals as provided in the Finance Act 2008. The regulations are expected to be in force early 2009.

**Real Estate Scheme:** Government is also giving permanent resident status to purchasers in Real Estate Scheme (RES) developments provided they buy a property worth at least US$ 500 000.

**Public Sector Investment Programme (PSIP):** The PSIP is revived. The Public Private Partnership (PPP) Unit is being strengthened to prepare a Ten-Year Infrastructure Development Plan. It will identify the cost of the infrastructure needs of the country and chart the best and most efficient implementation path.

**DCP:** The Decentralised Cooperation Programme (DCP) launches on 25 August two new finance mechanisms for Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), with an envelope of approximately Rs 98 million.

**DTAA:** The Vice Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Empowerment is on mission from 26 August to 2 September to Australia. The objectives of the mission are to hold discussions in connection with the signature of a Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement and a Tax Information Exchange Agreement with Australia and to promote Mauritius as a modern, friendly and reliable investment destination.

The **PRB Savings Scheme** is introduced on 27 August for employees of the Civil Service, parastatal bodies and local authorities.

**Climate Change and Trade:** The Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, and the Commonwealth Secretariat held on 2 September a two-day stakeholder meeting on Climate Change and Trade. The aim of this forum is to help smaller developing countries to understand the opportunities, and challenges they face with regard to climate change and trade policy and to be informed about policy choices.

**Strategic plan:** The National Audit Office (NAO) launches on 9 September its strategic plan 2007-2010 and its annual report 2006-2007.


**European Commission:** A first batch of contracts is awarded on 15 to 22 September beneficiaries for micro projects under the Small Grants Window, with a total funding of about Rs 7.5 million.

**European Commission:** A one-day Decentralised Cooperation Programme qualitative poverty assessment methodology workshop opens on 16 September in view of supporting the comprehensive policy to eradicate absolute poverty in Mauritius.

**The Bank of Mauritius** issues on 18 September a gold commemorative coin of Rs 1 000 denomination to mark the 40th anniversary of the independence of Mauritius and to honour Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam as the chief architect of Mauritius as a sovereign State.

**World Bank:** The new country Director of the World Bank for the southern region of Africa, Ms. Ruth Kagia, is, from 21 September, on a four-day visit in Mauritius to attend the Joint Country Programme Review.

**Corruption Perceptions Index:** On 25 September, Mauritius ranks 41st on the 2008 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) with a total score of 5.5 on a scale from zero (highly corrupt) to ten (highly clean) out of the 180 countries rated by the CPI. This ranking indicates an improvement in its perceived level of corruption as compared to the CPI index of 2007.
The Investment Project Process Manual is prepared in accordance with the Finance and Audit Act. The Manual is a set of guidelines for all investment projects including roads, IT, public utilities, public infrastructure.

Comesa Fund: The first meeting of the Regional Integration Support Mechanism (RISM) Advisory Committee is held on 29 September at the Lunch Room, followed by the third Meeting of the Ministerial Committee on the Comesa Fund Committee on 30 September. RISM Advisory Committee recommended the process for amending the Contribution Agreement for broadening the scope to include social and economic costs in addition to revenue losses. Ministerial Committee decided on the location of the COMESA Fund, namely, Mauritius.

Highlands Project: The State Land Development Co. Ltd presents, on 30 September, the Highlands Urban and Knowledge Industry Development Project. This project, spread over 920 hectares of land, is proposed as an integrated township and can be defined as a global city with world-class infrastructure and facilities conducive for business, living, learning and leisure: setting up of knowledge services-based industries, a state-of-the-art office complex, the development of world class residential and social amenities, space for leisure activities and nature tourism, hotels and resorts, as well as offices for Ministries and Government departments.

European Commission: The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Empowerment and the Head of the European Commission delegation in Mauritius sign on 6 October, a financing agreement of Rs 460 million under FLEX (Fluctuation in Export Earnings) instrument for the year 2007.

DTAA: The Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement with Tunisia comes into force on 28 October.

Circular Migration: In October, Mauritius participates at the Second Global Forum on Migration and Development in Manila, Philippines (27-30 October) where Mauritius together with the European Commission presented the Mauritian Circular Migration Project and the outcomes of the Workshop held in Mauritius in September. Mauritius also made a plea for support from development partners such as EC, IOM, OECD and World Bank for their support for the Circular Migration Pilot Project.
The **National Empowerment Foundation** announces on 30 October that a total of 11,269 persons both in Mauritius and Rodrigues have so far benefited from training facilities, placement and financial assistance under the different programmes initiated by the foundation since its setting up in July 2006.

**High Level Committees:** The Prime Minister sets up two Ministerial Committees in November. First, a Committee on ‘Nurturing Resilience’ headed by the Prime Minister, to address policy issues to enhance the resilience of our economy and coordinate actions to remove bottlenecks and constraints.

The second Committee, on ‘Human Capacity, Solidarity and Physical Infrastructure’ is presided by the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Empowerment to address issues relating to training, empowerment and infrastructure with a view to accelerating the implementation of infrastructural projects that are crucial to investment, production and employment creation.

The **Google Apps and Google Maps initiatives** are officially launched on 5 November. These initiatives were materialized following the visit of a delegation led by the Vice Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Empowerment to the Google Headquarters in Silicon Valley in October 2007. The maps of Mauritius and Rodrigues on the Google map platform are now much more elaborate with an intensive amount of social and tourism infrastructures.

The **Registrar General’s Department** inaugurates on 6 November, an electronic search room. The aim is to provide such facilities which are modern, more efficient, and speedy especially with regards to land and property transactions which will help in improving the doing business environment as well as facilitating investment. The Registrar General’s Department will also proceed to the scanning of the casiers hypothécaires which will ease the process of conducting searches pertaining to land.

**Grants:** The Government and Agence Française de Développement (AFD) sign on 7 November, a financing agreement in forms of grants to the tune of 750,000 euros to finance capacity building projects underpinning the economic reform programme.

**Doing Business 2009 Report for SIDS:** The Vice Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development launches on 12 November, the Doing Business 2009 Report for SIDS. Mauritius ranks second on the Ease of Doing Business, preceded by Singapore among the 33 Small Island Developing States (SIDS) economies.

**Customs:** The Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA) hosts the 17th Sub-Committee on Customs Cooperation (SCCC) Meeting from 22 to 28 November.

**Customs:** The Mauritius Revenue Authority and the Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and Industry sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on 28 November in Port Louis to work closely so as to simplify customs procedures and thus facilitate trade. The MoU will also help to combat fraud and corruption and make Mauritius a competitive place for conducting business.

**The Insolvency Bill** is introduced into the National Assembly in December. The objective of this bill is to reform the law relating to the insolvency of individuals and companies.

**Additional Stimulus Package:** Government presents the Additional Stimulus Package amounting to Rs 10.4 billion, equivalent to 3.8 % of GDP. This package is expected to unlock an extra 1 to 1.5 % growth annually.

**Actions under the Additional Stimulus Package:**

- Fast-tracking and frontloading public infrastructure
- New investments in public infrastructure
● Supporting infrastructure development in local authorities
● Supporting infrastructure development in Rodrigues
● Upgrading public infrastructure in Education, Health, Environment and Sports
● Accelerating private sector investment
● New private sector investment
● Improving further business facilitation
● Building human resources capacity
● Boosting manufacturing and export sector
● A social contract to preserve employment
● Enhancing role of Empowerment Programme
● Measures to further promote tourism
● Measures to further consolidate the sugar sector
● Measures to revamp the construction sector
● Measures to improve the credibility of our financial services sector
● Developing further the seafood hub
● Making the ICT sector more resilient
● Protecting the population
PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE, LAND TRANSPORT & SHIPPING

A modern infrastructural landscape
An efficient transport system
Ensuring maritime security
PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE, LAND TRANSPORT & SHIPPING

A modern infrastructural landscape
An efficient transport system
Ensuring maritime security

PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

March
Start of Works on Macondé Bridge

Over the years, the causeway has shown signs of rigorous deterioration. A new bridge is being built further downstream. Upon completion, the Macondé bridge will bring great relief to the inhabitants of the south. Construction works started in March.

July
Launching of e-Project Management

The e-Project Management Solution would help project management and coordination and increase efficiency and productivity. It would enable users to monitor building projects in real time.

Re-organisation of the Civil Engineering Section

In order to facilitate the implementation of Government projects, both in capital infrastructural investment and management of Government infrastructural assets, the Civil Engineering Section has been re-organised.

August
Preparation of the draft Investment Project Process Manual

In accordance with the Finance and Audit Act, amended by the Finance and Audit (Amendment) Act 2008, the Ministry, in consultation with the Ministry of Finance and Economic Empowerment, prepared a draft Investment Project Process Manual (IPPM).

September
Construction of Access Road to Réduit Triangle

Works on the road infrastructure started on 29 September and are expected to be completed by March 2010.
New Customs House

The construction of the New Customs House, a state-of-the-art building, situated at Marine Road, Mer Rouge was completed in September. It is one of the largest and most important projects of the Customs reform and modernisation programme, costing around Rs 400M.

October

Construction of Access Road to Tianli Industrial Development

The Mauritius Tianli Economic and Trade Cooperation Zone Co. Ltd (MTET) has been allocated an area of land bounded by the Riche-Terre Road and Baie-du-Tombeau Road. Government has agreed with MTET to provide all off-site infrastructural works and utilities for the full development of the industrial area.

In this connection, a dual carriageway is being constructed between Motorway M2 at Riche Terre and the Tianli site. Construction of the road started on 15 October.

Revision of Rates charged by the Materials Laboratory

An increase of about 60% was recommended on all laboratory and field tests performed by the Materials Laboratory and implemented as from 1 October.

November

Introduction of the Construction Industry Development Board Bill in the National Assembly

The CIDB Act 1997 has been repealed and replaced by a new legislation, the CIDB Act 2008, which regulates the construction industry.
December

Appraisal under PMS

The Performance Management System (PMS) was launched at the Public Infrastructure Division in May 2007. At December 2008, around 85% of the Technical grades had signed the Performance Management Agreement Form and were to be appraised under the new System.

SHIPPING

Consultancy Services - Procurement of a Double Hull Tanker

A study on the procurement of a product carrier/oil tanker by Maritime Logistics Transport Consultants was carried out from March to May. The Consultant recommended the acquisition of a double hull 47 000 DWT tanker in view of its financial and economics viability to transport the bulk of our petroleum products.

The Merchant Shipping Bill

The Merchant Shipping Bill which was passed in the National Assembly on 7 December 2007 is yet to be proclaimed. The Act was revised to meet the requirements of the maritime sector due to new changes in technology and incorporation of the International Conventions to which Mauritius is a party. The principal objectives of the Bill are to ensure that shipping practices and operations are conducted according to international safety norms to enhance maritime safety and security.

World Maritime Day Celebration 2008

World Maritime Day 2008 was celebrated at the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) on 25 September with various events planned. A symposium was organised on 25 September to provide information and create awareness for career opportunities at sea among school leavers.

The Implementation of the Ballast Water Management Convention

The Shipping Division of the Ministry has set up a National Task Force on Ballast Water Management. A National Seminar on Ballast Water Management was held from 23 to 25 January to develop a Road Map to facilitate national preparations for implementing the IMO Ballast Water Convention when it comes into force.

Workshop on Developing Professional Capacity

A Workshop on developing professional capacity to meet the needs of the shipping sector was held on 7 and 8 May at the Mauritius Maritime Training Academy at Pointe aux Sables. The objectives and purpose were to make an evaluation on the scarcity of skills and competence in the Maritime Industry with a view to assessing and recommending appropriate training needs and initiating relevant corrective measures through the input of all stakeholders and ministries concerned.

Need Assessment Mission on Maritime Security in Mauritius

The IMO organised a Need Assessment Mission on Maritime Security in Mauritius from 22 to 26 September. The objectives of the mission were to take cognizance of how Mauritius is implementing the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) Chapter XI – 2 Convention and the International Ship Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code
in relation to port facilities, located within the territory of Mauritius and how ships entitled to fly the flag of Mauritius are complying with the aforesaid requirements.

**Review of the Guide to Ship Registration**

The Guide to Ship Registration, which has been updated, sets all the requirements and advantages for ship registration under the Mauritian Flag.

**ISO Certification**

The Shipping Division was ISO certified and is on the IMO so called “white list”. This implies that Mauritius is implementing the provisions of the IMO Standard of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping Convention (STCW 78/95) and training and certification issued by the Administration are recognized and accepted internationally. The Quality System is being reviewed through Internal Audits every six months and through External Audits yearly to ensure total effectiveness and conformity with current policies and activities.

**Mauritius Maritime Training Academy**

The Mauritius Maritime Training Academy (MMTA) has conducted the Basic Safety Training, Coxwain for MRA Customs Patrol Boat, Second Hand Skipper, Second Engineer and Chief Engineer (Fishing Vessel) courses and some 200 candidates have been trained to take employment at sea.
TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT AND ROAD SAFETY UNIT

January

The contract was awarded on 17 January for the supply of 70 LED aspects for replacing conventional light system.

Speed review

There is a need to rationalize and make more consistent the speed limit signs on our roads. A speed review had been carried out along the motorways and some classified roads in 2006. Since January, this exercise has been extended for classified roads in the northern and eastern districts. 40km/h speed zones were created near public beaches, schools and areas with high pedestrian activities.

February
Quatre Bornes Traffic Centre

Quatre Bornes Traffic Centre was redesigned, with a view to minimizing the risk of traffic accidents.

March
Fixing of billboards/Advertising Panels for bus stops

Conscious of the negative impact of fly-posting (affichage sauvage), which constitutes an eyesore in villages and towns, the Ministry has taken the initiative to restrict the posting of advertising materials for road safety campaigns at designated locations. In March, a contract was awarded to a specialized outdoor advertising company for the fixing of twenty billboards, thirty poster flag poles and one hundred advertising panels on existing bus shelters.

April
Maintenance of Traffic Signal Equipment

The contract was awarded on 4 April and consists of maintenance services for 186 sets of traffic signal equipment located over the whole island. The works include daily inspections of all sites, ensuring that all equipment are in good working condition and replacement or repair of all electronic/non-electronic parts damaged/worn out or failed.

May
Pedestrian Road Safety Campaign

A pedestrian safety campaign was launched on 25 May at Lady S. Ramgoolam SSS, Triolet for a period of fifteen days. The main aim of the campaign was to sensitize the population at large to what extent pedestrians are the most vulnerable road users and how they can be at risk of being involved in road accidents.

Microcomputer Accident Analysis Package (MAAP) – Update of software and training

Mr. S. Vadgama of UK’s Transport Research Laboratory (TRL) was in Mauritius from 19 to 28 May to provide training and consultancy services on the Micro Computer Accident Analysis Package (MAAP).
Implementation of Global Positioning System Units (GPS)

Presently, the TMRSU relies on sketch made by the Reporting Police Officer to locate the position of road accidents. The TMRSU has purchased seventy-five GPS units. The use of the GPS units will improve road accident data collection system; it will allow the input of more precise information as regards to the position and exact location of road accidents.

August

Traffic and Road Safety at Sivananda Avenue, Pont Fer

A series of traffic/road safety measures have been implemented along part of Sivananda Avenue, near Pont Fer Roundabout, Phoenix. The road has been widened to cater for additional lane traffic to increase fluidity at that locus. A signalized pedestrian crossing has been set up and raised footpaths have been constructed to enhance road safety in that area.

September

Fixing of billboards/Advertising Panels for bus stops

The works for fixing of billboards and advertising panels started in September. Twenty billboards (along Motorways) and thirty flag poles (Kakemonos) were installed along roads in Vacoas, Phoenix Roundabout and near Pamplemousses roundabout. One hundred and one advertising panels were fixed in bus shelters island wise.

October

Traffic measures in Ebene Cybercity

In October, the TMRSU was assigned the task of formulating measures to improve traffic fluidity and enhance road safety within the road network of Ebene Cybercity. The works consisted of parking restrictions, relocation of bus stops, setting up of directional signs, amongst others.
Road Safety Campaigns

In October, a contract was awarded for the supply of creative advertising services. The contract departed from past bidding exercises because it integrated three road safety themes namely speeding, drink-driving and two-wheelers. Speeding Campaigns were terminated in November and a drink-driving Campaign was implemented as from mid-December.

November

LED (Light Emitting Diodes) Aspects for Traffic Signal Equipment

The second contract for the supply of LED aspects was awarded on 7 November. 155 LED aspects and associated spare parts were purchased. The aim is to gradually phase out the existing traffic signal heads, which in the long run will prove to be more cost effective.

Supply, Installation and Commissioning of Traffic Signal Equipment

The contract was awarded on 18 November. The purpose of the contract is to set up new traffic signal equipment at essential locations to improve road safety and traffic control.

December

Launching of Variable Message Signs (VMS)

The tender for the purchase of two variable message signs was launched in December.

Mauritius Maritime Training Academy

Courses held at the Mauritius Maritime Training Academy from January to date:

- Basic Safety Training (ongoing on Modular Basis throughout the year)
- Coxswain for MRA Customs Patrol Boat
- Crowd Management and Crisis Management (ongoing)
- Second Hand, Skipper, Second Engineer, Chief Engineer Course for Fishing Vessel ≥ 24 metres
- Skippers/Engine Operator for Vessel ≤ 24 metres

National Transport Authority

February

Introduction of e-service

With the introduction of the Government Online Centre, NTA has started providing e-services for the reservation of specific registration marks and for securing appointments for examination of vehicles as to their roadworthiness. The electronic system has improved transparency in the whole exercise of availability, selection and allocation of registration marks.
August

Exemption from need for Private Carrier ‘B’ Licences

The Finance Act 2008 has brought a consequential amendment to section 83 of the Road Traffic Act with a view to exempting vehicles classified as “dual purpose” from the need to have a Private Carrier ‘B’ Licence when such vehicles are used for the conveyance of goods. Since its coming into operation in July, the amendment has enabled some 20 000 owners of such vehicles to renew their motor vehicles licences at post offices.

September

Decentralisation of Services

In line with government policy to bring services closer to the public, the NTA entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with Mauritius Posts Ltd in July 2005 for the renewal of motor vehicle licences at post offices. Initially, 20 post offices scattered throughout the island started providing such services. In October 2006, the number of pay points was increased to 33.

In implementing one of its objectives under the Performance Based Budgeting for financial year 2008-09, the NTA has further increased the number of pay points from 33 to 56. In addition, besides payment for private cars and motorcycles only, the road tax for dual purpose vehicles as well may now be paid at post offices.

Bus Industry Employees Welfare Fund (BIEWF)

The BIEWF has eight soft loan schemes and other welfare schemes specially aimed at improving the life of the employees, as well as promoting their welfare and that of their families.

Soft Loan Schemes

- Purchase of Motorcycle/Autocycle Loan Scheme
- Marriage Loan scheme
- Domestic Appliances Loan
- House Renovation/Construction
- Payment of Examination Fees
- Medical Treatment/Tertiary Education
- Purchase of Spectacles
- Purchase of Books

Welfare Schemes

- Death Grant
- Retirement Grant
New Schemes

In an attempt to provide for new challenges for the Fund’s development, the Board has designed new schemes for year 2008, namely the House Renovation Scheme, the Scholarship Scheme for children of workers and a Social Aid Scheme for victims of fire or accidents. An in kind and one off assistance of Rs 5 000 will be provided to these victims.

Seafarers’ Welfare Fund

The Seafarers’ Welfare Fund Bill was enacted by the National Assembly on 15 July to provide for the replacement of the Seafarer’s Welfare Fund which had been established by way of a Regulation under the Merchant Shipping Act 1986.

The objectives of the Fund are, among others, to ensure that welfare facilities and services are provided for all seafarers irrespective of nationality, race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion or social origin and irrespective of the state in which the ship on which they are employed is registered.

The Seafarers’ Welfare Fund has a series of Welfare Schemes, which extend financial assistance to both active and retired seafarers, and are non-refundable. They relate to social aid, medical expenses and grants for education.

A total amount of Rs 641 844 was disbursed for period January-November under the various welfare schemes.
FOREIGN AFFAIRS, REGIONAL INTEGRATION AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Furthering economic relations through diplomacy
Strengthening ties with countries of origin
Consolidating relations with friendly nations
Achieving regional integration through trade
Gearing up for globalisation
FOREIGN AFFAIRS, REGIONAL INTEGRATION AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Furthering economic relations through diplomacy
Strengthening ties with countries of origin
Consolidating relations with friendly nations
Achieving regional integration through trade
Gearing up for globalisation

January

Accreditation of Ambassadors/High Commissioners

The Non-resident Ambassadors/High Commissioners from the following countries presented their credentials to the President of the Republic: Swaziland, United Arab Emirates, Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic, Mexico, Czech Republic, Japan, Uganda, Cyprus, Republic of Korea (South Korea), Brazil, Nigeria, Singapore, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (North Korea), Belgium, Saudi Arabia and Bangladesh.

The Ambassadors/High Commissioners of South Africa, Pakistan and India also presented their credentials as Resident Representatives in Mauritius.

Government Report on Trade Policy Review

The Draft Government Report on Trade Policy Review was submitted to the World Trade Organisation. The Report covers the evolution of trade policies and practices of Mauritius over the last six years, i.e. for period 2001-2007 and its future trade policy outlook.

First COMESA Fund Ministerial Meeting

The First COMESA Fund Ministerial Meeting was held in Mauritius on 31 January. The approved resolutions are to enlarge the scope of the Contribution Agreement between the COMESA and the EU as regards its adjustment facility for social and economic adjustment costs and revenue loss arising out of tariff cuts and to set up a COMESA Infrastructure Company to effectively activate contributions from the private sector and international financial institutions.

February

SADC National Workshop on Poverty

A National Workshop was organized on 8 February the purpose of which was to hold consultations with stakeholders on the draft outline of the Regional Poverty Reduction Framework.
Presentation of Credentials to the President of the Republic of Austria

Ambassador M. Ghiselaine Henrison presented her letters of Credence to the President of the Republic of Austria on 15 February.

March

ESA-EC Trade Ministers Meeting in Lusaka, Zambia

The ESA-EC Trade Ministers’ Meeting was held in Lusaka, Zambia on 3 March to take stock of progress achieved since the Interim Agreement was signed in December 2007 and on the way forward.

Launching of the SADC Ambassadors’ Group Strategic Plan in Berlin

The Mission in Berlin has been instrumental in the preparation of a strategic and action plan for the SADC Ambassadors’ Group in Berlin. The strategic plan was successfully launched on 12 March during a ceremony which was attended by a broad spectrum of key players from the private sector, the press and government.

Visit of the Chief Minister of Haryana

Shri Bhupinder Singh Hooda, Chief Minister of Haryana, was invited as a guest of the State of Mauritius, from 10 to 13 March, for the celebrations of the 40th Anniversary of its Independence.

IOC Council of Ministers

The IOC Council met in Seychelles on 27-28 March and reviewed the implementation of on-going projects/activities and examined the proposed budget for 2008 and the restructuring of the Secretariat.

Participation in the “Semaine de la Francophonie”, Berlin

The Mauritius Mission in Berlin is a member of the Francophonie group. In March, as every year, members of the Francophonie in Berlin organised a “Semaine de la Francophonie” to celebrate the diversity of the organisation.
April

7th Joint Working Group Meeting between Mauritius and Pakistan

The 7th Joint Working Group Meeting between Mauritius and Pakistan was held in Islamabad. The purpose of the Meeting, held from 2 to 4 April, was to review progress in the implementation of the Preferential Trade Agreement which was signed on 30 July 2007 and was operationalised on 30 November 2007. Visa facilities for the business community and direct air links for the expansion of bilateral trade and investment were among the issues raised during the Meeting.

Protocol Amending the Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement

The Protocol amending the Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement was ratified on 10 April. This amendment permits any WTO member to export pharmaceutical products made under compulsory license for the purpose of supplying developing countries with no or insufficient manufacturing capacities in the pharmaceutical sector. Mauritius is, consequently, allowed to manufacture pharmaceutical products under compulsory licensing for export to the other members of regional trade arrangements to which it belongs, for example the SADC and the COMESA.

Presentation of Credentials by the High Commissioner of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan

Mr. Ghulam Farid Farrukh, High Commissioner of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to Mauritius, presented his Letters of Credence to the President of the Republic on 17 April.

SADC International Conference on Poverty and Development

Mauritius hosted the Ministerial Consultative Conference and the SADC International Conference on Poverty and Development, the theme of which was “Regional Economic Integration: A Strategy for Poverty Eradication Towards Sustainable Development”.


The WTO agreements require the evaluation of the trade and related policies of member countries, at regular intervals, to ensure that these policies are transparent and non-discriminatory in their formulation and implementation and are compliant to WTO.


The TIFA is the formal mechanism wherein bilateral trade issues and trade and investment relations between Mauritius and the US are addressed. Progress, implementation of priority areas of the Joint TIFA Work Plan over the past 12 months, new challenges and avenues for future collaboration were assessed.

Re-election of Former Chief Justice to UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Former Chief Justice Ariranga G. Pillay was re-elected on 29 April at the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) session in New York to the CESCR for a fourth time to serve for the term 2009-2012.
Election of Mauritius as member of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development and of the UN Commission for Social Development

At the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) session in New York, Mauritius was elected by acclamation as member of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development, on 29 April, for the period 2009-2012 and member of the UN Commission for Social Development for the term 2009-2013.

Meeting of SADC Ministers of Gender, Windhoek

The Draft Protocol on Gender and Development was finalized for vetting by the SADC Ministers of Justice/Attorneys-General to be held in Lusaka from 5 to 9 May 2008.

Appointment of Honorary Consuls

The Honorary Consuls of Mauritius in South Africa (Cape Town), Malta, Belgium (Antwerp & Wallonia), Australia (Melbourne), Denmark (Kolding) and Zambia (Lusaka) nominated.

The nomination of the Honorary Consuls of Comoros, Côte D’Ivoire, Norway and Malaysia in Mauritius finalized.

May

IOR-ARC

Eighth Ministerial Meeting of the Indian Ocean Rim - Association for Regional Co-operation (IOR-ARC), Teheran, Islamic Republic of Iran, 4 May.

Second Extraordinary Meeting of the COMESA Council of Ministers, Kenya

This Extraordinary Council Meeting was convened on 15 May to take stock of progress made as regards the launching of the Customs Union in December 2008, the establishment of the COMESA Fund and the implementation of the Economic Partnership Agreement following the signature of the Interim Agreement.

Visit of Mr. Shyam Saran, Special Envoy of the Prime Minister of India

Mr. Shyam Saran, Special Envoy of the Prime Minister of India, was on official visit on 20 May. His discussions with the Prime Minister centred on issues relating to climate change and possibilities of cooperation in the field of renewable energy sources.

Course on Trade Negotiations Skills for English-Speaking African Countries

The course held at the Meridien Hotel on 26 May and organised by the World Trade Organisation imparted skills and knowledge on negotiations processes, systematic decision analysis, WTO principles, framework for reduction of trade barriers, general agreement on trade in services and rules.

Fourth Tokyo International Conference on Development (TICAD IV) in Yokohama, Japan

Mauritius broached the subject of small islands developing states (SIDS), Aid for Trade and Triangular Cooperation and requested for Japanese assistance under TICAD to address these issues. The Japanese authorities agreed to loan US $ 4 billion from ODA under TICAD IV.
June

The Commonwealth Meeting on the Reform of International Institutions, London

Mauritius, along with Ghana, Guyana, India, Malaysia, New Zealand, South Africa, Tanzania, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago and the United Kingdom, took part in the Commonwealth mini-Summit to discuss the Reform of International Institutions with a view to addressing current global challenges.

Signature of Agreements with France

Mauritius signed three agreements with France during the visit of the Prime Minister to France, relating to internal security, the extension of SSR international airport and supply of wheat.

Presentation of Credentials by the Ambassador of Turkey

The Ambassador of Turkey to Mauritius presented his credentials on 10 June.

Membership of Mauritius Mission in Brussels to Sub-Committees of the ACP

The Mauritian Ambassador in Brussels is currently the Chairperson of the ACP Sub-Committee on Trade and Commodity Protocol. He is also member of the Working Group on the implementation of the ACP Council Decisions on the Strategic Management Plan of the ACP Secretariat and the Future of the ACP Group.

Our membership to the ACP Working Group on Fisheries has also been endorsed by the East Africa region. This Working Group which was expected to be fully constituted by early 2009 has been set up following an ACP Council decision taken in Addis Ababa in June 2008.
Appointment of Honorary Consul of Mauritius in Béziers, France

On 21 June, Mr. Bruno Lopez was appointed as Honorary Consul of Mauritius in Béziers, France.

July

Eighth Session of Seychelles-Mauritius Commission on Bilateral Cooperation in Mauritius

Discussions centered on avenues of co-operation to enable both countries cope with the challenges of globalisation and liberalisation and for continuous capacity building. Agreement has been reached for an Exchange Programme for capacity building in core areas, namely regional security, port management, higher education and vocational training, standards and quality, water resources management, agriculture and fisheries.

Derogation of 3 000 Metric tons of canned tuna and 600 tons of tuna loins

On 17 July, Mauritius obtained a one year derogation of 3 000 metric tons of canned tuna and 600 tons of tuna loins on a retroactive basis starting on 1 January and ending December 2008.

National Seminar on Domestic Regulation and Scheduling of Specific Commitments

The aim of the Seminar held on 29 July was to increase understanding of the WTO General Agreement on Trade in Services, especially on domestic regulation.

Green-Room Mini-Ministerial meeting of the World Trade Organisation in Geneva

The objective of the Mini-Ministerial meeting held from 21-29 July was to discuss and agree on modalities on agriculture and non-agricultural market access (NAMA).
15th Ministerial Conference of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), Tehran

Mauritius participated in the XV Ministerial Conference of NAM where the Final Document adopted included a paragraph to reaffirm that the Chagos Archipelago including Diego Garcia is an integral part of the sovereign territory of the Republic of Mauritius.

Co-operation with Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)

In July, the Privileges and Immunities Agreement with the OPCW was signed. The OPCW has provided assistance to the University of Mauritius in the organisation of the 20th International Conference on Chemistry Education held in August 2008.

August

Grant of Observer Status to Mauritius in SAARC

The request of Mauritius for Observer Status in South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) was ratified on 2 August by the 15th SAARC Summit held in Colombo.

Official Visit of Mr. Sem Keitaro Sato, Special Envoy of Japan for UN Reforms

Mr. Sem Keitaro Sato, ambassador in charge of Peace Building in Africa and Special Envoy of Japan for UN Reforms, was on an official visit to Mauritius, from 11 to 13 August, to lobby for the support of Mauritius for the candidature of Japan for non-permanent membership at the UN Security Council for 2009-2010. During the visit, issues of bilateral cooperation were raised.

SADC Summit - Launching of SADC Free Trade Area (FTA) in Johannesburg, South Africa

The SADC FTA which is the milestone in the regional economic integration agenda was launched on 17 August at the Ministerial Committee. Mauritius was also acclaimed for facilitating the re-admission of Seychelles to SADC with a mutually agreed annual contribution by Seychelles of US $100 000.

Turkey-Africa Summit in Istanbul, Turkey

The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping attended the Turkey-Africa Summit held in Istanbul, Turkey from 18 to 20 August where Turkey has agreed to extend assistance to Mauritius, through the Turkish International Cooperation with Africa (TICA), in the fields of tourism, health, education and agriculture, including training of experts.

Honorary Consulates and Accreditation

The Honorary Consulate of Mauritius in Istanbul, Turkey, opened in August.

September

Presentation of Letters of Credence by the High Commissioner of India

Mr. Madhusudan Ganapathi, High Commissioner of the Republic of India to Mauritius, presented his Credentials to the President of the Republic on 11 September.
Meeting of the New Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration & International Trade, and the Diplomatic Community

The new Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration & International Trade, met the Diplomatic community on 22 September at Clos St Louis Restaurant, Domaine Les Pailles, to discuss foreign policy and the way forward.

Meeting on ‘Plan Régional de Surveillance des Pêches’, Mauritius

The objective of this project is to exercise a surveillance of the Exclusive Economic Zones of the IOC Member States in order to prevent illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. The IOC Secretariat finalised the “Convention Spécifique” no 2 for the IOC project “Plan Régional de Surveillance des Pêches”.

Meeting of the Coordinating Committee on the WTO and the EPA

The purpose was to outline the EPA and WTO Negotiations, including implications for the export sectors namely Textiles, Tuna and Sugar.

Special Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, New York

Mauritius participated in the Special Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting wherein the principles and directions set out in the Marlborough House Statement were endorsed.

7th Commonwealth Foreign Ministers Meeting, New York

Mauritius participated in the 7th Commonwealth Foreign Ministers Meeting to discuss progress on implementing key recommendations made at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting held in Kampala in 2007.

High-Level Intersectoral UNESCO Mission to Mauritius

A High-Level delegation from UNESCO visited Mauritius in order to reinforce co-operation between Mauritius and the UNESCO mainly in areas of science and culture.

63rd Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)

Mauritius participated in the annual sessions of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). The Mission in New York also participated actively in meetings held in the margins of the 63rd UNGA Session.

Presentation of Credentials of the High Commissioner of Singapore

Mr. Rangacheddy Jagacheddy presented his credentials as High Commissioner of Singapore to Mauritius.

October

6th Summit of the ACP Heads of State and Government in Ghana on “Promoting Human Security and Development”

The Mauritian delegation was led by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration. Central to the discussion were developmental challenges such as climate change, rising food and oil prices, the current financial crisis, Economic Partnership Agreements and the Millennium Development Goals confronting the ACP Group. The 6th Summit was held on 2 and 3 October.
Eligibility of Mauritius for the Third Country Fabric Provision until 2012

The US Congress adopted the Amendments to the AGOA legislation on 3 October making Mauritius eligible for the Third Country Fabric Provision until 2012 and has repealed the abundant supply/commercial availability provision. The legislation granting Mauritius the derogation (HR 7222, Extension of the Andean Trade Preference Act) was signed by President Bush on October 16.

Interim EPA Mission

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade led a COMESA Mission on EPA to several European Capitals, from 6 to 9 October, to sensitize EU Member States on the contentious issues in the Interim EPA. The mission covered Germany, Denmark, UK and France.

ESA-EPA Negotiations in Germany

A COMESA delegation including the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade of Mauritius met with the German Minister of Economic Cooperation and Development on 06 October. Mauritius sought the support of the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany for the ESA-EPA negotiations.

Participation in the 6th Forum on China Africa Cooperation, Cairo

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade participated in the 6th Forum on China Africa Cooperation, held in Cairo on 18 and 19 October. Cooperation issues between Africa and China were reviewed and the implementation of the Action Plan of the Beijing Summit, the fourth Ministerial Conference of FOCAC scheduled for the fourth quarter of 2009 in Egypt and the strengthening of the China – Africa relations were also the focus of discussions.

Exchanges between the People’s Republic of China and Mauritius

Discussions held between the various stakeholders in Mauritius for the setting up of a Confucius Institute at the University of Mauritius.

IOR-ARC Fisheries Support Unit (FSU), Oman

The Fisheries by-laws and Budget for setting up the FSU in Muscat has been established. An Advisory Committee of Fisheries experts from IOR-ARC Member States has been formed to examine project to be undertaken by the FSU.

IOR-ARC Maritime Transport Council, Oman

At the Meeting held on 19 and 20 October, the setting up of a Maritime Transport Council was considered. The Maritime Transport Council will be the mechanism through which Member States will interact on a range of maritime issues – transport, shipping, customs procedures, establishment of shipping lines etc.

First Tripartite Summit of Heads of State and Government of the East African Community, the COMESA and the SADC in Uganda.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade participated in the above mentioned Tripartite Summit on 22 October, the objective of which was to forge closer interaction among the three Regional Economic Communities, in the area of trade, regional infrastructural development, institutional framework for the tripartite programme and their stance on various trade and economic policies.
at regional, continental and international levels to smoothen the integration process as outlined in the Abuja Treaty and the Constitutive Act of the African Union.

**UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)**

Mauritius elected to the ECOSOC for the term 2009-2011 during elections held in the UN General Assembly.

**Presentation of Credentials by the Ambassador of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea**

The Ambassador of the DPRK (North Korea), Mr A.N. Hui Jang, presented his credentials on 23 October.

**Equivalence of Certificates and Student Visas Belgium**

An increasing number of Mauritian nationals are pursuing their studies in Belgium, particularly in the medical field. They face lengthy procedures before their qualifications are accepted. The Mission in Brussels is exploring the possibility of concluding an agreement to facilitate equivalence for degrees obtained in Mauritius and for SC and HSC certificates to be recognised, in order not to penalise Mauritian students and facilitate provisions of visas to them.

**IPPA with Belgium-Luxembourg Economic Union**

Mauritius has completed its legal procedures for the entry into force of the Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement with the Belgium-Luxembourg Economic Union. The instrument of ratification is now being prepared for exchange with the Belgian and Luxembourg authorities.

**November**

**COI - Committee of the OPL, Mauritius**

The OPL meeting, held at the IOC Secretariat from 4 to 6 November, provided a platform whereby Member States reviewed progress and implementation of the IOC projects in the field of environment, tourism, development of trade, fishing, telecommunication, culture, meteorology and development of human resources.

**Honorary Consulates and Accreditation**

The Honorary Consulate of Mauritius in Warsaw, Poland was inaugurated on 5 November and attended by members of the diplomatic corps, Honorary Consuls, officials of government and business people.

**Visa Waiver Agreement between Mauritius and the EC**

On 16 October, Mauritius successfully completed negotiations with the European Commission for the conclusion of the Agreement between the European Community and the Republic of Mauritius on the short stay visa waiver. The agreed text of the Agreement was initialled on 12 November.

**Presentation of Credentials by the High Commissioner of Mauritius in London to King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden**

The High Commissioner of Mauritius in London presented his Credentials to King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden on 12 November. During the meeting, the High Commissioner articulated the vision of Mauritius on the concept of “Maurice Ile Durable”.
Presentation of Credentials by the Ambassador of Iceland

Dr. Gunnar Palsson, the Ambassador of Iceland to Mauritius, based in New Delhi, presented his credentials to the President of the Republic on 13 November. During his visit, the Ambassador recommended that the possibility of having a MoU on Fisheries between Mauritius and Iceland and of cooperation in the field of renewable energy can be explored.

Presentation of Credentials by the Ambassador of Cuba

Mr. Cosme Torres Espinosa, the Ambassador of Cuba to Mauritius, stationed in Harare, visited Mauritius from 15 to 20 November. During his visit he met the Hon. Minister with whom he evoked several issues of common interest such as tourism and renewable energy. Ambassador Espinosa also met the Secretary for Foreign Affairs and exchanged views on bilateral issues of common interest.

Regional Workshop on WTO Rules including Fisheries Subsidies

This workshop, which was held in Mauritius on 17 November regrouped 16 participants from 10 English speaking African countries, namely Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Mauritius, Namibia, Seychelles, Sudan, South Africa and Gambia. It was intended to build capacity in identifying and understanding issues pertaining to the rules of negotiations, particularly in the area of fisheries subsidies and in trade negotiating skills.

National workshop on anti-dumping in Mauritius

This workshop held at Plantation Hotel on 18 November was directed at finalizing the draft legislation in line with WTO rules.

Second Euro-African Conference on Migration and Development in Paris

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, attended the Second Euro-African Conference on Migration and Development on 25 November, at the invitation of the French Authorities, particularly with a view to showcasing the bilateral agreements recently signed with France and the Mauritian experience on migration.

COMESA Policy Organs Meetings, Lusaka, Zambia

The purpose of these meetings held from 27 November to 5 December was to appraise the implementation of on-going projects/programmes of COMESA, including co-operation in trade, infrastructure, procurement, monetary matters and the setting up of the COMESA Fund and to review the functioning of the various COMESA Institutions and approve the proposed budget for year 2009.

Presentation of Credentials by the Ambassador of Italy

The Ambassador of Italy based in Pretoria, Mr. E. Mezzone, presented his credentials on 11 November.

Participation in the Preparatory Meeting in Shanghai

Mauritius participated in the preparatory meeting in Shanghai in November and signed the participation contract and the Financial Assistance agreement.
December

**ESA Council Meeting, in Lusaka, Zambia**

There was an ESA Council Meeting from 3 to 5 December in Lusaka, Zambia. Ministers agreed to host the signing ceremony of the Interim EPA in Mauritius.

**COMESA Council of Ministers Meeting, in Lusaka Zambia**

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade attended the COMESA Council of Ministers Meeting in Lusaka, Zambia on 4 and 5 December. After intense diplomatic efforts, the COMESA Council agreed to locate the COMESA Fund in Mauritius.

**88th Session of the ACP Council of Ministers**

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade and the Minister of Agro-Industry, Food Production and Security attended the 88th Session of the ACP Council of Ministers from 15 to 18 December in Brussels.

**Vin d’Honneur at Maritim Hotel, Balaclava**

Hosting of Vin d’Honneur on 22 December by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade at Maritim Hotel, Balaclava.
INDUSTRY, SCIENCE AND RESEARCH

Promoting industrial development
Maintaining a competitive edge
Science & Research: Essential tools for growth
INDUSTRY, SCIENCE AND RESEARCH

Promoting industrial development
Maintaining a competitive edge
Science & Research: Essential tools for growth

Establishment of the Fashion and Design Institute

The legislation was introduced in June.

International Textile Manufacturers Federation Conference

The Ministry, jointly with MEXA, hosted the annual conference of the ITMF in Mauritius in 2008. The theme was Challenges for a Greener and More Sustainable Textile Industry.

Business Excellence Award

The Business Excellence Award competition was organized for businesses in all sectors, classified as small, medium and large. The objective was to promote best business practices in Mauritius for enhanced productivity and competitiveness.

Industry and SME Strategy

The Ministry, together with the Ministry of Finance and Economic Empowerment, worked towards the elaboration of an Industry and SME strategy document. The final draft document was submitted in November.

ASSAY OFFICE

Accreditation of the Assay Laboratory

The Assay Office obtained the accreditation of its Assaying Laboratory on 2 April. The scope of accreditation is for the testing of gold jewellery and its alloy by cupelling, touchstone and x-ray methods.

Proclamation of the Jewellery Act 2007

The Jewellery Act 2007 was proclaimed on 9 May. The Act makes better provisions for the regulation and control of the manufacture, sale, importation of jewellery made of gold, silver and platinum and the verification of precious & semi-precious stones.
MAURITAS

Award of First Accreditation Certificate by MAURITAS

The first MAURITAS Accreditation Certificate was awarded to the Mauritius Turf Club Laboratory in the chemical testing field on 12 February.

MAURITAS admitted as Associate Member of the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC)

Following the award of accreditation certificates to four laboratories during year 2008, the status of MAURITAS’ ILAC membership was upgraded from Affilate to Associate on 10 November. The Associate membership status will confer MAURITAS voting rights at international level on accreditation issues as well as enhanced international recognition of the accreditation certificates issued by MAURITAS.

ENTERPRISE MAURITIUS

SECA 2008

Enterprise Mauritius facilitated the participation of ABC Datacall and Nibanna Ltd SECA 2008 (Centre de Contacts Relation Client Multicanal Convergence) held in France from 1 to 3 April. Positive contacts were established with potential business partners.

Agro Forum

The Agro Forum was held on May 14 at the Mahatma Gandhi Institute and the theme was: Meeting the challenges of Food Security through Competitive Agro-Business.
Seventy-seven companies, comprising 64 small firms, seven medium sized and six large operators, participated from 29 to 31 May at the Salon Mauricien at La Réunion. Exhibitors reported 1,256 contacts with potential buyers. The latter were satisfied regarding the quality of products displayed by Mauritian companies.

**Fancy Food Show**

Mauritius participated in the Fancy Food Show held in New York from 29 June to 1 July. The objective was to:

- promote Mauritius as a reliable sourcing hub for exotic foods
- sustain the presence of Mauritian companies in US
- enhance exports of processed foods to US under AGOA and
- identify new export avenues in the Mauritian Agro sector

**Marketing mission in Sweden, Denmark and UK**

In the context of the implementation of the EM/ITC project, marketing missions were undertaken in Sweden and Denmark from 18-28 August and in UK from 29 August to 3 October.

**MAGIC**

Mauritius participated in MAGIC from 24 to 27 August in USA during which 108 business contacts were established.

**Call Centre Expo**

Six Mauritian companies participated on 16 and 17 February in the Call Centre Expo in England with a view to promoting Mauritius as a reliable outsourcing destination.

**Texworld**

Seven Mauritian companies participated in Texworld, an international fair held in France from 22 to 25 September.

**Zoom by Fatex**

EM supported the participation of 10 companies to the international trade fair Zoom by Fatex held next to Première Vision from 23 to 26 September in Paris Parc des Expositions Villepinte. Fifty business contacts established.

**Salon International de l’Alimentation**

Mauritius marked its presence at the Salon International de l’Alimentation 2008, the world’s leading food industry show, which was held at the Paris Nord Exhibition Centre, Villepinte in France from 19 to 23 October.

**Breakfast series on “Factoring Services”**

EM in collaboration with CIM Finance and ADG Brokers Ltd invited manufacturing industries at a workshop on factoring services. Thirty firms participated in the Breakfast series.
MAURITIUS FILM DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Film Competition Nou Pei Nou Fierté

The Corporation organized on 4 March, in the context of the 40th Anniversary of Independence, a short film competition on the theme *Nou Pei Nou Fierté*.

Workshop on Career Opportunities in the Film Sector

With the collaboration of MGI, a delegation from the Government of Maharashtra conducted on 1 July a one-day workshop on Career opportunities in the Film Sector.

Film Festival

A Marathi Film Festival was held from 25 to 29 July, followed by a Spanish Film Festival from 2 to 7 November.

Kino Océan Indien

Kino Reunion was held from 2 to 8 November. Kino Moris was held from 7 to 14 November. Sixty short films were produced both in Reunion and Mauritius.
Mobile Cinema

Twelve films were projected in different regions of Rodrigues in August and two film shows for children were screened at Pailles Recreational Centre and at the Town Hall of the Municipal council of Curepipe in Mauritius.

Ciné Sessel

The festival Ciné Sessel was held from 21 to 26 October in Seychelles. The short film Ronde du Bonheur produced in the context of the 40th Anniversary of Independence of Mauritius was awarded ‘Prix du Meilleur Court Métrage’.

Commemoration of the Arrival of Indentured Labourers to Mauritius

In the context of the commemoration of the arrival of the indentured labourers to Mauritius, Mrs Shundell Prasad Jha, producer of the documentary film “Once More Removed”, conducted from 29 October to 6 November a three-day workshop on Essentials of Documentary film making.

Film Animation

A five-day workshop on Land Art Film Animation was conducted from 3 to 9 November by a French producer Français Sebastien Fau in collaboration with Centre Culturel Charles Baudelaire.

MAURITIUS STANDARDS BUREAU

Testing of Toys

MSB has been called upon to perform testing on a wide range of toy products in order to cater for the legal requirements and to ensure that the specific requirements are met.

Laboratory Accreditation

The Mauritius Standards Bureau (MSB) embarked on a project to get its laboratories accredited to ISO 17025:2005 – General Requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories. Two laboratories namely Food and Agriculture Laboratory and the Mechanical Engineering Laboratory were assessed by the MAURITAS/SANAS in June/July.

RAJIV GANDHI SCIENCE CENTRE

Science Communication Contest

The Science Communication Contest 2008 was launched in February for students of Forms 1 – 3 of private and State secondary schools.

Young Scientist’s Workshop

Two Young Scientist’s workshops were organized for primary students during the April holidays on the theme ‘Energy’. For secondary students two workshops were organized during the 2nd term holidays on the theme ‘Science is fun’ and three more workshops were held during the 3rd term holidays for secondary students on the theme ‘Exploring Renewable Energy’.
Science Outreach Programmes

The Centre undertakes visits to schools and carries out activities, namely astronomy sessions in its inflatable planetarium, science talks and science shows.

Sky Observation

Sky observation is held bimonthly at the Centre. The visitors are initiated to the world of astronomy.

Junior Science Adventure 2008

A science based competition, the Junior Science Adventure (JSA 2008), was organized for primary school pupils. The competition aimed at creating an interest in science among young pupils and at initiating them to the investigation of contextual science problems encountered in everyday life.

National Science Challenge 2008

The National Science Challenge 2008 aims at promoting science and technology and at enhancing the public understanding of these fields.

Physics Olympiad

The first Physics Olympiad was held among HSC students of Mauritius in collaboration with the Association of Physics Educator and the Mauritius Institute of Education, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources and the Mauritius Research Council.
**Exhibition on Mauritian Inventions and Innovations**

An exhibition on inventions and innovations made by Mauritians during the past forty years was organized from 10-14 March.

**Infotech 2008**

The Centre participated in the Infotech 2008 and exhibits related to ICT were put up to create awareness on emerging technologies.

**Rajiv Gandhi Birthday**

The RGSC organized a photo exhibition on the late Prime Minister of India, Rajiv Gandhi, to commemorate his 64th birth anniversary. On the same occasion, the second Rajiv Gandhi Memorial Lecture was held.

**Exhibition on “Inventions and Discoveries that changed our life”**

To mark the fourth anniversary of the inauguration of the Centre, an exhibition on the theme **Inventions and Discoveries that Changed our Life** was held.

**MAURITIUS RESEARCH COUNCIL**

Work continued with regard to the development of a Land-Based Oceanic Industry in Mauritius and the creation of an economically, technically and environmentally viable seaweed industry in Mauritius and Rodrigues.

**Renewable Energy Resources Assessment**

The MRC collaborated with the Mauritius Meteorological Services (MMS) and the Ministry of Renewable Energy and Public Utilities to carry out a comprehensive assessment of the potential for wind and solar renewable energy sources in Mauritius. In addition, wind speed and solar insolation maps are to be developed for Mauritius. The MRC and MMS have identified sites where wind turbines could be installed.

**Setting up of Science Rooms in Schools**

MRC provided technical assistance for the setting up of science rooms and semi-mobile laboratories in about 30 primary schools.

**Regional Cooperation**

Visit of a 12-member delegation from the Department of Science and Technology of the Republic of South Africa in October. The objective was to explore potential areas related to opportunities for cooperation in the cross-cutting field of science and technology.

**Studies, Research Projects and Surveys**

During the course of the year, MRC also funded the conduct of studies, research projects and surveys on several subjects:

- Nature, extent and cost of domestic violence to the Mauritian economy
- The cultural industry in Mauritius
- Production needs of primary school teachers and children
- E-waste quantification and characterization for Mauritius
- Education system in promoting knowledge and awareness of anti-corruption values in Mauritius
- Mapping educational achievement in Mauritius
- Interaction between PON1 Gln192Arg polymorphism and type 2 diabetes in agricultural workers exposed to herbicides
- Power and silence - workplace sexual harassment in Mauritius
- Trade unionism in Mauritius
- Development of a communication assessment protocol for young children with cleft lip and/or palate in Mauritius
- Project to encourage the private sector and the higher education sector to identify and monitor benchmarks for key areas of performance
- Waste vegetable oil
- Impact of the tax reform on the Individual Income Tax System in Mauritius
- Toxic plants
- Towards enhancing the quality of life in Mauritius
- Centenarians in Mauritius and Rodrigues

**Seminar and Workshops**

- Development of a seaweed industry in Mauritius and Rodrigues
- Intellectual property rights
- Making the most of agricultural biodiversity
- Identifying potential areas of collaboration between local research organisations and the "Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas" (CSIC) – Spain
Un Toit Pour Toi – Housing for All
A modern land management system
An optimal use of land resources
HOUSING & LANDS

Un Toit Pour Toi – Housing for All
A modern land management system
An optimal use of land resources

Access to Housing – Housing Construction

This programme comprises the construction of housing units which are targeted towards the low-income and lower-middle families.

The construction of 533 Firinga Type housing units for low-income households in the following regions is under way: Bambous, Chebel, Henrietta, Ville Noire, Rivière des Anguilles and Rose Belle.

Tenders have been launched for the construction of a first batch of 550 housing units for low-income households on 12 sites which have already been identified.

Another project in the pipeline is the construction of 116 housing units for lower middle income households in Port Louis.

Access to Land Tenure

Sale of Land on which stand ex-CHA Houses (2007) – Access to land tenure

In line with Government reform programmes to empower the people, the “Right to Buy” Policy re-introduced for the sale of the plots of State land on which stand ex-CHA houses.

The State Land Act was amended to empower the Minister of Housing and Lands to sell portions of State lands on which stands an ex-CHA house at a nominal price of Rs 2 000.

Site and Services Schemes

The Site and Services Scheme basically allows households to have access to a plot of land and subsequently encourages them to construct a housing unit on their own (on a self-help basis).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Description</th>
<th>Sites and Number of Lots</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Delivery of 242 ‘Serviced Lots’ for the lower-middle households (income Rs 8 500 < Rs 12 000) | Ville Noire - 56  
Souillac – 63  
Glen Park - 123 |
| • Lots of land will be leased for rent for a period up to 30 June 2060  
• Payment of annual rental of Rs 3,000 up to year 2060  
• Own arrangements for financing housing construction |
Campement Site Leases

Out of the 1 280 campement site lessees, 1 156 opted to enter into the new 60-years lease. As at 28 November, 667 new campement site leases were prepared.

The revenue collected amounted to Rs 167 636 739 prior to 31 July and Rs 538.89 million between the period July to November

Planning Policy Guidance (PPG): Development along the Motorway (April 2008)

The elaboration of a specific Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) was undertaken in line with Government policy to promote economic development and to undertake a comprehensive revision of the five municipal outline schemes.

The planning policy guidance selected some strategic areas along the Port Louis-Mahebourg corridor and came up with clear development criteria and provided certainty on the basis of which any promoter could design and develop his project.

The main areas are Port Louis central area, Pailles, Réduit/Ebène/Trianon, St Jean/Sodnac, La Vigie and Rose Belle.

The PPG was approved by Government in April 2008 and the document is a national planning instrument which prevails over the outline scheme for the specific area.

Revision of Municipal Outline Schemes

Procedures were initiated to review in a comprehensive single exercise the preparation of new Outline Schemes for the five towns. This project is expected to be completed in 3 years. The office launched Expressions of Interest to prospective consultants in August.
Planning Policy Guidance for Gaming Houses, Places of Amusement/Totalisors

This activity, which started in 2007, was finalised in August 2008. It aims at regulating activities which are major revenue generators but which have an important social component. The judicious siting of these activities is expected to reduce the negative impacts and perception of the activity in the minds of the public.

Review of the Quatre Bornes Outline Planning Scheme

The exercise which started in August 2007 is a complete overhaul of the present approved scheme dating back to 1984. It will have a short time frame as the outline schemes of all the municipal councils will be reviewed in one comprehensive exercise for which funds have been identified. Its aim is to allow development where infrastructure is available but intends to be cautious on the long term possibilities which would be developed during the comprehensive review of the five municipal schemes.

Hydrographic Activities

The Third Joint Indo-Mauritian Committee was held from 4 to 6 February in Mauritius to discuss and plan hydrographic activities to be undertaken by Indian Naval Authorities as provided for in the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the Republic of India and the Republic of Mauritius.

Indian Navy Ship “INS Investigator” carried out hydrographic survey over half of St Brandon area from 29 February to 6 April.

During that survey period, 12 officers went on board the ship for on the job training in hydrography.

Towards an integrated urbanisation policy
LOCAL GOVERNMENT, RODRIGUES AND OUTER ISLANDS

Democracy at regional level
Extending amenities to all citizens
Viable waste management
Sustainable development
A greater say in decision-making
LOCAL GOVERNMENT, RODRIGUES AND OUTER ISLANDS

Democracy at regional level
Extending amenities to all citizens
Viable waste management

E-Business Plan for Local Authorities

On 26 November, the Ministry awarded a contract for the implementation of an E-Business Plan for all Municipal and District Councils. The main objectives of the project are to enhance operational efficiency and service delivery by Local Authorities, promote networking and develop a Local Government Portal. The project is expected to be implemented within 18 months.

Financial Management Manual for Local Authorities

In line with the objective to promote sound financial management and efficient use of resources, the Ministry, in collaboration with staff of Local Authorities and the Ministry of Finance & Economic Empowerment has produced a draft Financial Management Manual for Local Authorities.

Local Infrastructure Fund

The Budget 2008/2009 has provided for the setting up of a Local Infrastructure Fund with an initial investment of Rs 120 m to finance some key infrastructural projects. This Fund has been set up under the Chairmanship of the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry and has already approved a number of projects including the construction of Market Fairs at Rose Belle and Abercrombie, Multi-purpose Complex at Vacoas and Rivière du Rempart, Miniwaterfront at Grand River South East and Tartan track at Sir Gaëtan Duval Stadium, Rose Hill.

Code of Conduct for Councillors

The Ministry, in collaboration with the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC), launched on 10 December a Code of Conduct for Councillors which sets out the principles and standards of conduct and integrity for Councillors. The objective is to promote good governance and best practices.

Compensation and Relocation of inhabitants of Mare Chicose to Rose Belle:

Following government decision to relocate the inhabitants of Mare Chicose to Marie Jeannie, Rose Belle, 14 arpents of land were acquired from Rose Belle Sugar Estate.
La Brasserie Transfer Station

The La Brasserie Transfer Station constructed in the early 90’s was not meeting the present day need. The contract for the upgrading of La Brasserie transfer station was awarded in April to the tune of Rs 72m and works are expected to be completed by end of April 2009. Works comprise the construction of the upper platform, two lower platforms, a mid platform, access roads and ramps, gates (entrance and rear), drains and boundary block wall.

Construction of New Transfer Station at La Chaumière

The objective of this project is to construct a new and modern transfer station at La Chaumière that will service the lower Plaines Wilhems and Black River District areas. Land has been secured and the project is estimated at around Rs 75m. Tender documents were sent to the Central Procurement Board on 28 November.

Construction of an Interim Hazardous Waste Facility at La Chaumière

Government has decided to set up an Interim hazardous waste storage facility at La Chaumière as part of its hazardous waste management strategy. This facility represents the first step in the receipt of hazardous waste. A loan Agreement with BADEA was signed by Ministry of Finance and Economic Empowerment on 24 January.

A workshop on Carbon Finance and Carbon Development Mechanism (CPM) was organised in collaboration with the UNDP on 29 and 30 September. The aim of the workshop was to build capacity to access the CDM by creating awareness and technical understating of carbon finance.
Main achievements of local authorities

- Reconstruction of Canal Bourgeois (Port Louis)
- Enlargement of bridge at c/r V. Pougnet/Orléans Streets (Port Louis)
- Upgrading of France Martin Stadium (Port Louis)
- Construction of market fair at Chebel
- Construction of Barkly mini market
- Construction of a modern multipurpose gymnasium at Ebène
- Construction of two new multipurpose complexes at St Paul and Belle Terre
- Construction of outdoor handball court and volleyball court with synthetic flooring at Grannum and Carreau Laliane
- English Literacy course for women using IT, in Curepipe
- Training in entrepreneurship, in Curepipe
- Launching of Moka/Flacq Environment Award
- Construction of toilet block at Rivière du Poste Traffic Centre
- Construction of Rose Belle market
- Activities in the field of education organised in the north in the context of Independence Day
- Upgrading of roads throughout the west

Projects undertaken by all Local Authorities

Information Service Centre

Local Authorities have set up Information Service Centres which will help to handle complaints and provide information to the citizens. Complaints are attended to by the Local Authorities within a minimum of 40 hours and maximum of three weeks depending on the nature of the complaints.

Construction of Poster Panels

The Local Authorities have constructed Poster Panels in different designated sites to provide space for display of posters and to prevent haphazard posting of posters that create eyesores.

Rodent Control

Following a decision of Government, rodent control which was under the aegis of the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life has been decentralized to all the nine Local Authorities. The Local Authorities have started with the programme of placing rodenticides in places where there are proliferation of rats.

BEACH AUTHORITY

The Authority embarked on an on going exercise of infrastructural development by providing appropriate parking facilities on beaches at: Flic en Flac, Belle Mare and Le Morne. It also proceeded with the construction of tuckshops at the Pereybere public beach and coastal protection works at the Trou aux Biches public beach.

Parking space at Belle Mare

The project consists of the construction of 7 parking slots, felling of trees, ground leveling, backfilling and compaction, implementation of traffic lights, planting of decorative plants and enclosure with pine poles. The project started in March 2007 and will be completed by March 2009.
Parking at Le Morne public beach

The project of providing new parking facilities to prevent vehicular access to the beach so as to protect the beach from erosion was completed in February.

Coastal Protection Works At Trou Aux Biches Public Beach

The project was completed on 4 October. The works comprised of construction of rock revetment wall along a stretch of 137 metres.

Grand Bay Integrated Project

The project comprises the installation of 30 lampposts, 15 new prefab benches together with brick platform, installation of 25 bins and resurfacing of parking area. The project started in August 2008 and will be completed by March 2009 at the cost of Rs 2.5 m.

Lighting Facilities on Public Beach

Lighting facilities were provided at Belle Mare and Mon Choisy public beach. The purpose was to extend the seaside leisure activities after day time and for security purpose.

Toilet Facilities on Public Beaches

Several new toilet blocks were constructed on public beaches namely at: Bois des Amourettes, Pointe Sud Ouest, Albion and Mon Choisy.
Sustainable development

A greater say in decision-making

Entrepreneurship Awareness

In view of promoting entrepreneurship, talks were organised throughout the six regions of the island. Around 700 young entrepreneurs were targeted, mostly the unemployed youths that were previously identified through a youth profile survey.

A further screening of the 700 young entrepreneurs was effected, out of which 217 interested entrepreneurs were selected to follow an in-depth course on entrepreneurship and marketing. The talks were scheduled between February 2008 and April 2008.

A training plan was designed to enhance the entrepreneurial and business skills of entrepreneurs.

Five workshops were organised by the "Atelier de Savoir" for participants completing the two year course in dressmaking, woodwork, welding and electrical installation, masonry and pastry.

Technical support was provided to several promoters to enable them acquire their commercial lease and residential cum commercial lease.

Registrar of Companies Unit

A workshop was organised in April at the Human Resource Centre of Malabar to create awareness among the entrepreneurs and business communities with regard to the provisions of the Companies Act 2001 and Business Registration Act 2002.

Licensing Unit

For period July 2007 to June 2008, 164 applications for licences were received out of which 125 have been approved. With a view to regularising and formalising all tourism related activities/businesses in Rodrigues, the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Tourism Regulations 2007 is in force.

Consumer Protection Unit

Checks were regularly carried out in trade premises to ensure that traders are complying with legislations in force and that controlled commodities are sold according to prices fixed. Sensitisation campaigns on rights and responsibilities of Consumers were held in villages and on the air by the two Consumer Protection Officers.

Civil Status

In the context of the implementation of the computerisation Project, delegations from the Civil Status Office were in Rodrigues as from June, The activities consisted mainly in the installation of hardware and software at Port Mathurin and La Ferme Offices and training of staff. This project would enable the registration of birth, death publications and civil marriages and to be online system of the head office of the Civil Status in Mauritius.
Fisheries

Fisheries Protection Services

The Unit has been involved in the enforcement of fisheries legislation. One cooperative society (Rodrigues Fishermen Multipurpose Co-operative Society Ltd (Oyster Bay Branch)) has relinquished its large net licence and each of the nine agents has received a compensation of Rs 70 000.

Fisheries Research and Training Unit. The FRTU has been involved in the following activities:

- Training of Fishermen in Off lagoon FAD Fishing from October 2007 to June 2008. In view of the conversion of lagoon fishers into off lagoon fishers, 58 lagoon fishermen were trained for off lagoon FAD fishing to relieve pressure of overexploitation of the lagoon

- Training of Skippers for vessel of more than 12 metres and less than 24 metres

- A survey of seaweed was carried out in the lagoon of Rodrigues to identify different species for farming. The survey was carried out in collaboration with ReCoMaP and the FRTU

The demarcation of Passe Demie Marine Reserve started in February in the lagoon and monitoring of the demarcation buoy was effected. The Oyster Bay marina project started with the construction of the revetment wall as from April.
Agriculture

- A mega fruit plants sale was held in February in line with measures to mitigate the food security crisis. A total of 1,707 fruit trees were sold and 380 chilli seedlings donated to planters of Baladirou village.
- A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the MSIRI and the Commission for Agriculture to strengthen working relationship and collaboration.
- A training session was conducted for 25 agro processors to acquaint them with basic techniques on the operation of a community kitchen.
- An office of the Small Planters Welfare Fund (SPWF) was launched.
- A Maize festival was held on 13 April at Gravier to encourage farmers to increase their production.
- In June, a demonstration for compost making was held in collaboration with the UNDP Project in Marechal.

Road Infrastructure

Since January, the following main roads projects have been implemented:

- Anse aux Anglais – Terre Rouge Phase 2
- Pointe La Gueule – Baie du Nord realignment
- Resurfacing of Grand La Fouche Corail – Caverne Patate
- Access road from Box Culvert to Anse Nicolas
- Petit Gabriel Junction
- Resurfacing Pointe La Gueule to Baie du Nord
- Baladirou to Grand Baie Road
- Malabar - Cooperative

Besides the road upgrading programme, gabions works were carried out at Camp du Roi and about 1 kilometer of track roads and footpaths were constructed. Moreover, in collaboration with the Decentralized Cooperation Programme, a track road construction programme was initiated.

Water Resources

The water development programme aiming at increasing water storage capacity and improving the distribution network is ongoing. The following projects were implemented:

- The geotextile membrane liner in a prefabricated steel reservoir at Mt Cabris (Sud) was renewed. The service reservoir is presently used for the storage and distribution of water to the south western region of the island.
- A new borehole was drilled at a depth of 80 m with a diameter of 250 mm at Mt Lubin. The yield of the borehole is estimated at 100 m³ but is being exploited at 20 m³.
In view of monitoring the quality of water that is being distributed to consumers, a unit has been set up by the Commission for Water Resources. Samples points throughout the island have been established where water is collected and analysed at the Malabar mini laboratory.

Three brackish water purification plants to the tune of Rs 15 million are being installed at Baie Topaze, Hauteur Accacia and Creve Coeur for the purification of brackish water from boreholes in the region and to ensure potable water supply at required norms to consumers and users.

In order to cater for a sustainable water distribution during dry season during which water production decreases from 5 600 m$^3$/day to 3 600 m$^3$/day, two sea water desalination plants have been ordered.

Protection Of Marine & Natural Resources

A workshop on aquaculture was held on 19 and 20 May.

Health

- 24 hour emergency services at Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Mont Lubin and La Ferme Health Centres
- Regular health screening programmes are carried out in the island such as School Health and Non-Communicable Diseases
- Acquisition of new medical equipment
- Continuous medical education

Fire Services

- 37 cases of fire emergencies were attended to

Co-operatives Division

- In the context of the International Co-operative Day, sensitisation meetings on the benefits of Cooperatives and how to form such society were organized at La Ferme, Mont Lubin, Roche Bon Dieu, Port Sud Est, English Bay and Oyster Bay
- A half-day workshop was organized at La Ferme for the Directors of six livestock Co-operatives Societies in Rodrigues
- Workshops were organized for registration of Fishermen Co-operative Societies:
- Seminar on Entrepreneurship for women
- Opening of the Cooperative Fair Price Shop at St. Gabriel

Probation and After Care Service

Counselling services were provided in 122 cases and Community Service Order were supervised in 12 cases.
Public Health

- Health Education activities carried out on General Sanitation and hygiene
- Larviciding and disinfection operations
- Visits at health centres and schools
- Training on safe food handling practices
- Inspection of food premises and seizure and destruction of foodstuffs unfit for human consumption and examination of frozen sea food prior to export to Mauritius

Arts & Culture

- Celebration of Spring Festival with the participation of the Wushu Lion Dance Association
- 173rd Anniversary of Abolition of Slavery at the Lieu de Memoire at L’Union
- National Day at Camp du Roi

Chagos Day

- Drama league drama show on the theme alcoholism “Solisyon dan ou la men”

First Masa Awards Night

- 3 May at Mourouk Ebony Hotel
Music Day

To commemorate the World Music Day celebrations 2008, a song competition on the theme “A la Découverte des Talents Cachés” was held at Malabar Podium.

Artist Assistance Scheme

An amount of Rs 200 000 was allocated in the budget to finance artistic and cultural projects under the Artist Assistance Scheme. The scheme was meant for artists in every field such as music, sculptures, paintings, literature, drama who are facing financial problems to complete their projects.

Education

- Construction of four classrooms at Terre Rouge Government School for pre primary pupils
- Payment of Pre Primary Schooling in favour of 3+ years needy children
- A residential seminar on the causes of CPE failures in Rodrigues and the way forward at Cotton Bay Hotel on 11 and 12 April
- Training programme for Teachers of STD I, II, III and newly recruited Primary School Teachers

Training/Vocational Training

- Training in ICT for HSC School leavers, primary school teachers, public officers and unemployed, Training programmes for public officers
- Induction programme for newly-recruited Clerks and Word Processing Operators
- Diploma in library studies for four trainee Library Clerks by the Mauritius College of the Air
- Diploma in Occupational Health and Safety
- Diploma in Sanitary Science
- Foundation Course in Social Work run by University of Mauritius
- One year training course in book binding and finishing run by the Industrial and Vocational Training Board to one machine minder of the Binding unit

Entrepreneurship Development

A one day brainstorming session for about 60 entrepreneurs and artisans with the objective to set up a 2-3 years training plan for entrepreneurs and artisans in Rodrigues. In June, training programme in Garment making – Stitching of Uniforms for 20 dress-makers started.

Adult Literacy and Numeracy Project (ongoing)

The Adult Literacy and Numeracy Project run under the financial assistance of the DCP (75 %) and 25% funding from the Commission for Training is delivered to 836 beneficiaries by 24 trainers in 43 Community Centres.
Organisation of “Innoved 2008” Regional Exhibition

Three teams represented Rodrigues at the National exhibition.

Career Counselling and Related Activities

- Information sessions organised study opportunities by Middlesex University and Australo- Mauritian
- A Careers Guidance Fair organised in March for targeting SC and HSC School Leavers

Empowerment Programme

In April, one trainee coordinator posted to the centre on the Empowerment Programme Scheme.

Social Security, Women Affairs, Family Welfare & Child Development

The main activities implemented were as follows:

- Financial assistance to needy students of forms V and VI for the payment of examination fees
- Workshop on better parenting for 50 families of the village of Riviere Banane and 25 teachers of Pre-primary schools
- The Commissioner for Women’s Affairs led a delegation of Women Entrepreneurs to the 3rd Seminar of Women Entrepreneur of the Indian Ocean held in Seychelles
- Setting up a Monitoring Committee for the Welfare and Protection of Elderly Persons
- Setting up of 12 Health and Nutrition Clubs around the island for the benefit of Senior Citizens
- Training course at the IVTB for the benefit of some 500 single mothers in livestock rearing, agriculture, beekeeping, pastry

Youth

Training and Youth Entrepreneuriat

Training of youth for their empowerment and employability was one of the major occupations of the youth division.

Entrepreneurship Development Programme

Two days workshops organised for some 217 youths from February to April in each of the six local regions of Rodrigues on business plan preparation.

Recreational and leisure activities

- Special Vacances programme in April
- Colonie de vacances organized from 9 to 11 April
- Carnivals organized in the context of Festival Du Mais on 13 April at Graviers and Environment Day on 7 June at Grand La Fouche Corail
Seven aside football tournaments organized from period 8 May to 25 June

‘Ballade Traditionelle’ organized at Mont Lubin on 4 April and Anse Raffin on 26 April

Music day celebrated at Baie Lascars bus terminal on 21 June

National Youth Achievement Award Programme

One NYAA group from Mauritius was on expedition in Rodrigues where 22 bronze award participants of the Bocage International School came to prepare their final bronze competition on 30 to 31 May.

Adolescent Youth and Health Counselling Centre

From April to June 30 peer educators were trained. Talks and Seminars organized at the Adolescent and Youth and Health Counselling Centre and at village level to sensitize and empower the youth against STD/HIV aids and to promote their sexual and reproductive health.

Upgrading of Youth Centres

The La Ferme Youth Centre and Malabar Centre D’accueil upgraded and equipped with audio visual facilities and computer with access to internet.

CJSOI Games in Seychelles

Participation of Miss Carimeane Grandcourt and Sebastien Capdor in the “Volet Jeunesse” of the CJSOI Games in Seychelles from 27 July to 2 August.

Dreams + Teams Project

Dreams + Teams Project was launched in Rodrigues.

Sports

Participation in the following sports activities:

- Central Sud Football Team MFA Cup in Mauritius in April
- Participation of Young football players in the Danone Nations Cup in Mauritius in June
- Three athletes in the CJSOI Games in Seychelles in July
- Two volleyball teams (men and women) in the Master Competition in Mauritius
- Rodriguan wrestlers in “Tournoi de L’Amitié” in Mauritius in August

Main Infrastructure development

- Levelling of football ground at Baladirou
- Upgrading of sports complex at La Ferme/Manique
- Lighting of major sports infrastructure
- Construction of Boulodromes at Papaye, Pistaches, Camp du Roi and Citronelle
Construction of two Tennis Courts and Cloak room at Mont Venus

Renovation of fencing of Bay Lascar football ground

Labour

The Labour and Industrial Relations department of the RRA organized a half day talk organized on 17 April for Job Contractors.

AGALEGA (OIDC)

- Setting up of a Junior Secondary School
- Construction of a Refugee Centre
- Ten additional lines on the island provided by Mauritius Telecom
- Introduction of mobile facilities for domestic and international calls by Emtel network
- FM radio and all MBC television channels available
- Construction of a duplex type quarters for staff
- About 100 hectares of land cleared
- Construction of building on the island for the installation of a tide gauge to read the movement of tides at sea as a preventive measure in case of Tsunami
- Harvesting and shipment of sea cucumber from April up to September to Mauritius for exportation purposes
- Setting up of two Children’s playground

Extension of mobile phone network to Agaléga
Basic social protection for all
Social aid for the vulnerable groups
Welfare and protection of the elderly
Promoting community living
Integration of the disabled within mainstream society
Basic social protection for all
Social aid for the vulnerable groups
Welfare and protection of the elderly
Promoting community living
Integration of the disabled within mainstream society

National Pensions Scheme

The National Pensions Scheme promotes the concept of national solidarity through redistribution of income in the form of non-contributory benefits. For the period January to October 2008 an amount of Rs 5.3 billion was disbursed in respect of payment of Basic Pensions (Retirement, Invalidity, Widows, Orphans).

Contributory Pensions

The Ministry collects contributions in respect of insured persons (full-time and part-time employees) in the private sector, and effects payment of the related benefits at time of entitlement to the latter or their dependants. For the period January to October, an amount of Rs 664 992 119 was disbursed in respect to these contributions.

National Savings Fund

NSF contributions relate to a monthly contribution amounting to 2.5 per cent of the basic wage or salary (up to a ceiling) of every employee, aged between 18 and retirement age. A lump sum made up of contributions and accrued interests is payable at time of retirement. For the period January to September, an amount of Rs 509 891 735 was collected as contributions from the employees. For the period January to October 2008, 13 357 beneficiaries were awarded an amount of Rs 360 928 203.

Social Services Management Information System (SSMIS)

The Ministry has embarked on a major computerisation project to replace its existing information systems with the latest technology for the delivery of social services, with a view to providing a better service to citizens.

Increase in Retirement Age

Following Government’s decision to increase retirement age, the Ministry started implementing the policy as from August in a phased approach. The present normal retirement age as well as the normal pension age (60 years) is being gradually increased over a period of ten years, from August 2008 to August 2018, to age 65.
Social Welfare Division

A four-day national Foire Artisanale for Elderly Persons, with the participation of more than 200 Senior Citizens Associations and interested individual elderly from all the districts of the island, was organised in September 2008 by the Social Welfare Division of the Ministry from 25 to 28. The major objectives of the Foire were to promote productive and income-generating activities amongst SCAs and Senior Citizens in general and to promote opportunities for them to make their skills/talents known to the public and sell their products.

Food Security Policy

In line with Government policy on food security, the Ministry, with the support of the parastatal bodies operating under its aegis, took the initiative to create awareness and redynamise interest in agricultural activities. The objectives are to sensitise local communities on the campaign “Retour à la Terre”, contribute towards food self-sufficiency and to the national effort on poverty alleviation.

Medical Unit

Launching of Anti Influenza Vaccination Campaign for Elderly

The Anti Influenza Vaccination campaign for the elderly (65 yrs and above) was launched at Vacoas, Rose Hill and Beau Bassin on 12 May and lasted till September.

Health and Nutrition Clubs

During the year, eleven new health and nutrition clubs were set up in the community through the network of Social Welfare Centres and Community Centres to enable people to take control of and to improve their health through regular checks and health education programmes.

Recruitment of Medical / Nursing Staff

Medical and para-medical services with 24 hour coverage started in September for residents at Pointe aux Sables Centre for the Severely Disabled with a panel of nine doctors and 13 Nursing Officers on a shift system to provide nursing care.

To cope with the increasing volume of work in connection with domiciliary visits to the bedridden aged 75 years and above, those aged 90 years and over, and Medical Board sessions as well as visits to infirmaries, ten Medical Practitioners were recruited on a part-time sessional basis.

Eleven Nursing Officers were also recruited. They have been posted to infirmaries, homes, health and nutrition clubs and at the centre for Severely Disabled at Petit Verger, Pointe aux Sables to give medical assistance.

Centre for Elderly Persons with Severe Disabilities

As from September, 16 residents were admitted at the Centre.
Disability

Respite care programmes

The Ministry regularly organizes respite care programmes. The aim is to provide some relief to parents who have to look after their disabled children on a 24-hour basis. In this context, some 300 disabled children spent a whole day at the Waterpark in August and another whole day at Calodyne sur-mer hotel in September.

Working on employability of disabled persons

With a view to sensitizing employers on the practice of recruiting persons with disabilities in their workforce, the Ministry organised a one-day workshop on strategies to enhance the employability of disabled persons.

Job and Training Fair for persons with disabilities

A Job and Training Fair was organised on 4 December at CyberTower, Ebène in the context of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities.
**Signing of MoU with UNDP**

A MoU was signed between the Ministry and the UNDP for the setting up of a database on disability. This database will serve as an important tool in policy-making. It will help to map out the number, category, age, type of disability and where the disabled persons are, what they are doing and what should be done as well.

**Senior Citizens Council**

**Launching of ICT courses (IC3)**

Organised by the Senior Citizens Council and launched in Pamplemousses in January, the objective of these courses conducted by the National Computer Board in the IT Coach is to enable senior citizens to have access to information and enrich their knowledge through internet, correspond with relatives and friends, record documents and keep simple accounts.

**National Day Celebrations**

The Ministry, in collaboration with the Senior Citizens Council, organised a Meet of 1 200 senior citizens on 10 March at the Recreation Centre of Pointe aux Sables to celebrate the event.

**Consultative Meetings on Needs of the Elderly**

The first of a series of five Consultative Meetings on Needs of the Elderly was launched on 16 May. Senior citizens were given through brainstorming sessions the opportunity to voice their feelings, give their opinions and make proposals on issues pertaining to the elderly, namely on ‘Older Persons and Development’, ‘Advancing Health and Well-being in Old Age’ and ‘Supportive Environment’.

**Preventive Health Care**

Launching on 17 July of a half-day Seminar on Preventive Health Care in the district of Moka at Quartier Militaire. The objective of this exercise was to create awareness on Osteoporosis, Malnutrition and Mental Health among senior citizens.

**Intergeneration Meets**

In the context of the International Day for the Elderly, a meeting followed by a lunch was organised for 60 senior citizens and 25 students at the Dr Maurice Curé State College and Lady Sushil Ramgoolam State Secondary School on 27 and 28 August respectively.

**Delegation from Respect Age International (India)**

A delegation of 15 senior citizens from Respect Age International (RAI) Agra, India visited Mauritius in September on the invitation of the Senior Citizens Council. They were led by Dr. Girish C. Gupta, Secretary General of the organization. The Senior Citizens Council has a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with this NGO which caters for the welfare of the elderly in India.
NGO Trust Fund

Get together of NGOs in the disability sector

The NGO Trust Fund which supports many NGOs working for the benefit of persons with disabilities organised a get together on 27 February with a view to:

(i) enlisting their support in the implementation of the Action Plan;
(ii) conveying appreciation for the support of NGOs in the process of integration of persons with disabilities within the mainstream society, and
(iii) creating a new synergy among NGOs in the disability sector.

Launching of Training Programme for NGOs

In line with its objective of ensuring the capacity development of NGOs in Mauritius, training programmes on Project Management and Accounting and Budgeting were officially launched in April for a second batch of 50 NGO volunteers.

Workshop on Strengthening Governance in NGOs

A one-day workshop was organised in September in collaboration with the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) and on the basis of the recommendations, a manual on good governance for NGOs will be published.
NGO Strategy Retreat

The NGO Strategy Retreat was organised on 13 November with the following objectives:

(i) To make an overview of emerging social challenges facing our society in the wake of globalization; and
(ii) To assess programmes and activities of the NGO Trust Fund and to identify new programmes/services to enable NGOs to effectively address the emerging challenges.

International Volunteer Day (IVD)

To mark IVD this year, a ceremony was organised on 8 December at IVTB House in Phoenix to award scholarships to volunteers and hand over certificates to NGO volunteers who followed the training programmes on Project Management and Accounting and Budgeting.

Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund (SILWF)

Scholarships Scheme

Under the scholarship schemes, award was made to 642 scholars following courses at Secondary, Tertiary and Vocational Levels and the sum disbursed from January to November amounts to Rs 3 594 000.
**Housing Loan Scheme**

Under the Housing Loan Scheme, the Fund provides loan facilities up to a maximum of Rs 200,000 at 5% interest per annum refundable over a maximum period of 20 years to sugar workers for the purpose of construction/repairs/completion of their houses.

**Community Development & Amenities Schemes**

Under the Community Development Scheme, the Fund operates 125 Community Centres throughout the island and the principal aim is to cater for the all-round development of community spirit among the population. Under this Scheme, educational, social, economic, and recreational activities are carried out.

Under the Amenities Scheme, the Fund disbursed a sum of Rs 2.5m for Capital Projects at the Community Centres (like fencing works, tarmac, construction of office and toilet blocks).

Besides, a sum of Rs 1m has been disbursed for the purchase of indoor games, IT equipment and keep fit materials at the Community Centres.

**Soft Loan Scheme**

Under the Soft Loan Scheme, an interest-free loan of a maximum of Rs 10,000 refundable over a maximum period of three years is granted to a sugar worker for the purchase of household equipment (Gas & Electrical Oven, Refrigerator, Washing Machine, Sewing and Embroidery Machine and Autocycle). From January to June, an amount of Rs 3,646,000 was disbursed.

**Miscellaneous**

The SILWF disbursed a sum of Rs 180,000 to a number of socio-cultural and religious organisations for the celebration of various events and festivals for the period January to October.

**Loïs Lagasse Trust Fund**

- Free distribution of JAWS (Talking) Software to the University and to three visually impaired students
- International White Cane Day commemoration on 15 October and distribution of white canes free-of-charge
- Launching of specialized pre-primary school for visually impaired children on 10 December
- Purchase and distribution of JAWS Software and white canes
- Renovation of the Primary School
- Construction of specialized pre-primary for visually impaired children
WOMEN'S RIGHTS, CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY WELFARE

Empowerment through capacity-building
Integrating gender into development
Protection of children and women
Promoting family values
WOMEN'S RIGHTS, CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY WELFARE

Empowerment through capacity-building
Integrating gender into development
Protection of children and women
Promoting family values

GENDER UNIT

February

Launching of Cervical Screening Programme

The Cervical Screening Programme was launched on 5 February at the Floreal Women Centre, and replicated in 13 others, with a view to sensitizing women on the importance of early detection of cervical cancer and subsequently refer women for follow up in case of abnormalities detected through Papsmear Test. This programme was held in collaboration with the Mauritius Family Planning and Welfare Association and has benefited 700 women.

March

Celebration of International Women’s Day 2008

The International Women’s Day 2008 was celebrated at the Octave Wiehe Auditorium of the University of Mauritius and was attended by 1 000 women. The theme chosen for the year was “Financing for Gender Equality”.

Handing over of Cheques to Women Associations

Cheques amounting to Rs 2 000 each and which represent annual grants were handed over to the 1200 Women’s Associations affiliated to the National Women’s Council to organise activities related to their needs.

Handing over of Equipment

Under the women entrepreneurship development programme, the Ministry handed over equipment to the tune of Rs 154 426 to beneficiaries of micro projects, mainly to seven groups of retrenched/unemployed women of Souillac, La Porte (Poste de Flacq), Camp de Masque Pavé, Pointe aux Piments, Mont Ida, Calebasses and Cité Malherbes (Curepipe).
Launching of CD on “La Loi Mariage”

A CD on “La Loi Mariage”, the first of a series, was launched at the National Women Development Centre of Phoenix. The clip aimed at educating the public in general and women in particular, on their rights and responsibilities and mobilizing women for legal and social change.

Consumer Rights Day

An exhibition on healthy foods for children was organised at the Mahatma Gandhi Institute. Around 800 persons attended the function. The objective was to sensitize parents as well as children on the need to consume healthy foods and avoid junk ones in order to enjoy good health.

June

Handing over of Certificates

Following training courses which were organised by the Home Economics Unit during year 2007, around 5 300 trainees received certificates in various fields, such as basic home economics, healthy eating and nutrition, food preservation, floral arrangement, curtain making, pastry and dessert and home decoration.

July

Sensitisation Programme on Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH)

To mark World Population Day 2008, sensitisation campaigns on SRH were launched at the Lady Sushil Women Centre of Bambous and were replicated in three other regions. A total of 600 women have benefited from the programme.
Sensitisation Programme on Post-budgetary Opportunities for Women

A national awareness campaign was launched with a view to making women at grassroots level aware of the various opportunities outlined in the budget 2008-2009 and the ways they can benefit from these opportunities. Some 800 women were sensitised.

Capacity Building and Strategic Planning Working Sessions for Officers of the Ministry

In view of the implementation of the National Gender Policy, sector wise guidelines have been prepared with a view to assist ministries/ departments to develop their respective gender policies to ensure effective implementation of the National Gender Policy Framework through programme based budgeting.

Action Plan 2008 – 2010

A new Action Plan for the Home Economics Unit for 2008 – 2010 was drawn and aims at giving the unit a new orientation so that the programmes/projects are more in line with government policies and meet the evolving needs of the target population.

August

Evening Courses for Working Men and Women

Evening courses of about 20 weeks duration each and targeted towards working men and women, were launched at the Phoenix National Women Development Centre. Courses in ‘Pastry and Dessert’, ‘Food Preservation’, and ‘Healthy Eating’ were organised. The objective is to empower both working men and women who usually cannot benefit from the training activities organised during working hours.

Half-day Sports Activities for Women’s Sports Associations

Following the setting up of Women’s Sports Associations at the level of Women Centres, the Ministry organised training programmes to ensure their proper management. Actions were geared towards increasing the number of members so that they could practise various disciplines which would in turn keep them sound and healthy. With a view to sustaining those Associations, four regional half day sports activities were organised and were attended by 500 women and young girls.

September

Enhancing Household Food Security

A nationwide kitchen garden competition was launched in September 2008. The objective was to sensitise women as well as the family on the need to grow fruits and vegetables in backyards. Around 225 families took part in the competition.

Development of Recipes on Locally Available Food Products

Development and standardisation of recipes using locally available sources of carbohydrates were initiated at the level of the Home Economics Resources Centres. The aim is to vulgarise these recipes in order to encourage the population to eat more locally available foods and hence be less dependent on imported staples.
October

Celebration of World Food Day 2008

A National Culinary Competition on local foods was organised at the Phoenix National Women Development Centre on the theme ‘Enhancing Household Food Security’. A National Sales Exhibition of agricultural products by women entrepreneurs was also held.

November

Sensitisation Programme on Sex Discrimination Act

The Ministry launched a sensitisation programme on the Sex Discrimination Act at the National Development Centre of Phoenix reaching out 200 women and men. This activity is being replicated in all Women Centres.

Workshop on Formulation of Draft Sectoral Gender Policies

A Workshop on formulation of draft sectoral gender policies was organised. Representatives of technical and administrative cadres of pilot Ministries namely, Ministries of Youth and Sports; Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment; and Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources attended the workshop which was facilitated by an international consultant on Gender.

Training of Trainers (TOT) in Kitchen Gardening

A TOT programme in the field of kitchen and kitchen gardening was organised for the benefit of 18 trainers in collaboration with the Agricultural Research and Extension Unit (AREU). The aim was to impart
knowledge and skills in the fields of basic agriculture. The trainers will in turn be required to disseminate the information to the general public.

**Seminar on Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) under the UNFPA Project**

A first seminar on SRH was launched at the National Women Development Centre targeting some 200 women leaders. Three additional activities were held simultaneously in other regions. Activities also comprised capacity building/training programmes for Officers-in-charge of Women Centres and field staff.

**Validation Workshop**

A workshop was organised to scrutinise the national report on the status of gender equality in Mauritius. The object was to validate the report and formulate a regional gender strategy in collaboration with countries forming part of the Indian Ocean Commission.

**Collaboration/Partnership with other Stakeholders**

The Ministry worked in collaboration and in partnership with other ministries, institutions and organisations on programmes related to a number of issues. These included empowerment of unemployed women through capacity building and cooperatives, the environment, road safety, and strengthening family life through training sessions for pregnant women, married and unmarried.

**Ongoing IEC Programmes in Women Centres**

The Gender Unit has conducted monthly activities on specific themes which include:

- World Population Day
- Women's Rights are Human Rights
- Gender Awareness Programme
- Food Security
- Gender-Based Violence

The objective of such activities is to keep women abreast of developmental issues and update them of the importance of their involvement in Women's Empowerment Programme.

**January –December**

**Training courses in Women Centres**

Women at grassroots level are regularly provided with basic courses at the level of 14 Women Centres, the Empowerment Centre, the National Women Development Centre and the Richelieu Regional Women Development Centre.

The courses comprise the following:

- Physical /Keep fit/Sports Activities
- Health Care
- Handicraft and Other related crafts; and
- Adult Literacy
Skill Sharing Activities

Women are also encouraged to share and exchange skills in which they excel.

National Women’s Council

Women Empowerment in Decision-Making

The project "Women Empowerment in Decision-Making at the Regional Level" was initiated by the Regional Committee of Pamplemousses/Rivière du Rempart and the National Women’s Council and funded by the Decentralised Cooperation Programme-EU and Fondation Nouveau Regard-Ciel Group. 320 women were trained in Advocacy, Poverty Alleviation and Community Health and networks of women were set up. The aim is to provide women with skills to participate actively in decision-making instances on issues that affect their livelihoods in their respective locality.

April

International Health Day

A number of activities were organised with a view to sensitising women on the importance of healthy eating and physical exercise for maintaining a healthy life. About 250 women were sensitised.

May

Enhancing Life skills of Women Detainees

A ‘Certificate Award Ceremony’ for women detainees was organised. Twenty-five women ex-detainees had been trained during the programme in Life skills and Leadership skills. The objective was to increase their self-esteem and self-confidence to re-integrate society.

World Book Day

In the context of World Book Day, an IT Club and Library was inaugurated at Mare Tabac Village Hall.

June

World Environment Day

A sensitisation programme was organised with a view to reflecting the importance of the environment, wildlife and the oceans to the health of planet Earth, natural resources and protection of our biodiversity. About 1,000 women attended.

September

Adult Literacy Course for the Entrepreneurship Development for Women (ALED – for Women)

The International Literacy Day 2008 was celebrated at the Mahatma Gandhi Institute, Moka on the theme ‘Empowerment of women through Literacy’. The main activities included:

- Launching of a four-month module, ‘Adult Literacy Course for the Entrepreneurship Development, for Women’. It aims at enhancing the self-confidence of women to engage in productive work including income generating activities
Projection of a short documentary on 'Empowering of women through Literacy'

Award of Certificates to 300 Adult Literacy trainees

Launching of Adult Literacy courses at Bel Ombre and La Preneuse, adding up to the existing 36 centres where courses are carried out

October

Training in HIV/AIDS

A residential training programme on HIV/AIDS was organised for 50 Family Support Officers and Community Leaders at Trou aux Biches in collaboration with the Council of Religions with a view to increasing awareness on the pandemic and reduce stigma in the community.

December

The National Women's Council, in collaboration with Arya Samaj and NATReSA organised a two-day workshop on “Preventive measures on drugs substance abuse” at Rose Belle District Council with a view to sensitising women to have better and healthier life.

National Women Entrepreneur Council

With a view to enhancing women entrepreneurship and improve competitiveness of women owned businesses, the NWEC organised a series of programmes and activities in 2008. The main activities were:

Women Entrepreneurship Development Programmes

Women Entrepreneurship Development Programmes were organised in 14 regions to accelerate start-up amongst potential women entrepreneurs and also enhance competitiveness of women owned enterprises. The

Facilitating women entrepreneurship in Mauritius and Rodrigues
programmes covered procedures to set up Businesses, Labour laws, Business Planning, Marketing, Production techniques, Human Resource management, Finance, Services of key institutions, an overview of promising sectors and meetings with successful entrepreneurs. 960 existing and potential women entrepreneurs followed the programme in 2008.

**Short skills Development Programmes**

Training programmes were organised at Phoenix for 320 participants on topics related to Finance, Marketing, Human Resource Management, Business, French and Quality to improve functional and managerial skills of women entrepreneurs.

**Product Upgrade Programme**

Forty Women entrepreneurs involved in pickle making followed a training program to acquire new techniques and skills to produce better quality pickles. The women entrepreneurs were also given the opportunity to network with large entrepreneurs in similar lines of production.

**Sensitisation Campaigns on Financial Schemes**

Two sensitisation programmes on Financial Schemes offered by DBM and SME Partnership Fund were organized for 215 women entrepreneurs

**Fairs in May, October, December**

Three fairs were organised and 120 women entrepreneurs participated. The key objectives were to increase awareness and sales of products manufactured by women entrepreneurs.

**Sectoral Entrepreneurship Development Programmes**

Short courses to inform and motivate potential and existing women entrepreneurs in sectors like textiles, agro industry and handicraft were held. The courses prepared participants particularly existing entrepreneurs to consider diversifying in new sectors.

**Business Incubators**

Two business incubators were developed at Phoenix and Triolet to accommodate 25 potential women entrepreneurs.

**Directory/ Product Catalogue**

A Directory/Product Catalogue for women entrepreneurs was prepared. The objectives were to improve awareness and increase sales of products and services provided by women entrepreneurs.

**Manufacturing Adjustment and SME Development Fund**

Projects amounting to Rs 20m were submitted for funding under the Manufacturing Adjustment and SME Development Fund as announced in budget 2008/2009. The aims of the projects are to assist growth and development of women entrepreneurs in a range of areas like capacity building, marketing, innovation, ICT and management.
Creation of new Cooperative in Agro industry

Fourteen women entrepreneurs were provided a plot of land of six acres in May to set up a cooperative to produce and process vegetables. Training, business planning and pre-start support were provided by the NWEC in collaboration with AREU.

Child Development Unit

January-November
Information Education Communications (IEC) Campaign

Since the beginning of the year, a series of sensitisation and awareness campaigns were organised by officers of the CDU. The number of children reached was 2,249 and that of teachers from secondary schools and the IVTB was 53.

Parental Empowerment

Some 940 parents across the island have had the opportunity to get appropriate information relating to parenting and rights of the child, as parents do become child’s rights advocates and safeguard the best interests of children under their responsibility.

March
World Poetry Day

The Ministry in collaboration with the National Children’s Council celebrated the World Poetry Day. A poetry competition was organised at country level and the prize giving ceremony was held on the 21 March 2008 at the National Women Development Centre, Phoenix. Some 200 students and parents attended the function.

June
16 Days 16 Rights Campaign

In the context of the 16 Days 16 Rights Campaign, the Ministry organised a series of sensitisation programmes and a debate competition for children of primary and secondary schools on the rights and responsibilities of children. A poetry and essay competition for children was also launched during the campaign.

Day of the African Child

To mark this event, the Ministry organised a cultural programme at the National Women Development Centre, Phoenix. NGOs working with children and children attending schools in Phoenix attended the function. Video clips on the rights and responsibilities of children were shown and were later broadcasted on the national television during the month of June.

July
Shelter

The Shelter for Women and Children in Distress was relocated to Pointe aux Sables for the sake of more adequate and appropriate spacing at the Ministry. The Ministry, through the National Children’s Council runs a shelter for Women and Children in Distress.
Capitation grant to institutions increased

An increase was made in the rate of capitation grant payable to charitable institutions where children with utterly non-stable families are placed by the Ministry.

October

Assessment and monitoring of implementation of Early Childhood Development guidelines/laws

A series of eight workshops were organised for all managers/caregivers of child day care institutions. The workshops provided a platform for them to express themselves on the problems and issues affecting them in their day-to-day interaction with children and parents and in the day to day running of their institutions and thereafter enabling their counselling through a support system appropriately designed for them.

Workshop on Child Mentoring Programme

A consultative workshop to validate the Child Mentoring programme framework was organised with all stakeholders in child welfare on 8 October.

The Ministry is coming forward with a child Mentoring Programme where the Child Mentoring Programme shall be a well structured and well managed programme in which children in distress will be appropriately screened and matched with trained adult mentors for a one to one relationship of emotional reconstruction.

November

Celebration of Universal Children’s Day

To mark the Universal Children’s day, an open day was held on the 17 November at the Gymkhana Grounds at Vacoas. Some 2000 children were present. The theme was centred around child safety and “Securité nou zenfants avant tout”.

Community Child Watch Committees

A Community Child Watch Committee at Pointe aux Sables was launched on 28 November.

The Ministry embarked on the Community Child Protection Programme (CCPP) which acts as a formal forum at the grassroots and district levels to ensure community development with respect to child protection and welfare.

Crackdown Operations

Since January, more than 45 crackdown operations were conducted to discourage school truancy and mendicity involving minors. Cases of mendicity were referred to the relevant authorities.

The aim of these operations is to send a strong signal to children and parents.
National Children’s Council

Sensitisation Programme on Prevention of Child Exploitation


Children’s Participation in Creativity Centres at Mahebourg & Floreal

Some 10 000 children attended the centre for creative activities. 1 400 children attended Residential camping programmes.

Family Unit

January

Launching of Online Services

An online service for reporting of domestic violence cases and online registration for participation in Informative, Educational and Communication (IEC) activities was launched on 24 January on the Government Web Portal through one of its sub-portals, the Citizen Portal.
February  
L’Année Sans Violence  

An anti-violence campaign 2008: L’Année Sans Violence was launched with a view to creating awareness among the public at large on the mandate of the Ministry and on issues pertaining to domestic violence.

Men as Partners Project  

The Men as Partners Project, a gender sensitive project aiming at promoting responsibility and participation of men in the family, was launched on 16 February at l’Escalier.

This project is implemented in collaboration with the Mauritius Family Planning and Welfare Association.

Zero Tolerance Clubs  

During the period February to October 2008, 19 workshops were organised through the existing network of five Zero Tolerance Clubs. The object of these Clubs is to empower communities to act as watchdogs to ensure that their locality is violence free.

April 
National Action Plan on the Family  

A Consultative Workshop was organised in April with all stakeholders concerned with a view to ensuring broad consensus on the proposed National Action Plan on the Family.

May 
International Day of the Families  

A Validation Workshop on the National Action Plan on the family was organised on 15 May with a view to strengthening the families in Mauritius.

A documentary film on ‘Role Ban Papa Dan Bien Etre la Famille’ as well as pamphlets was launched on that occasion.

A Recreational Day was also organised on 18 May at the SSR Botanical Garden, Pamplemousses. Around 2000 persons attended the function.

July 
Training of Law Enforcement Officers on the Protection from Domestic Violence Act  

Following amendments brought in the Protection from Domestic Violence Act (PDVA), a training programme for Law Enforcement Officers was organised on 7 July. The participants were apprised of the amendments and were further informed on their roles and responsibility to enforce the legislation.

August  

A Training of Trainers Programme on ‘Anger Management and Counselling Techniques’ was launched.
UNFPA Project

With a view to promoting sexual and reproductive health (SRH) for the public at large, six workshops were organised during the period August to November by Family Counselling Officers through the six Family Support Bureaux of the Ministry.

Partnership Against Domestic/Family Violence

A Partnership Against Domestic/Family Violence Committee was set up with a view to allow all stakeholders to adopt a coordinated approach to combat domestic/family violence. Keeping in view the objectives of the partnership, a new call for project proposals was launched in October to invite stakeholders to submit projects to combat domestic/family violence.

October

Sensitisation Workshop with Law Enforcement Officers

A sensitisation workshop was organised on 27 October for Court Officers, Police Officers, Medical Social Workers, representatives of NGOs and Officers of the Ministry, among others, to apprise them of the services offered and strategies adopted to combat domestic violence.

November

International Day Against Violence Against Women

From 17 to 27 November, the Ministry organised a series of activities to commemorate the International Day Against Violence Against Women (IDAVAW).
World class education
Lifelong learning
Training for employability
Mauritius a unique cultural experience
EDUCATION, CULTURE AND HUMAN RESOURCES

World class education
Lifelong learning
Training for employability
Mauritius a unique cultural experience

January

Book Clubs in Secondary Schools

Launching of the Book Club project.

Computerisation of Secondary School Libraries (Public Libraries)

This is an ongoing pilot project initiated in four State Secondary schools and one Public Library. The objective of this project is to have more performing school libraries in view of the various projects towards the promotion of reading and sustaining the reading culture.

Bridging the Gap Programme

Bridging the Gap Initiative is implemented in the first term of Standard I. The overall objective is to ensure a good start at the beginning of primary schooling securing five-year-olds emotionally so that they are successfully integrated in their new environment. The Bridging the Gap programme focuses on an enhancement of the physical environment of the class and an implementation of an inclusive and experiential pedagogy.

Vision Screening

Following the very positive outcome of the pilot phase, January has seen the full scale launching of Vision Screening in primary schools by specially trained officers of the Health and Physical Education Section. All pupils suspected of having sub-normal vision were referred to optometrists for a free examination. Rotary and Lions’ Clubs provided free glasses to needy pupils.

Auditory Screening

As from January, Social Workers (Education) carried out Auditory Screening in pre-primary and primary schools. This exercise helped to detect and attend to hearing problems that could otherwise jeopardise the successful entry of young children in the education field.
SADC Secondary Essay Competition

209 entries from 64 schools were received for the SADC Secondary Essay Competition. The theme was: *What measures should be put in place to ensure that the SADC Free Trade Area benefits the people of the Region in the fight against poverty?*

The Green School Project (GSP)

In collaboration with the NPCC and the Ministry of Environment and the NDU, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources piloted the Green School Project (GSP) in five primary and five secondary schools. The main objective of the GSP is to groom “today’s children – tomorrow’s citizens” to become responsible towards the environment in all developmental effort so as to achieve sustainable development.

Junior Science Adventure 2008

In line with its objectives to supplement school education in Science and Technology at all levels and to encourage creativity and innovation among young people, the Rajiv Gandhi Science Centre organised a science based competition aimed at primary school pupils, the Junior Science Adventure (JSA 2008). The competition aims at creating an interest in science among young pupils and initiating them to the investigation of contextual science problems encountered in their daily life.

Science Communication Contest 2008

Rajiv Gandhi Science Centre launched the 2008 Science Communication Contest. The goals of this contest are to encourage the development of analytical thinking, communication and presentation skills of students, to encourage students to research on topics in science and technology, to promote awareness of the importance
of information technology tools for effective communication in Science and Technology, and to recognize and reward talented students who can explain enthusiastically a scientific topic.

**National Science Challenge 2008**

The Rajiv Gandhi Science Centre (RGSC) organized the National Science Challenge 2008. This project based contest was aimed at Form IV and Lower Six students who were judged on the scientific quality of their project and their ability to communicate.

**Launching of the National Curriculum Framework**

The National Curriculum Framework (NFC) is the foundation policy statement covering teaching, learning and assessment for all students in all primary schools. It will also act as a guideline to curriculum developers and teachers. The Primary NCF is the first statement in the history of Mauritian education to provide an overview and outlines the ways in which the Curriculum will respond to the basic needs and interests of students in the context of our modern society and economy. The new curriculum stimulates integrated and holistic learning.

**February**

**InnovEd (Innovation for the Education Sector)**

The InnovEd project is organised collaboratively by the NPCC and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources. One of the main objectives is to provide school children (pre-primary, primary and secondary) with an opportunity to experience the rewards of creating something and to grow up into talented individuals having great respect for innovation and creative powers. 7,930 participants from 256 schools involving 660 facilitators presented 256 innovations at the Pre-Primary level. 60 primary and 75 secondary schools also participated.

**March**

**12th Model United Nations Conference (M.U.N.)**

The 12th Model United Nations Conference 2008, usually launched in February, is held on three days at the Mahatma Gandhi Institute during the 2nd Term holidays.

**April**

**Project Citizen Mauritius**

The Project Citizen Mauritius 2008 was launched on 22 April. The objective for the students participating in this Project was to help them to learn how to develop a public policy to solve a community problem and understand how citizens can have power to monitor and influence public policy making in the community.

**World Book Day**

On 23 April the World Book Day was observed in all schools.

**May**

**La Malle Circulante – Secondary Schools**

This project based on the spirit of partnership between Alliance Française of Mauritius and Ministry of Education, culture and Human Resources was launched in May 2008. Private Secondary Schools also have
been taken on board. This project promoted the reading culture and the French Language and increased the eloquence of students in that language.

**Launching of Task Analysis in Special Education**

A Task Analysis in special education for children with mental disabilities was undertaken. The objective was to provide teachers with a pedagogical tool which allows step-by-step activities with a view to develop teaching skills.

**June**

**8th Civic Action Teams (CATs) Convention**

The 8th edition of the CATs Convention for students of primary and secondary schools was organised. The objective was to identify, reduce and eliminate muda problems. Some nine hundred students participated in the project.

**July**

**School and the World of Work**

The Human Resource Development Council in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources, runs the Work Placement for Lower VI and 3rd Year Pre-vocational students. The main objective of the Project is to bridge the gap between the schooling system and the world of work.

**August**

**Launching of the 21st Century Science Project**

Further to the Ministry’s document “Towards a Quality Curriculum” of November 2006, and the holding of a Science colloquium in October 2007, the Ministry has come up, for implementation as from January 2009 in Form IV, with a project to train teachers to teach and implement (on a pilot basis in 14 colleges) a new O-Level Science syllabus entitled “21st Century Science”.

**November**

**Exploring Humanitarian Law Project**

During the summer holidays, a workshop on Exploring Humanitarian Law (EHL) was organised for private secondary school teachers. The main objective was to induct General Paper and Social Studies teachers into the Exploring Humanitarian Law project. Exploring Humanitarian Law is an educational programme which aims at inculcating into adolescents the basic rules and principles of international humanitarian law. This project, which has already been piloted into state secondary schools- is now being extended to private schools.

**Human Resource Development Council (HRDC)**

**Mentoring for SMEs**

The HRDC in collaboration with the Mauritius Employers’ Federation has been implementing a project of Mentoring for the SMEs. The programme was launched in May 2006 and, as at date, around 100 SMEs have received mentoring support. This project which aims at covering around 200 SMEs will continue in the course of 2009. The mentoring exercise is being conducted by experienced professionals and businessmen.
Project on Landscape Designing

The Sectoral Committee on Agriculture has identified a project related to training in Basic Landscape Design and Supervisory Skills for Landscaping specially to suit the growing demand for specialist landscaping services in Mauritius. With the development of the tourist industry, the IRS and golf sectors, luxury property developments, modern business parks and public spaces, there is an urgent need to maintain landscapes. A training session was held in the month of November.

Mauritius College of the Air (MCA)

January

Customer Care and Quality Management Course

A Diploma in Management was awarded to 33 members of the FPBOU (Federation of Parastatal Bodies and Other Unions (FPBOU) formerly FSCC) after having successfully completed the programme through open distance learning – a joint UTM/MCA venture. They are now eligible to enroll in the BSc (Hons) Management to be offered as from January 2009.

February

The Division of Distance Education (DDE) offered the Certificate of Proficiency in the Management of Early Childhood Services to 121 officers from the Early Childhood Care Educational Authority (ECCEA) in February. The course was designed to train officers in the grade of Teachers/Educators/Supervisors.

July

Advanced Diploma in Logistics and Transport

The Advanced Diploma in Logistics and Transport from CILT (UK) was offered to 15 people at the middle management level in the Logistics and Transport Sector.

Encouraging reading among school children
Manual on Computer Projects

A flexible learning on Manual on Computer Projects in Visual Basic at HSC/GCE ‘A’ level was published in October to assist HSC pupils overcoming the difficulties encountered with Papers 2 & 4 of the Cambridge Syllabus.

Mauritius Qualifications Authority (MQA)

January

Setting up of the Industry Training Advisory Committee (ITAC) in Agro Industry

The ITAC: Agro Industry was set up in January with a view to generating unit standards and qualifications in the agro industry, thereby creating learning pathways for people in the sector and promoting lifelong learning.

April

Workshop for training of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Assessors

A specific hands-on training for RPL assessors in the Tourism and Hospitality sector was conducted on 4-5 April at Domaine Les Pailles with Mrs M.C. Guyon, Director of Groupement d’Intérêt Public Formation Continue, Insertion Professionnelle (Académie de la Réunion) as resource person. Twenty-nine participants from the Industrial and Vocational Training Board (IVTB), Mauritius Examinations Syndicate (MES), Mauritius Qualifications Authority (MQA), Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) and people from the industry, have been trained.

June

Conference of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

A conference on RPL was held in June with a view to sharing the findings of the RPL Pilot Project in the Tourism sector that was launched in October 2007. The aim of the workshop was to come up with the way forward toward the RPL implementation at the national level.

Around 70 participants attended the conference and 7 international delegates from Ghana, Seychelles, Namibia and Kenya attended same as observers.

July

MQA as the lead organization for RPL in Commonwealth Countries

At an international conference on RPL organized by the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) and the Commonwealth Association of Polytechnics in Africa (CAPA), the MQA was nominated as the lead partner in monitoring selected countries to implement RPL. In this context, Ghana was chosen as the first country which the MQA will monitor regarding the implementation of RPL.

August

Launching of MQA Integrated Management Information Systems

On 14 August, the MQA launched its Integrated Management Information Systems (IMIS) for computerisation of its business process. This aims at offering all the informative, interactive, transactional and collaborative services for the activities of the MQA.
October

Transnational Qualifications Framework - MQA in Management Committee

Following the establishment of the Transnational Qualifications Framework (TQF) for small States of the Commonwealth, the TQF Management Committee met in Singapore for the period 6-10 October and nominated Mr K Allgoo, Director of the MQA, as its Chairperson.

Launching of the second RPL Pilot Project in the Construction Industry

The second RPL Pilot Project in the Construction Industry was launched on 23 October.

November

Launching of the Adult Literacy for Educators

The Mauritius Qualifications Authority (MQA) in collaboration with the HRDC launched a two-day workshop on the National Core Skills Development Programme which was held on 17 and 18 November. The main objective of the programme is to increase the literacy and numeracy rate in Mauritius.

National Productivity and Competitiveness Council (NPCC)

April

Productivity Academy

In the context of the launching of the Productivity Academy, the National Productivity and Competitiveness Council in collaboration with the Asian Management Institute (AMI) proposed to the business community a first series of proven and practical capacity-building programmes in the field of (1) change management, (2) mediation / negotiation, (3) train-the-trainers and (4) leadership / team building from 17 to 24 April.

May

Lifelong learning (L3) project in Mauritius

The NPCC worked closely with the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) to integrate Life Long Learning (L3) in the process. About 300 planters of the Belle-Mare region and Trou d’Eau Douce Cooperative were mobilised and on 30 May the farmers registered a new Cooperative institution – The Agro-Farm de L’Est Multipurpose Cooperative Society.

June

Addressing Women’s Emerging needs through Empowerment

The NPCC worked closely with the Ministry of Women’s Rights, Child Development and Family Welfare in addressing women’s emerging needs through empowerment project. The project aims at empowering and strengthening the capacity of women-led groups to get organised and take an active part in community projects for the welfare of the whole society. More than 100 Participatory Advisory Committee (PAC) members from the 14 Women Centres have so far been trained on the different tools and techniques which can be used for project identification, implementation and evaluation for the betterment of the status of women.
Early Childhood Care and Education Authority (ECCEA)

February

Bilateral Cooperation with Luxembourg in the field of Education

Dr Gudrun Ziegler, Assistant Professor at the University of Luxembourg, was in Mauritius from 5 to 16 February to carry out an assessment of the state of play of our pre-primary education sector. The objective of the mission was to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses thereof, and to make recommendations with a view to its upgrading and improvement.

March

Early Years Enriched Programme for the underprivileged children of the Pre-School Trust Fund

The Trust Fund for the Social Integration of Vulnerable Groups and the Early Childhood Care and Education Authority carried out a survey to identify the specific needs to upgrade the pre-primary schools having children from disadvantaged groups.

November

Celebrating the International UN Universal Children’s Day

In the context of the International UN Universal Children’s Day celebrated on 20 November, a symposium was held at the Octave Wiehé Auditorium – University of Mauritius, Réduit.

Mauritius Institute Of Education

January onwards

A number of projects have been initiated with a view to boosting Science Education and the use of ICT in schools at both primary and secondary levels. These are on-going throughout the year.

Use of ICT as an Innovative Strategy in the Teaching and Learning of Physics in secondary schools in Mauritius

Students from 12 State and private secondary schools, including two in Rodrigues, participated in the pilot project on the use of ICT, data logging and sensors to study Physics. The use of ICT and data logging tools has been stipulated in the O and A level syllabi, as these enhance conceptual understanding of scientific concepts at both lower secondary and upper secondary levels. Teachers have followed several training workshops to familiarise with these tools and they have been fully supported by MIE staff in the process.

Engaging in Thinking Project (on-going 2008)

The aim of the project is to actively engage pupils during science lessons by making use of ICT and also to teach science with an integrated approach with numeracy and languages. This project is targeted at pupils of standards 4 and 5 in 8 pilot schools, whereby pupils have been exposed to use of ICT, sensors and data logging in science lessons by means of Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs), laptops and LCD projectors.
Workshop on Biology Education

A pre-symposium workshop was organised jointly with the SBT. It focused on activities related to the theme “Biology in and out of Classroom”.

Competition and Exhibition on “Life in the Lab”

A competition was organised jointly with the SBT whereby secondary schools were asked to set up a project entitled “Life in the Lab” in the school biology laboratory, with clear aims and objectives. Students were required to prepare “graphics” e.g. pictures, drawings, diagrams, graphs and charts to represent successive stages of the project.

Physics Olympiad – 2008

The Physics Olympiad 2008 was an initiative of the Association of Physics Educators and driven by MIE lecturers, with the collaboration of the Mauritius Research Council (MRC), Rajiv Gandhi Science Centre and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources. Its aim was to search for students who are exceptionally gifted in Physics and its applications in everyday life, to challenge their understanding of scientific problems of practical nature and gauge their problem solving skills. More than 200 students from all the four educational zones of Mauritius participated.

April

International Forum on Education

One of the highlights of the academic calendar has no doubt been the International Conference on Education on the theme: Education and Knowledge-Based Economies in April. Participants, researchers, rectors, teachers and other professionals from different countries presented papers on a broad range of issues of concern to the region.
Educating Diabetes patients and youth through the Wiki educator: A case study from Mauritius

This project proposes an innovative and constructive methodology to disseminate appropriate and adapted information on diabetes to the Mauritian public through the Wiki educator. The Wiki environment does not only have updated material, but also provides a platform for Diabetes patients to relate their own cases and thus, create greater awareness of this non-communicable disease in Mauritius.

May

Developing and implementing online HIV/AIDS education for secondary school students

Under the MIE-School Link Initiative a project was initiated using a blended mode of face-to-face and online interaction of HIV/AIDS course designed for secondary school students. It is aimed at creating awareness on HIV/AIDS among students and enabling them to actively participate in the learning process and become independent learners.

The Reproductive Health, Sexuality and Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) Education Project

The Reproductive Health, Sexuality and Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) Education project reached the end of its first phase which involved critical analysis of knowledge, attitude and behavior of students, teachers and managers of the primary and secondary schools towards STI (including HIV/AIDS) and Reproductive Health and Sexuality Education (RHSE) and, also investigation of the teaching and learning of STI and RHSE in both Mauritius and Rodrigues.

June

Setting the foundations of a more inclusive education

A new paradigm is being adopted for training of teachers whereby a team of MIE lecturers is working with teachers in ZEP schools. Such a project is designed to bring innovative practices in primary classrooms by providing school based training in literacy.

Addressing HIV/AIDS issues in class using an integrated approach

The above project aimed at empowering lower secondary school teachers to address HIV/AIDS issues in class with their pupils in their respective subject areas using an integrated approach.

December

Spelling for fun Interactive CD

Spelling activities are used in the Pre-Primary Schools in the teaching of various themes. These activities allow children to learn how to combine letters to form words related to the themes being taught. A CD containing a collection of works done by pre-primary teachers enrolled in the Teacher’s Certificate Pre-Primary (TCPP) programme has been produced.

35th Anniversary – MIE

MIE launched an interactive CD developed with the collaboration of Pre-Primary School teachers and two publications: the MIE Journal, and Conference Proceedings of the International Conference on ‘Knowledge Based Economics’.
Curriculum Framework

Following the policy document “Empowering the nation’s Children – Towards a Quality Curriculum” (Ministry of Education and Human Resources 2006) the MIE was entrusted with the design of the Curriculum Framework at all levels of Education in Mauritius.

CULTURE

Modern Art Exhibition

A modern Art Exhibition was organised by the Ministry of Arts and Culture and the Escale groupe of artists between 11 and 31 January.

Thaipoosam Cavadee Festival

The Ministry provided assistance to various major socio-cultural organisations in terms of financial support to bring a cultural troupe from India to give performances in Mauritius.

173rd Anniversary of the Abolition of Slavery

Wreath-laying ceremony at Pointe Canon in the presence of Ambassador Olabiya Babalola Joseph Yaï, Chairman of the UNESCO Executive Board.

Maha Shivaratri Festival

Ministry provided assistance and support to socio-cultural organisations. It also arranged for the arrival of a cultural troupe from Delhi.
Chinese Spring Festival

Gala show organised by the Ministry in collaboration with the Federation of Chinese Societies at the Mahatma Gandhi Institute.

Drama Unit

Participation in Bharat Rang Mahotsaw at National School of Drama, New Delhi, India.

World Theatre Day

The World Theatre Day was celebrated at the Serge Constantin Theatre Centre, Municipality of Curepipe, Quartier Militaire District Council, Municipality of Port Louis, Rose Belle Tamil Hall, Quatre Bornes Town Hall, Rivière du Rempart Youth Centre and Salle des Fêtes Plaza.

Centres de Lecture et d’Animation Culturelle (CLAC)

CLAC organised various activities in all its Centres across the island.

Centre de Formation Artistique (CdeFA)

A second Centre de Formation Artistique opened in August at Plaine des Papayes. The objective of these centres is to make the practice of all art forms easily accessible to every citizen. It offers courses in guitar playing, tabla, violin, painting, photography and dramatic arts.

A workshop was organised by the Centre de Formation Artistique of Vacoas by the Midi Music Company from UK.

National Day Celebrations

National Day Celebrations at Champ de Mars in the presence of South African President, H. E Mr. T. Mbeki.

Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund

- Commemorative ceremony on 21 February of the 144th Anniversary of the opening of the Vagrant Depot of Grand River North West
- Commemorative Ceremony of the 174th Anniversary of the Arrival of Indentured Labourers

Islamic Cultural Centre

- Hadj Awareness programme
- Registration of prospective Hadjis for Hadj 2008

Le Morne Heritage Trust Fund

- Finalising of Management Plan Documents for inscription of the Le Morne Cultural Landscape
- Two competitions were held to mark the International Day of Monuments and Sites

Mauritius Museums Council

Inauguration of the Dodo Gallery on 14 March.
Mauritius Society of Authors (MASA)

- The Director, Mr. Gerard Louise, met representatives of diplomatic missions of France, South Africa, United States, Australia and Madagascar to promote cultural exchanges
- MASA Award Nite in Rodrigues

National Archives

The National Archives organised an exhibition of records and materials on slavery

National Art Gallery

- 2nd Salon d’Eté at the New Complex Hall, Plaine des Papayes in April
- Organisation of Art Therapy at the Dr. A. Jeetoo Hospital

National Heritage Fund Board

- Workshop on Archaeological and Cultural Mapping by Dr A. Rafolo, President of ICOMOS (Madagascar)
- Celebration of International Day for Monuments and Sites
- Exhibition on Mauritian Heritage sites in Rodrigues

Nelson Mandela Centre for African Culture

- Africa Day Celebration at Le Caudan Waterfront
- President Fund for Creative Writing in English
- Launching of books and organisation of workshops
Music Day (June)

Music Day held at Serge Constantin, Vacoas in collaboration with Ecole de Musique Arpège.

Le Morne on the World Heritage List

Inscription of Le Morne on the World Heritage List-during the 32nd Session of the World Heritage Committee which met in Quebec City, Canada from 2-10 July.

A Cultural Show was held at Le Morne Public Beach in August to mark this landmark event.

Aaprvasi Ghat

A ceremony was held in July in Port Louis to mark the 2nd Anniversary of the inscription of Aaprvasi Ghat on the World Heritage List. Aaprvasi Ghat was inscribed on World Heritage List in July 2006 at the 30th session of UNESCO’s World Heritage Committee held in Vilnius, Lithuania.

Mauritius a Language Hub

In line with the Government objective to make Mauritius a language hub, the Marathi-Speaking Union Bill, the Tamil-Speaking Union Bill and the Telugu-Speaking Union Bill were passed in July with a view to provide for the setting up of the respective Unions.

The Hindi Speaking Union organized the following activities:

- Talks at the library of the Hindi Speaking Union (Triolet)
- Story telling competition
- Elocution Contest
- Book launching ceremony

The Urdu Speaking Union organized the National Urdu Competition.

African Nite Concert in Beijing

- Participation in African Nite Concert held in July in Beijing, China in the context of Beijing Olympic Games
- Exhibition in September on Slave Trade in the Indian Ocean at the National History Museum in Port Louis

Other Activities - October to December

- Creators and Performers Day at Serge Constantin Theatre, Vacoas
- National Divali Celebrations at Auguste Volaire Stadium, Flacq
- National Christmas Celebration at the Nelson Mandela Stadium, Résidence Vallijee, Port Louis
- Unveiling of bust of Mr. Sookdeo Bissoondoyal at Place d’Armes, Port Louis
- Award Ceremony for artists at Serge Constantin Theatre, Vacoas
AGRO INDUSTRY, FOOD PRODUCTION AND SECURITY

Sugar sector reform/MAAS
Support to small planters
Agricultural diversification
Development of agro-processing activities
Food security
AGRO INDUSTRY, FOOD PRODUCTION AND SECURITY

Sugar sector reform/MAAS
Support to small planters
Agricultural diversification
Development of agro-processing activities
Food security

Mauritius Sugar Authority

The sugar industry has been undergoing major structural reform as a result of reforms taking place at the level of the European Union and in particular the reform of the sugar regime culminating in the major price cut of 36% in October 2009.

The reform in the sugar industry is being driven by the Multi-Annual Adaptation Strategy (MAAS), which addresses the issues that would enable the sugar industry to sustain the price cut and remain viable. A Government guarantee of €94 M has been agreed upon for a bridging loan to be contracted on behalf of all Sugar Companies, Mauritius Sugar Producers Association (MSPA) members or otherwise, that would be engaged in the VRS 2, the ERS and factory closures (blueprint).

Centralisation and factory closure

Five sugar factories requested the permission of the Minister of Agro Industry to cease milling operations and for their milling operations to be transferred to other sugar factories.

Mon Loisir and Mon Désert Alma obtained permission for closure in March 2008.

Production set up of small and medium planters

The Field Operations and Regrouping and Irrigation Project (FORIP) has been designed with the objective of modernising and upgrading the production set up of small and medium planters so as to enable them to withstand the shocks of the future through enhanced production and lower costs.

The first phase of the FORIP covering some 340 ha was completed in March 2007. The second phase, under implementation, includes new elements, that is, the introduction of new technologies coverage of difficult areas and introduction of modern and the efficient irrigation systems.
On 5 December 2007, the government and the Mauritius Sugar Producers Association (MSPA) concluded an all inclusive deal, following which the participation of all stakeholders was enlisted to effectively implement the provisions of the Agreement, namely VRS2, ERS, factory closures, re-skilling of employees and allocation of plots of land to employees concerned.

Consequently, 25 growing companies applied for the VRS 2, and the payment of cash compensation has been completed.

Four milling companies, around which there would be clusters, that is, Belle Vue, FUEL, Médine and Savannah, applied for an ERS. The procedures have been completed and cash payment effected.

Factory closure procedures in respect of Riche en Eau, Mon Trésor and St Félix were completed in December 2007 whereas those of Mon Désert Alma were completed in April 2008. The factory closure procedures for Mon Loisir would be completed once agreement is reached on transfer of cane.

As at date, 6 536 and 210 employees have accepted the VRS 2 and the ERS respectively, that is a total of 6 746. Out of this number, 4 277 have expressed the intention to enrol in training schemes and 1 865 have already enrolled in training schemes.

Cash compensation paid to employees of 25 VRS 2, 4 ERS and 4 Blue Print, Sugar Entities amounts to some Rs 3.6 billion. Infrastructure and other costs for these employees would amount to some Rs 2 billion resulting in a total cost of some Rs 5.6 billion. To this amount, the costs of closure of Mon Loisir, DRBC and Union St Aubin, estimated at some Rs 1 billion, have to be added. So far bridging finance of an amount of € 45 M has been raised and used.

Training and recycling

The Regional Training Centre noted in mid January that the attendance of participants was not satisfactory. The MSA met all concerned parties in January 2008 to ensure the smooth operation of the training schemes and to facilitate the enrolment of the remaining 2 300 employees in training schemes.

VRS 2, ERS and Factory Closure - The Schemes
The MSA has as from mid February 2008 embarked on a training caravan to canvass the remaining 2 300 or so employees.

The MSA and the Sugar Companies in collaboration with the Empowerment Programme are engaged in ensuring that a maximum number of employees are recycled. As at mid April, some 800 employees had already been redeployed.

**Land to employees and sale of land to recoup costs**

The Schemes have two main components, cash compensation and the provision of land with all infrastructural facilities. In this regard, some 58 sites have been identified for the beneficiaries of VRS II, 6 for the beneficiaries of ERS and 4 for those concerned with factory closures.

**Phasing out of Sugar Industry Camps Scheme**

The Scheme has reached its second and final phase. The total number of sugar camps which have been phased out as at date is 46. Out of the remaining 67 sugar camps, 55 have been earmarked for phasing out. Works are progressing on another 12 sugar camps.

**Northern Plain Drip Irrigation Project**

The Project consists of the conversion of 1 131 ha of sugarcane field from the overhead irrigation system to a combination of drip, centre pivot and solid set irrigation systems in the Northern Plain. The Project is divided into 3 phases namely Phase I, Phase II and Phase III. The total cost for the overall completion of the Project is estimated to about Rs 378 million.

**Phases II & III**

The combined Phases II and III consists of the conversion of some 770 ha of sugarcane to centre pivots and solid set irrigation systems. The project boundary is located within the regions of Triolet, Solitude, Plaine des Papayes, Morcellement St André and Fond du Sac. The number of small / medium planters within the project boundary is approximately 1 172.

**Metayers**

The metayers are as a rule found in what are termed “difficult areas” in the MAAS and they operate in difficult circumstances. In this regard, Government and the MSPA have agreed that a joint Ministry of Agro Industry and Fisheries/MSPA Committee would in an expeditious manner work out appropriate solutions so that the metayers benefit from the implementation of the Sugar Reform. Solutions would be in respect of the possibility of sale of non-strategic land to metayers and the positive review of the rental formula.

FA 2007/8 refers to three indicators for the variable tranche. 7 139 employees have accepted an offer under the VRS 2, the ERS or the Blue Print (3500 was the target). 850 ha are being covered by phase 2 of the FORIP as opposed to the requirement of 750 ha. The indicator has already been met in terms of the regrouping of planters and by early 2008, 750 ha would have been derocked. Regarding cane planting, beset by force majeure conditions and the shortage of inputs, some 750 ha would have been planted by April 2008. More than 500 employees will be recycled (the requirement was 500) by April 2008. All indicators for FA 2007/8 have been met.
Farmers Service Corporation

All activities related to harvest are monitored by the Farmers Service Corporation (FSC). Advice is given on appropriate cultural practices and planters benefit from several facilities, such as separate sucrose test from the Control Board. The Corporation liaises between planters and sugar estates for the smooth running and proper timing of the harvest.

Regular monthly meetings are held at the Centres with all stakeholders to review, plan and discuss several activities related to the sugar sector.

Training is also conducted for the farmers community and for the FSC staff and radio talks are organized in various fields for the small planter.

One of the major ongoing projects is the implementation of the Multi Annual Adaptation Strategy – Action Plan 2006-2015.

Old cane varieties and old ratoons are replaced by new performing varieties and regrouping and mechanisation result in a reduction in the cost of production.

In 2006, approximately 350 hectares of land were prepared and about 850 hectares in 2007. The target for 2008 and onwards is approximately 2 000 hectares.

Agricultural Research and Extension Unit

Release of locally bred onion varieties

One of the major breakthroughs in the local onion industry has been the release of a new locally bred variety called Bellarose. This variety has emanated from the onion breeding programme implemented by the Agricultural Research and Extension Unit (AREU) out of rigorous screening and selection from crosses between the parent cultivars comprising the local Red Variety and imported varieties.

Launching of the Blueprint for the non-sugar sector

This document was prepared under the aegis of the Ministry of Agro Industry, Food Production and Security with a dominant contribution from AREU following a draft Consultation document entitled “Strategic Options in Crop Diversification and Livestock Sector (2007-2015)”, which was based on solicited inputs from all stakeholders.

Setting up of the Farmer Training School

With capital fund (Rs14m) being secured under the IFAD Rural Development Programme, construction works for the farmer training school started in April and were completed end November. Training courses aiming at upgrading farmer’s skills both technical and managerial as well as on good agricultural practices and exploiting agribusiness opportunities are offered.

Community Food Security

AREU conducted four regional workshops on food security island wide to sensitise the community on the threat posed by food insecurity and on the necessity of producing essential vegetables and fruits in the backyard.
Launching of the Agro Processing Resource Centre

An Agro Processing Resource Centre has been set up at Wooton. The objective is to further support the entrepreneurs. Their ideas/products can be tested at the Centre before they invest heavily in production equipment.

Plant health diagnostics

AREU offers quality assurance in plant health diagnostics.

Training of VRS Workers of the Sugar Industry

AREU collaborated with the Regional Training Centre and ran training courses for a batch of 659 retired workers of the sugar industry.

Village Laitier

To face the rise in demand for dairy products, the Ministry has released lands for the setting up of a Village Laitier. The aim is to reach at least 10% self sufficiency in milk and other dairy products by the year 2015. Multiplier dairy farms with a component on importation of breeding animals have been set up along with fodder plantations.

Several accompanying measures have been also put at the disposal of those involved in the above mentioned activities such as: lease of State land and release of sugar-cane lands to set up dairy farms and fodder plantation, training of farmers on modern methods by dairy farming among other measures.
Food & Agricultural Research Council

Tissue Culture/ Micropropagation Programme

A number of tissue culture projects were carried out at the Tissue Culture laboratory and nursery facilities of the Food and Agricultural Research Unit (FARC), in the framework of a Tissue Culture/ Micropropagation Programme. The objective of the programme is to develop appropriate protocols for in-vitro initiation, regeneration and rapid multiplication of several crops (ornamentals, food and novel crops) of economic importance.

Sugar Investment Trust

Agricultural Diversification Programme

In line with its agricultural diversification programme, the Sugar Investment Trust (SIT) Group has, through its subsidiary SIT Land Holdings Ltd (SITLH), embarked on a large-scale potato plantation project. The company has, from an initial five tons of seeds in 2004 significantly increased cultivation and is presently growing 50 tons of seeds. The potato yield amounts to some 450 tons, the sale of which resulted in a profit of Rs 1.8m. The company is now aiming to increase plantation to about 80 tons for the next financial year.

Agricultural Morcellement Projects

The company has successfully undertaken several agricultural morcellements projects and to date sold around 3 377 acres of agricultural land. It is presently planning to sell another agricultural morcellement on some 300 acres.

Residential Morcellement Projects

After the successful completion of Les Residences Pinewood Gardens at Wooton, Curepipe and Residences Les Palmiers at Union Vale, SIT Property Development Ltd (SPDL) – the property development arm of the SIT Group - is implementing two additional residential morcellements projects at Union Park (90 acres) and Rose Belle (57.2 acres) respectively.
Other Investments

SIT has made investments to the tune of Rs 5m in the Mauritius Land Based Oceanic Park Ltd, a company set up to exploit water resources from the depths of the ocean for commercial uses and Rs 20m in the Ebène Cybercity Hotel Ltd, which will be operating a hotel in the Cyber village at Ebène. Investments have also been made for the acquisition of some 2 250 square metres of prime office space in the Ebène Cybercity.

Mauritius Sugar Industry Research Institute

International Year of the Potato

The Mauritius Sugar Industry Research Institute (MSIRI) organized a National Potato Conference and an Exhibition on Potato in August. All the different aspects of potato production, marketing and consumption were highlighted.

Accreditation of MSIRI Laboratories

To gain international acceptance of its test reports as well as to increase the confidence of stakeholders in its analyses and also to meet some legal requirements, MSIRI brought the necessary changes to the laboratory procedures in its Agricultural Chemistry, Plant Pathology and Biotechnology Departments that will make them comply with the requirements of ISO 17025.

ISO 17025 accreditation has been awarded to MSIRI laboratories as regards 15 tests. The certificate of accreditation was presented to the MSIRI in September.

Agricultural Marketing Board

Local Potato Boost Up Scheme

The Agricultural Marketing Board (AMB) has recently introduced a Local Potato Boost Up Scheme in an attempt to contribute towards a medium term objective of achieving self-sufficiency in the production of local potatoes by providing financial incentives to potato growers.

The scheme intends to increase production of local potatoes and reduce reliance on imported potatoes among others.

Award

The AMB has won the ‘International Arch of Europe Award for Quality and Excellence’ awarded by the Business Initiative Directions, which is based in Madrid, Spain.

Auction Sales

The AMB intends to shortly start the auction sales of all vegetables. It has been observed that very often, prices of vegetables in the market crash down due to an overflow of same, resulting to heavy losses for producers. Through the AMB, products will be distributed to end users in an optimum hygienic condition. Moreover, the AMB owns the basic necessary logistics and infrastructure (chilled room) to successfully manage such project.
Sugar Planters Mechanical Pool Corporation

The Sugar Planters Mechanical Pool Corporation owns and manages a fleet of agricultural machines and equipment to provide derocking and land preparation services. The objective is to decrease the cost of production by 20% while increasing the yield by 20%. In the context of the Multi-Annual Adaptation Strategy Plan (MAAS) for the sugar industry, some 12 000 hectares of land belonging to small and medium planters will require partial or full derocking to mechanise their field operations.

Irrigation Authority

- The Irrigation Authority acquired some 10 perches of land at L’Esperance Trebuchet for the construction of an office/store for the Water Users Cooperative Society of Block 8A.
- The ADB and BADEA are jointly financing the implementation of various components of the Northern Plains Irrigation Project – Phase II. In April, the Cooperative Society for Block 4 of the project was created and registered as the Vale Water Users Cooperative Society Ltd.
- The IA conducted training programmes in September-October for leader planters. The objective is to improve mobilization and participation skills of planters, and improve the understanding of operation and maintenance of irrigation projects.
- The IA conducted a training programme as from 14 April, 2008 and completed a 5th round of capacity building in June.
- Pumps were procured For Small Scale Irrigation Projects in November.
- Consultancy Services were hired for the identification of 5000-7000 hectares of potentially irrigable land in December.

Tobacco Board

During the year, 305 million tons of leaf were sold to British-American Tobacco for export to its processing facilities in Kenya. About 750 million tons of cigarettes and 150 000 cigars have been imported from various sources for sale in both duty-free and duty paid outlets.

The Mauritius Sugar Terminal Corporation

Shed No. 2 which was initially designed to store bulk sugar was modified this year to accommodate also the storage of one-ton bagged special sugars.

Mauritius Meat Authority

The existing slaughter house facilities are currently being rehabilitated to enhance the quality of services.

Small Planters Welfare Fund

There are actually around 22 000 planters from both Mauritius and Rodrigues registered with the Small Planters Welfare Fund (SPWF). A Planter’s Identity Card (PIC) has been issued to all registered planters, which allows them to benefiting from different schemes developed by the SPWF.
Developing a sustainable fishing industry

- The Fisheries and Marine Resources Act was proclaimed on 8 May
- The Blue Bay Marine Park was included in the list of Wetlands of International Importance established by Article 2.1 of the Ramsar Convention on Wetland on 31 January to protect the marine ecosystem
- 46 new fishermen were trained
- In-service training courses were dispensed to 136 officers of the Fisheries Protection Service to equip them with the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively and efficiently enforce the Fisheries and Marine Resources Act
- 300 shares of Rs 10 each of the Fishermen Investment Trust were issued free of charge to 2,480 registered fishermen of Mauritius and 1,981 registered fishermen of Rodrigues
- A Seafood Week, La Route du Poisson, was held from 18 to 21 August in collaboration with the Mauritius Export Association (MEXA) with the object of boosting up the seafood sector and assisting local operators and exporters in quality and traceability of fish and fish products
- Mauritius was granted a quota of 3,000 tons for preserved tuna and 600 tons for tuna loins for export to the EU for the period January to December 2008 following the Commission Decision of 17 July 2008 on a temporary derogation from the rules of origin laid down in Annex II to Council Regulations (EC No. 1528/2007)
An Agreement was signed with the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) in April 2008 making provision for technical and other assistance to Mauritius for implementation of several projects for sustainable utilization of marine living resources. Consequently, an Institutional Cooperation Contract was signed in October 2008 by both parties to provide the Fisheries Division with a financial grant of NOK 8.850.000 (Norwegian kroner eight million and eight hundred and fifty thousand) equivalent to about Rs 45.312 million to be used exclusively to finance the programme.

- 67 fish farmers were trained in ornamental fish culture
- 300,000 camaron juveniles and 96,000 berri rouge fingerlings were produced and distributed to fish farmers
- 1,500 mangrove propagules were planted at Ferney, Roches Noires and the Terre Rouge Bird Sanctuary
- A slipway at Roches Noires and a fish landing station at Albion were constructed and a boat passage dredged at Ilot Bernache
- Two new establishments obtained approval for the export of fish and fishery products to the EU. Besides, the European Commission has agreed to a change in status for two other enterprises, which are now also eligible to process aquaculture products.
HEALTH AND QUALITY OF LIFE

- Easy access to health care
- Community health
- Hi-tech medicine
- Prevention of Non-Communicable Diseases
- Fighting HIV/AIDS
HEALTH AND QUALITY OF LIFE

Easy access to health care
Community health
Hi-tech medicine
Prevention of Non-Communicable Diseases
Fighting HIV/AIDS

Achievements at the Hospital Level

- An ICU set up at Flacq Hospital on 19 February
- Two units now operational at Casualty Departments – the Accident and Emergency Unit and the Unsorted OPD
- Implementation of a System of “triage” to screen cases
- Non-urgent cases referred to the Unsorted OPD, which operates until 10.00 p.m
- The Medical Council Amendment Act 2007, which was passed at the National Assembly on 11 December 2007, was published in Government Gazette in January 2008
- Human Tissue (Removal, Preservation and Transplant) Act has been passed at the National Assembly
- Cardiology Services extended to Flacq and J. Nehru Hospitals
- 7,401 angiographies, 719 angioplasty and 701 cardiac surgeries performed during period July 2005 to 2008
- From 2005 to 2008, 36 new dialysis machines procured and installed to deal with the increasing number of renal patients. A total of 120 dialysis machines now available at the five Regional Hospitals
- 10,680 cataract surgeries performed at S. Bharati Eye Hospital during period July 2005 to 2008
- Waiting time for cataract surgery reduced from one year to one month
- Ayurvedic Services extended to Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam National (SSRN) Hospital on 17 April 2008
- A new dental speciality ‘Root Canal Treatment’ (Endodontic Clinic) introduced at the Rose Hill Dental Clinic
- A dental clinic commissioned at Souillac Hospital
- The New Central Outpatient Department at Victoria Hospital inaugurated in November 2008
Sexual and Reproductive Health

- A National Sexual & Reproductive Health Strategy and Plan of Action 2009-2015 has been prepared in order to meet the challenges in the field of sexual and reproductive health

Achievements in Pharmaceutical Services

- Two new dispensing sites operational at Rose Hill Area Health Centre and at the Special Mobile Force, Vacoas
- A new ward for female clients now operational at Barkly Detoxification Centre
- A new pharmacy dispensing unit operational since mid- November at Victoria Hospital
- The old pharmacy at Victoria Hospital renovated, catering for the dispensing of drugs to specialised units, such as cancer patients, cardiac, paediatric, gynaecology and dental patients
- Ayurvedic pharmacy services now offered at Victoria Hospital
- A pharmacovigilance unit set up at Flacq Hospital to manage and monitor the proper use of drugs with regards to unfamiliar, unexpected and adverse drug reactions associated with drugs dispensed to patients at hospital level
- An ayurvedic clinic set up at SSRN Hospital in March providing full-fledged ayurvedic pharmacy services
- To disseminate information on issues pertaining to drugs, counselling counters made available to outpatients at SSRN Hospital since the beginning of 2008
- A ‘Drugs and Therapeutics Committee’ set up at each Regional Hospital to look into all matters pertaining to prescription of drugs, slow - moving items and introduction of new drugs, if need be

Screening for detection of early eye complications
Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS)

The second edition of the GYTS was conducted in Mauritius and Rodrigues in 2008. Data thus obtained enhance the capacity of countries to design, implement and evaluate tobacco control and prevention programmes.

Global School Personnel Survey (GSPS)

The GSPS was conducted in Mauritius and Rodrigues in 2008. It is a global survey carried out with the technical assistance of the World Health Organisation (WHO) and CDC (Centres for Disease Control and Prevention). It is part of the global tobacco surveillance system set up by the WHO to track down tobacco use and collect data on tobacco-related issues from among the teaching and administrative staff of schools using a self-administered questionnaire.

Health Promotion

A number of initiatives has been undertaken by the Ministry to create a supportive environment for the adoption of healthy lifestyles in the population. A series of 40 one-day workshops were held for housewives to reduce the intake of salt, sugar and fat and improve the dietary behaviours of families. Media campaigns including the broadcasting of TV and radio spots at peak viewing/listening times have been undertaken at regular intervals.

Health Promotion Activities also included Physical Activity Programmes (yoga, aerobic and physical activity) in the five Health Clubs, one in each health region and twenty three other localities to encourage people to adopt a healthy lifestyle.

The total attendance for aerobic sessions was 4 702, for yoga sessions 8 564, and for physical sessions, 3 765. For women associations, it was 10 870 and for senior citizens 9 027.

Along with distribution of pamphlets and other learning materials on health issues, some 145 talks on NCD and health promotion were organised throughout the island and 5 719 persons attended.

Methadone Substitution Therapy (M. S. T.)

To date, 983 male and 128 female injecting drug users (IDUs) have been induced on M. S. T. and 92% of them are still on Methadone Maintenance Therapy which is considered as a success as far as retention rate is concerned.

National Service Framework for Diabetes

- Intensified media campaign to sensitise the public about diabetes
- Glycosylated Haemoglobin (HbA1C) testing, for the monitoring of blood glucose levels in diabetics, is now being done in all hospitals
- Screening for NCDs extended to the tertiary education institutions
- Introduction of targeted screening, that is, screening on appointment at the Area Health Centres for people who have not been screened over the past three years
- Launch of podiatry clinic at Victoria Hospital with the services of a Podiatrist
- Screening by retinal camera at SSRN Hospital and J.Nehru Hospital for detection of early eye complications in diabetics
The sale of aerated soft drinks banned in educational institutions as from the beginning of 2007

A Website (http://health.gov.mv/diabetes) created with up-to-date information on all aspects of diabetes and linked up with international websites

An extension of the number of physical activity classes to 23 centres (welfare centres, community centres, village and social halls) across the island in addition to the existing five Health Clubs

A booklet on Type 2 Diabetes-Practical Targets and Treatments prepared to help diabetics with updated treatment

Purchase procedures for portable Doppler Ultrasound equipment for use in diabetes footcare management underway

Dedicated diabetic clinics operational in all the five regions of the island

**Other Activities in Hospitals consisted in:**

- Infection control in health care settings
- Sensitisation and Awareness sessions on Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission – PMTCT
- Continuous Medical and Nursing Education

**VII Colloque VIH Océan Indien**

Hosting of the VII Colloque from 10 – 12 November, at Hôtel La Plantation. Meeting of Member States of the Indian Ocean Commission – Comoros islands, France/Reunion, Madagascar, Mauritius and Seychelles.

**Viral Load Machine**

Donation of a Viral Load Machine by the Agence de Coopération Française- (AIRIS-IOC project) on 10 November for better management of people living with HIV and AIDS.

**NCD Screening Programme**

**Breast and Cervical Cancer Screening Programme**

Breast and Cervical Cancer Screening Programme is being carried out for married women aged 30 to 60 years according to guidelines laid by experts for early detection and treatment.

**NCD Screening at work sites, in schools as well as for small planters and on request**

197 worksites have been visited for screening programme and 15,831 workers have been screened.

**Retinal Screening Programme**

Retinal Screening was done at the SSRN Hospital for 107 participants and 15 Community Physicians, 15 H.C.As, 9 Optometrists and 9 Nursing Officers were trained.
Celebration of International Health Days on the following themes:

**World Health Day - 2008**

To mark the World Health Day, an official ceremony was held at Cyber Tower 1, Ebène on 3 April 2008. The theme was "Protecting health from Climate Change". An exhibition was held on this occasion. About 500 people attended.

**World No Tobacco Day - 2008**

To mark the World No Tobacco Day, an official ceremony was held at Auditorium of the Mahatma Gandhi Institute on 29 May. The theme was "Health effects of smoking among young people". A cultural program and a pledge taking ceremony were undertaken by students.

**World Diabetes Day – 2008**

To mark the World Diabetes Day, a workshop on Endocrinology and Childhood Diabetes was organized at Domaine Les Pailles on 14th November where 58 staff of the Ministry participated.

**HIV/AIDS**

- Voluntary Counselling and Testing (VCT) services
- Condom distribution for safe sexual practices and behaviours: 195 000 condoms distributed
- Sensitisation and Awareness sessions were carried out in all the five regional hospitals, schools and workplaces, prisons etc

![Volunteers respond to appeal for regular blood donation](image)
AIDS Unit

- Health Promotion and Preventive Activities to reduce the incidence of HIV infections. These are ongoing programmes as Sensitisation and Awareness sessions on Condom distribution, Outreach with MSM, SW, sailors, partners of MARPs; towards students and out of school youth, workers at workplaces; in the community and deprived areas

- Activities in Hospitals include sensitisation and awareness sessions on Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission (PMTCT), Post exposure Prophylaxis (PEP), Infection control in health care settings through Continuous Medical and Nursing Education

- Providing treatment, care and support by continuing to dispense antiretroviral drugs and detecting more HIV infected people in need of treatment in order to improve the quality of life of people living with HIV and AIDS

- The Ministry of Health (MOH) and the Mauritius Institute of Health participated in the holding of a Diploma course on HIV and AIDS dispensed to paramedical staff in the Indian Ocean region. Participants included Nursing Prisons Department and Rodrigues

- To reduce the incidence rate of HIV infection among injecting drug users, the Methadone Substitution Therapy Programme is also an ongoing activity. Bed capacity has been increased and the programme has been extended to female injecting drug users in March 2008

- The Needle Exchange Programme started in November 2006 by NGOs (7 sites and 400 clients) but due to limited capacities to scale up, the Ministry of Health embarked in the programme as from May 2008 through two mobile caravans operating in 26 sites and reaching 2 600 clients

- Mobile Clinics: Antiretroviral treatment has made HIV and AIDS a chronic disease. To fight against stigmatization and discrimination on one hand and to give better access to people for testing facilities on the other hand, the Ministry of Health is offering a new service in the community for detecting chronic diseases such as diabetes, cardio-vascular diseases and HIV and AIDS by means of mobile clinics
BUSINESS, ENTERPRISE AND COOPERATIVES

Focus areas
- Facilitate business
- Promote entrepreneurship
- Boost up the cooperative sector
BUSINESS, ENTERPRISE AND COOPERATIVES

Focus areas
Facilitate business
Promote entrepreneurship
Boost up the cooperative sector

Competition Commission

The Competition Act was passed in the National Assembly in December 2007 and Parts I and II thereof were proclaimed in October 2008 to allow for the recruitment of personnel and to kick start the initial activities of the Competition Commission. The main object of the Act is to safeguard and promote competition in Mauritius by creating a comprehensive competition regime to be administered by an independent Competition Commission and prohibiting the most serious anti-competitive restrictive agreements.

The Commission is located at 1st Floor, GM Tower, Caudan Roundabout, Port Louis.

Trade Facilitation - Permit Review Committee

To facilitate business and encourage entrepreneurship, the Government has embarked on an ambitious programme of removing hurdles in the import and export sectors. The main measures, as spelt out in the 2008/09 Budget, are the reduction of the number of permits relating to imports and exports to the essential minimum, by 1st July 2009 and the suspension as from 1 July 2009 of all permits relating to imports and exports, except those that are considered essential.

Consequently, a Permit Review Committee has been established, with the mandate of making recommendations for the review of the need for an export or import permit. All permit authorities would have to submit to the Committee, by end December 2008, any justifications for maintaining the permits they issue.

The Permit Review Committee has to submit proposals for the simplified processes and procedures for the issue of such permits and clearances. The Committee, chaired by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives, has already conducted several meetings with parties concerned.

AGOA (Third Country Fabrics)

AGOA allows access to US market without any quantitative limits on the volume of exports. Under AGOA exporters of textile from Mauritius get preferential access to the US market whereby expansion and employment in textile industries are maintained.

Following amendments to the AGOA legislation adopted on 3 October 2008 by the US Congress, Mauritius is eligible for the third country fabric provision till 2012. With this derogation, the textile and apparel exports to the US market would no longer be liable to customs duties irrespective of the source of the raw materials and would have enhanced market access opportunities.
SME Sector

New registrations and new businesses

At December 2008, a total of 2,961 enterprises registered as small enterprises with SEHDA, out of 2,306 were new enterprises registered in 2008. The number of visitors at SEHDA between January to December 2008 was 9,846.

Workshops, Training Courses and new Courses conducted at SEHDA centres

Over 900 trainees followed courses for skills development and upgrading of skills. Courses are conducted at SEHDA’s training centre in Coromandel, Flacq and Triolet, and also in village halls, community centres and youth centres across the island to make them even more accessible.

Courses are run as per the request of artisans and according to a training survey carried by SEHDA for the identification of sectors of interest and high demand. Artisans are given the necessary support to start their own business; they are registered with SEHDA, which facilitates the issue of loans by the Development Bank of Mauritius (DBM). The Business Facilitation Act now allows for many trades to be carried out on residential premises.

During the year 2008, courses were conducted in the following fields: textile painting, fashion design, curtain design, bag making, packaging and mushroom growing. The last two were also held in Rodrigues.

Technical Workshops were also organised in such sectors as:

- Technology Transfer
- E-Commerce for SMEs
Awareness on quality standards (ISO)

Quality Awareness for SMEs

Public Procurement Opportunities for SMEs

Other activities included:

- Caravane de l’Entrepreneuriat cum Regional SME Trade Fair in three regions
- Entrepreneurship Development Programme – Five Trainings
- SEHDA Training Unit Stand at SME Trade & Technology Fair – SVICC, Pailles

Ongoing training courses relate to areas like:

- Basketry
- Batik / textile painting
- Curtain making
- Sugar cane leaf and banana bark items
- Textile Painting
- Wood carving
- Fancy jewellery
- Laser cutting
- Fashion Design
- Bamboo craft
- Packaging

Caravane de l’Entrepreneuriat

The Caravane de l’Entrepreneuriat, set up to boost up a culture of entrepreneurship among the population, visited during 2007-08 ten regions across Mauritius and went to Rodrigues as well. A total of 1,623 potential entrepreneurs registered with SEHDA, while DBM loan cheques were issued to 81 persons. Sensitisation programmes linked to the ‘Caravane de L’Entrepreneuriat’ have touched a total of about 5,000 people in various regions.

Semaine de L’Entrepreneuriat

During 2008, SEHDA, in collaboration with the Ministry of Industry, SMEs, Commerce and Cooperatives and other SME support institutions, organised the Semaine de l’Entrepreneuriat in all local authorities in Mauritius and Rodrigues. This activity aimed at grouping the various institutions supporting the SME sector under a common platform so that the services and schemes available to potential and prospective entrepreneurs are popularized. A total of 4,751 persons attended the Semaine de l’Entrepreneuriat and 870 applications were received for a certificate of registration to start a small business.

Manufacturing Adjustment and SME Development Fund (MASMED)

Six projects totaling Rs 118.42m have been approved by the Main Committee of the Manufacturing Adjustment and SME Development Fund.

Management Support Program for SMEs (Rs 27.5m)

The project relates to the setting up of a Management Support Program for SMEs to assist SMEs in improving their management skills and implement proper management systems through training, counseling, in-house consultancy. It focuses on issues such as Accounting, Book keeping, Costing and Pricing, Marketing, Finance, HRM, IT, Legal, submission of returns for Companies Division, MRA, etc.

The matching grant are in the order of 25:75, e.g. the entrepreneur contributes 25% of the cost while the remaining is from Manufacturing Adjustment and SME Development Fund. The maximum grant support per firm amounts to Rs 50,000.
International SME Technology Expo Scheme (Rs 5m)

SMEs face a lot of difficulties to identify projects or access to technology to implement their projects. Such facilities are not available locally and are very costly to access from abroad.

The International SME Technology Expo Scheme meets 50% of costs (Ticket & accommodation) to SMEs to participate in SEHDA selected foreign technology fairs. However, an entrepreneur or company will obtain this facility only once every 3 years.

The main project objectives are to sharpen SMEs competitiveness, to increase productivity of SMEs through exposure to new costs reducing and competitive edge increasing technologies and to enable entrepreneurs to develop network abroad.

Export Assistance Scheme (Rs 5m)

SMEs usually develop their operations first in their domestic markets and try to get a stronger position there before starting to export. Apart from know-how, there is also cost involved when exploring new markets in the form of freight and cost of sample to be sent to potential buyers. This discourages many SMEs to explore foreign market.

The Export Assistance Scheme encourages local SMEs to explore foreign markets by providing financial incentives. Under the Scheme, manufacturing enterprises benefit from a reimbursement of 50% on the costs of air freight for sending samples to potential clients abroad.

SME Market link Fund (Rs 0.5m)

SMEs face a lot of difficulties to market their products in super and hyper markets. The Fund can be used to help SMEs to insert bar codes on their products.

The main objectives are to help SMEs create more visibility of their products in super and hyper markets, increase sales with a larger supply opportunities and improve communication between suppliers and distributors and thus exercising better control and monitoring on the quality of products.
Technology Diffusion Scheme (Rs 77m)

One of the key prerequisites for exporting locally made products lies in the competitiveness of the economic operators of the manufacturing.

To sharpen these sectors’ competitive edge, it is imperative that firms adopt strategies and address issues related to added value in the supply-chain processes and productivity through employment of technology support services.

In this respect, the Technology Diffusion Scheme provides for support to the technological development of SMEs. This project supports, through financial grants on a cost-sharing basis, the acquisition of technological expertise, equipment and machinery and know-how by qualifying SMEs.

Training Courses in Packaging and Labeling for SMEs (Rs 3.42m)

The project relates to the training of around 200 SMEs in packaging and labeling. It aims at providing entrepreneurs with necessary skills and expertise of foreign expert / consultant to better represent their finished goods in terms of portability, storage, communications and aesthetics. The training is to be conducted according to the needs of sectors after consultation with entrepreneurs. The Programme will have two components (a) a training course proper, and (b) firm specific intervention to ensure benefit of training is implemented within the enterprise.

Participation in Fairs (Local and International) - JAN-DEC 2008

- Salon des PMEs in Reunion Island - 29 to 31 May (50 entrepreneurs from SEHDA)
- Agri-Business exhibition at SVICC, Pailles - 25 to 28 September
- Techmart India and India International Trade Fair 2008 with a delegation of 21 SMEs at Pragati Maidan- New Delhi, India

Importation of Ration Rice

State Trading Corporation (STC) is presently the sole importer of ration rice although the importation of ration has been liberalised with effect from 17 May.

For the period 2008/2009, there has been a substantial increase in bid prices received by STC, for ration rice, that is USD 899 and USD 899.80 compared to USD 305 and USD 410 from previous contracts. However, following negotiations with the Government of India, the latter has accepted to offer, under the special exemption clause, 9 000 MT of rice to Mauritius at USD 455 per MT for shipment in a container mode.

Petroleum Products

Automatic Pricing Mechanism (APM)

In order to enable consumers to benefit immediately from world fall in prices, the Consumer Protection (Price and Supplies Control) Act has been amended on 31 October 2008 for the Certification Committee of the APM to meet on a monthly basis to fix the retail price of petroleum products (Mogas – Gas oil and fuel oil).

The maximum price increase which was 20% quarterly has also been reduced to 7.5% monthly.
Price of LPG

Following a fall in the price of LPG on the world market, measures were taken to pass on the reduction in price to consumers. Accordingly, the price of 12 kg cylinder of LPG has been reduced from Rs 315 to Rs 300 with effect from 22 December 2008.

Stock-take at filling stations to help retailers

Following the introduction of a monthly APM, a system of refund/claim on existing stock to all petrol filling stations has been put in place at the level of the STC to compensate them on their stock. Claims are made by the STC to petrol filling stations for windfall gain on their stock.

Additional storage facilities for LPG and petroleum products

The actual working storage capacity for LPG which is around 6 000 MT, is very limited and represents an average of 32 days of LPG’s storage, hence making it difficult to keep an adequate buffer stock. Government has, in December 2008, agreed to the construction of two additional storage tanks of storage capacity of 10 000 MT. The increase in storage capacity would enable the importation of LPG in a vessel of a higher capacity and at a cheaper cost as regards freight.

As for Mogas, the actual working storage capacity for is 9 500 MT; that of Gas Oil is 47 500 MT. The actual stock days available for Mogas is 35 whereas that of Gas oil is 54 days. The stock days on arrival of vessel is 5 to 10 days for Mogas and 20 to 25 days for Gas oil. With the rising demand and to prevent risk of a stock-out situation, Government has, in October 2008, agreed to the construction of additional storage facility of 25 000 MT (15 000 MT Mogas + 10 000 MT for Gas oil). This would enable the country to have 60 days of stock for Mogas and 75 days for Gas oil.
Cement - Construction of new cement terminal and silo

In order to allow new players to enter the market and increase competition, Government agreed in January to the construction of a new cement terminal and silo by a private company of a minimum storage capacity of 40,000 MT to be located on a plot of land to the extent of 6,000 M2 earmarked in the port area.

The benefits to be derived from the construction of a third silo are as follows:

(i) enhanced storage and supply;
(ii) lowering freight; and
(iii) targeting export/regional market as a source of revenue to Mauritius and inflow of foreign currency.

Cooperatives

Grant Scheme for Youth and Women Co-operatives

A Grant Scheme for Youth and Women Co-operatives was launched in March 2007 which comprised the provision of a grant of Rs 10,000 to existing and newly-formed youth and women cooperative societies for financing their cooperative projects/activities. The scheme aimed at encouraging youth and women to undertake income-generating activities on a cooperative basis and generate self-employment.

For year 2007/2008, the Ministry made disbursements to 30 women co-operative societies amounting to Rs 300,000.

Grant Scheme for Computerisation

The Grant Scheme for Computerisation provided a grant of Rs 20,000 to co-operative societies for the purchase of computer hardware. The Scheme aimed at encouraging co-operative societies to use computers and information technology to modernize their activities and improve their efficiency.

For year 2007/2008, the Ministry made disbursement to 17 co-operative societies amounting to Rs 320,000.

Grant Scheme for Cowbreeding Activities

The Grant Scheme for Cowbreeding Activities provided financial assistance of Rs 40,000 to cowbreeders, who are active members of existing cowbreeding co-operative societies and operating on a co-operative farm, for the improvement/construction of cowshed and for purchase of dairy equipment. The grant financed 80% of the project cost, up to a maximum of Rs 40,000 per breeder.

For year 2007/2008, the Ministry disbursed a sum of Rs 340,000 as grants to nine societies.

Promotion of Women Co-operatives

For year 2007/2008, 63 women cooperatives have been registered.

Cooperatives Pig Sector: Remedial Works at the St Martin Waste Treatment Plant

The GEF Small Grant Programme allocated an amount of USD 48,593.61 (approx. Rs 1.4 million) to the Plaisance Pig Marketing Cooperative Credit Society for financing the Remedial Works Project at the Waste Treatment Plant, St. Martin Pig Farm. The Cooperative Development Fund funded the project to the tune of Rs 708,395.
INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Increase computer literacy among all segments of the population
Democratisation of access to computers and Internet
Mauritius Intelligent island
ICT fifth pillar of the economy
Making Mauritius a regional hub for ICT
INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Increase computer literacy among all segments of the population
Democratisation of access to computers and Internet
Mauritius Intelligent island
ICT fifth pillar of the economy
Making Mauritius a regional hub for ICT

NICTSP

The National ICT Strategic Plan (NICTSP) 2007-2011 set the framework for Government and private sector interventions to make ICT the fifth pillar of the economy. Fifty projects have been initiated in 2008 in various sectors such as education, tourism, health, industry, local government, internal security and agro industries.

The Integrated Companies Business and Registry Application has been implemented at the Companies Division with a view to meeting the requirements of the Business Facilitation Act 2006, an Act aiming at improving the business climate and the ease of doing business in Mauritius.

Some 48 eServices were developed which allow for online applications of government services. The eServices will be enhanced to enable electronic payment to be made on a payment gateway. A project relating to offering e Services on mobile phones has also been initiated.

The Electronic Identification Card based on smart card technology will replace the old National Identity plastic cards. This project has started in 2008 and will span over four years and provide citizens with a very secure and multipurpose ID card.

Information Systems at the Blood Transfusion Service and the Cardiac Centre are already operational. These are expected to improve health services offered to the population.

The Labour Market Implementation System has been implemented to reduce mismatch between demand and supply in the labour market.

The revamped computerised Border Control System at the Passport and Immigration Service has brought in security features which are in line with international standards.

E-Parliament

E-Parliament is considered as a tool for fostering parliamentarian networks. During 2008, an e-parliament initiative was launched and decision was taken to implement a Digital Recording System (DRS). The DRS will provide for digital recording of Parliamentary debates held in the House. Transcription of digitally
recorded sessions will then be carried out using a voice to text recognition software. This will allow for the publication of the Official Reports of Parliament, more popularly known as the Hansard, promptly.

**Education Sector**

Personal Computers have been provided in each of the 275 primary schools in Mauritius and Rodrigues to ensure that children are no longer deprived of basic ICT facilities. At the secondary level, all the 175 State and Private Secondary Schools have been provided with broadband Internet Access free of charge resulting in an additional of 110 000 students of the population having ADSL access.

**Award of contract for E-Project Management**

The project consists in the procurement of a web-based project management and collaboration tool that would be used for managing projects in the Civil Service. Initially, the tool would be used by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure (MPI) Technical Division and the Central Informatics Bureau.

**E-Business Plan for the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life**

Contract was awarded for the preparation of an E-Business Plan for the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life. The final plan, approved in September, charts the way forward for modernising the health sector. In this context, a National eHealth portal, a Clinical System and an Administration System have been recommended.

**E-Business Plan for the Traffic Branch**

The Traffic Branch awarded a contract to develop an e-business plan in January with an objective to examine its activities so as to harness ICT to enhance the operations and service delivery of the department. The e-business plan has been approved in November. The next step is to implement the recommendations of the plan in order to improve productivity and service delivery of the Traffic Branch.
Community Empowerment Programme

The Community Empowerment Programme (CEP) has been initiated in collaboration with the UNDP and Microsoft. The CEP is a project targeted towards the whole community and its purpose is to empower citizens of Mauritius in building an information society by enabling the creation and sharing of information and knowledge for community development.

Public Internet Access Points

The Public Internet Access Points (PIAPs) project provides for free internet access through access points (PIAPs) in 93 post offices all around the island. Ten PIAPs have been set up on a pilot basis. This measure will result in a further increase in Internet penetration of some 200 000 citizens.

Infotech 2008

The Ministry has given a new momentum and a regional dimension to Infotech, a yearly event that showcases the ICT industry. The theme for Infotech 2008 was 'Living the Digital World.'

Incubator Centre

The ICT Incubator Centre set up to ensure the promotion of start-ups and the culture of entrepreneurship, has been enhanced. It is now being presented as a model of incubation in various fora organised by InfoDev, an arm of the World Bank.

Telecommunications Charges

A number of measures have been taken to bring down telecommunication charges. The costs of international connectivity between Mauritius and Europe have been brought down by up to 52% over an 18 months' period thus making Mauritius the most affordable ICT destination in Africa. Cost of a local telecom call has been brought down by 27% and by 19.8% for an international call. Moreover, cost of Internet charges has decreased by 26% and 24.2% of wholesale and retail charges respectively.

CERT-MU

The Computer Emergency Response Team for Mauritius (CERT-MU) was launched in May. This essential initiative is geared towards addressing information security at national level and improving computer security readiness in Mauritius. It is to be noted that CERT-MU is the third Computer Emergency Response Team in the African region and is being implemented in three phases.

IT Security

An outsourced IT Security Audit exercise was carried at the Companies Division and the National Transport Authority in November. The exercise involved audits carried with regards to Application Security, Network Security, Systems Security and Physical Security of the IT Systems of the sites, and was intended to bring out vulnerabilities susceptible by the systems. Various in-house audits exercises have been carried throughout the year 2008 to assess the security of certain critical Government owned IT systems. Through the use of a security auditing tool, vulnerability assessment exercises had been undertaken at sites including the Judiciary, CISD, LGSC, PSC and National Audit Office.
Security Awareness

The IT Security Unit has been involved in a range of information security projects, which include promotional activities aiming at the dissemination of information on IT security in the year 2008. IT Security Awareness sessions have been conducted among Public Officers of Ministries to sensitize them to IT security aspects. As part of promotional activities undertaken in the year 2008 was the elaboration and production of various IT Security publications for end users and IT staff.

ISO/IEC 27001 Implementation

The first government site to be 27001 certified was the Passport Immigration Office in November 2007, following which surveillance audits were carried in August 2008. Sites for which implementation of Information Security standards are under way include the Civil Status Division, the Ministry of Social Security, the Treasury Department, the National Audit Office, CERT-MU and the Government Online Centre.

Policies and Procedures

The implementation of IT Security practices for the Civil Service through the elaboration of policies and guidelines with regards to IT Security was undertaken through the formulation of an IT Contingency Plan template which is being implemented at different Government sites. The review of the Incident Handling procedures was started in October, and the IT Security Unit is contributing in the review of the Government’s Internet Usage policy.

Advisories

Security advisory services on IT security matters have been provided to Ministries/Departments throughout the year in view of helping them secure their infrastructure. Security elements were included during the launching of tender exercises undertaken for projects such as the electronic Archives, eProject Management, eParliament, Gender Information System, Electronic Attendance and the Mauritius National Identity card, amongst others.

Universal Service Fund

A Universal Service Fund has been established at the level of the ICT Authority, to provide universal service in sectors to be determined by the ICT Authority. All public operators have been called upon to contribute to that fund pursuant to Information and Communication Technologies (Universal Service Funds) Regulations made on 3rd October.

Computer Security Day 2008

The Ministry of Information and Communication Technology in collaboration with the National Computer Board organised an Information Security Week in December on the occasion of the Computer Security Day.

Pan African e-Network Project

The tele-education centre was set up at the Mauritius College of the Air and the tele-medicine centre at the Cardiac Centre. Both centres are ready for operation. The VVIP node has been set up at the Prime Minister’s Office. This forms part of the Pan African e-Network Project initiated by Dr A. P. J. Abdul Kalam, former President of India.
Inter Island Connectivity Project (SEGANET)

In December, Mauritius along with Member States of the IOC signed the “Protocole d’Accord” relating to the project - SEGANET (the Inter Island connectivity project). SEGANET aims at connecting member states together via a submarine fibre optic cable thus providing high telecommunications bandwidth for the socio-economic development of the region.

National e-Inclusion Foundation

A National e-Inclusion Foundation was launched on November 2008, on a joint public private partnership, bringing together Government, State Informatics Ltd, Microsoft IOI and private companies such as Leal Informatics.

The object of the Foundation is to facilitate access to ICT tools and raise awareness on their economic and social benefits, train users and trainers, and collaborate with NGOs to reach the poor and those at the margin of the digital society.

Child Safety Online Action Plan

The Child Safety Online Action Plan for Mauritius was elaborated in August.

World Telecommunications and Information Society Day 2008

The National Computer Board organised various activities such as ICT Awareness Sessions on internet. The main objective of the World Telecommunications and Information Society Day is to help awareness of the possibilities that the use of the Internet and other information and communication technologies (ICT) can bring to societies and economies as well as ways to bridge the digital divide.
Anti-Spam Legislation

The National Computer Board has drafted in October the main provisions for the Anti-Spam Bill (a recommendation of the National ICT Strategic Plan 2007-11) following comments received from members of the Anti-Spam Committee and the National Information Security Committee.

ICT Indicators Definition and ICT Sector Definition Reviewed

The ICT Indicators Task Force was set up under the chairmanship of the National Computer Board (NCB) to review the definition of the indicators to be compiled for the ICT Sector, the frequency at which the indicators should be updated and the body who will be responsible for the data collection.

Baseline Information Security Guidelines for SMEs

The National Computer Board compiled the Baseline Information Security guidelines to help businesses to safeguard their business critical information from falling into the wrong hands. This project is part of the National Information Security Strategy.

ICT Awards 2008

The NCB organised an ICT Professional of the Year Award 2008 and an Innovative Technology Award 2008.

The ICT Professional of the Year Award 2008 was organised for the first time in the context of Infotech 2008 and was intended to recognise outstanding achievement in and contributions to the development of an ICT-based society in Mauritius.

The Innovative Technology Award 2008 was organised for the second time and was aimed at rewarding contribution towards innovation in the field of ICT.
Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) with foreign countries

The NCB has signed several MoUs with foreign governments and ICT stakeholders so as to promote collaboration in ICT, support the efficient development of the ICT sector in Mauritius and enhance ICT industry development. The main objectives of the MoUs are to strengthen networking between Mauritius and international ICT players and facilitate capacity building, cooperation in e-Governance, entrepreneurship development, the implementation of quality standards, technology transfer and innovation. MoUs have already been signed with UPTEC Computer Consultancy Limited, India, and the Department of Technology Services, Technology Alliance Division, State of California. Discussions are being finalised for MoUs with Malaysia, Germany, Pakistan and Reunion.

Launching of Computer Clubs in Youth Centres

The launching of computer clubs in youth centres was held at Plaine Verte Youth Centre in the context of the Community Empowerment Programme (CEP).

Other developments

Other main developments include corporate projects such as:

- Investment, along with Telkom South Africa, in the Europe-India Gateway Submarine Cable System, which will link India to the UK via the Middle East, North Africa and Europe
- Increase of participation in the Eastern Africa Submarine Cable System (EASSy)
- Expansion of capacity of SAFE Submarine Cable System
- Launch of NETPC, a thin-client, low cost, hassle-free computing device
- Investment in the LION Submarine Cable System to provide connection to Mauritius, Reunion and Madagascar

Information and Communication Technology Authority (ICTA)

Introduction of Cost-based Interconnection Usage Charges with zero Access Deficit Charge

ICTA issued in April 2008 a determination on the cost-based Interconnection Usage Charges (IUC). IUC are charges payable between interconnecting operators for the actual usage of each others network to originate, transit and terminate a call. As a result of this determination, the IUC payable between interconnecting operators have decreased by over 60% from their previous values and hence, this decrease has been passed on to the subscribers by way of a reduced retail tariff for various services.

Consultation Paper on Numbering Change for Mobile Services

The objectives of this consultation were primarily to present a two-phased approach for the migration to the 8-digit numbering plan for telecommunication services; in the first phase numbers for mobile services only would be addressed and in the second phase numbers for fixed line services, including toll free and special numbers would be addressed.
Consultation Paper on the Opening of the 1785 – 1805 MHz Band for Broadband Wireless Access

The purpose of this consultation were to evaluate the possibility of allocating the 1785 – 1805 MHz band to Broadband Wireless Access (BWA) in Mauritius, whilst providing sufficient protection to both the existing Digital Communication System (DCS) 1 800 networks and the future BWA networks. It also proposed appropriate technical and regulatory parameters to enable efficient use of the frequency band of interest and to protect adjacent services from harmful interference.

SIM registration

As provided by the law, the Authority reinforced the measures to make the keeping of records by public operators of their subscribers, an obligation. Further to these measures, the mobile operators have informed the Authority that they are fully compliant with the provisions under Directive issued and that all prepaid and postpaid subscribers have their SIM cards registered.

Migration of mobile telephone Numbers from Seven to Eight Digits

This decision of the Authority was released following public consultation on the issue of migrating telephone numbers in two phases starting with mobile numbers. The Authority has decided to migrate the numbering plan to 8-digits in two phases on 1 November 2009 at 00:00 hrs.
LABOUR, INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND
EMPLOYMENT

- Safeguarding workers’ rights
- New work culture and environment
- Sound industrial relations
- Meeting new challenges in employment
LABOUR, INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND EMPLOYMENT

Safeguarding workers’ rights
New work culture and environment
Sound industrial relations
Meeting new challenges in employment

Labour Division

- A Tripartite Workshop was organised in January on the Draft Employment Relations Bill and the Draft Employment Rights Bill. The aim was to incite participants to come up with proposals for a legislation that is compliant with the International Labour Organisation (ILO) fundamental Conventions

- The “Field Crop Orchard Workers (RO) Regulations” of 1991, which cover the production of crops, flowers, fruits and tobacco leaves, were revised and new regulations made by the Minister in March 2008

- The “Public Transport (Buses) Workers (Remuneration Order) Regulations”, GN 68 of 1988, were revised and new Remuneration Order Regulations for workers of the Public Transport (Buses) Industry made by the Minister in April 2008

- Celebration of Labour Day on May 1

- A delegation led by the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment attended the 97th session of the International Labour Conference in Geneva in May

- The Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 (No. 188) and Work in Fishing Recommendation, 2007 (No. 199), adopted by the International Labour Conference in June 2007, were tabled at the National Assembly in June

Convention (No. 188) applies to all fishers and fishing vessels engaged in commercial fishing operations. The objective of the Convention is to ensure that fishers have decent conditions of work on board fishing vessels. The Convention is supplemented by the accompanying Recommendation No. 199 which dwells in detail on conditions for work on board fishing vessels

- A three-day Training Programme on Conciliation and Mediation Skills was organised in June by the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment in collaboration with the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University of South Africa. Topics that were covered included Conflict Dynamic, Consensus Building Skills, Joint Problem Solving, Modern Negotiating Theory, Conciliation and Mediation in Mauritius
A “Tracer Study” was carried out under the UNDP funded project “Capacity Building for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women”. The final report was released to stakeholders in June 2008 for implementation of the recommendations therein.

The Additional Remuneration Act 2008 providing for the payment of an additional remuneration with effect from 1 July to all employees of the private sector was passed by the National Assembly in July.

Two new pieces of labour legislation, the Employment Relations Bill (EReB) and the Employment Rights Bill (ERiB) were passed in the National Assembly in August.

The object of the EReB is to amend and consolidate the law relating to trade unions, fundamental rights of workers and employers, collective bargaining, labour disputes and related matters.

The object of the ERiB is to revise and consolidate the law relating to employment, contract of employment or service, minimum age for employment, hours of work, payment of remuneration and other basic terms and conditions of employment with a view to ensuring appropriate protection of workers.

The “Livestock Workers Remuneration Order”, GN 130 of 1983, which encompasses various livestock firms engaged in the breeding and raising of livestock, including cattle, deer and poultry was reviewed and replaced by the “Livestock Workers Remuneration Order”, GN 141 of 2008, made by the Minister in August 2008.

The “Blockmaking, Construction Stone Crushing and Related Industries (RO) Regulations”, GN 70 of 2003, which cover a number of activities ranging from stone splitting, stone crushing, making of blocks and pavements, of rocksand to premixed concrete and construction work were amended by the Minister in August by GN 142 of 2008 to include some new recommendations.

A study on Discriminatory Provisions in our National Legislation (Harmonisation Study) was conducted in September under the UNDP funded project “Capacity Building for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women”.

Workers’ education and training, a key tool for improving productivity.

- Twenty-five Remuneration Order Regulations were updated in October to incorporate in the wages prescribed the additional remuneration provided in the Additional Remuneration Act 2008. The new wages are payable as from 1 July 2008

- Launching of the project on the Elaboration of a Decent Work Country Programme by the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment in November

- A Sensitisation campaign on the Employment Rights Act 2008 and the Employment Relations Act 2008 was conducted by the Information, Education and Communication Division of the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment as follows:
  
  - Trade Union Representatives on 4, 11, 18, 25 November and 2 and 9 December
  - Human Resource Personnel on 6, 13, 20, 27 November and 5 and 12 December

- A one-day workshop for officers of the Labour and Industrial Relations Division on the Employment Relations Act 2008 and the Employment Rights Act 2008 was held in December.

- The EPZ Labour Welfare Fund celebrated Migrant Day in December at Belle Mare

**Occupational Safety and Health Inspectorate**

- International Labour Organisation/Indian Ocean Commission project on workplace discrimination and stigmatisation of persons living with HIV/AIDS launched in September

- Preparation in November of a National Occupational Safety and Health Profile for Mauritius

**Registry of Associations**

- From January to December 2008, 557 associations and trade unions registered themselves with the Registry of Associations

- The registration and management of trade unions was facilitated by the enacting of new industrial relations legislation – the Employment Relations Act
EPZ LABOUR WELFARE FUND

- In May the Fund allocated 96 scholarships to children of workers as follows:
  - Secondary level 64
  - Tertiary level 27
  - IVTB 5

About 1,075 children of EPZ employees have so far benefited from the scheme.

- A one-day seminar on Stress Management was launched by the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment on 2 December for the benefit of 50 shop floor leaders in EPZ enterprises.

- The EPZ Labour Welfare Fund proceeded on 17 December, under its House Enhancing Scheme, with the allocation of micro credit facilities to 379 workers to sustain their house embellishment initiatives and to 39 workers who applied for a loan under the Computer Loan Scheme.

- The EPZ Welfare Fund organized on 21 December a festive event in the context of International Migrant Day at Le Waterpark, Belle Mare for the benefit of 1,000 expatriate workers. A cultural programme was organized for guest workers from India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Madagascar and China.
EMPLOYMENT DIVISION

- The Labour Market Information System (LMIS) Project, officially launched in December 2007, became fully operational as from January. It is an electronic platform centralising all the activities of the Employment Service into a single database hosted at the Government Online Centre.

- A job survey was carried out in February.

- Government is encouraging circular migration and labour migration. The Ministry is working closely with the International Organisation for Migration for identifying suitable foreign employers and sending our workers in an organised manner. In March, 72 Mauritians left for Canada to work in meat processing plants.

- A job survey was carried out in June.

- 48 Mauritians left for Canada in June to work in meat processing plants.

- Another group of 15 Mauritians left for Canada in August, to work in meat processing plants.

- A job survey was carried out in October.

- At 31 October, the Ministry had delivered 29 Recruitment Licences. The licence is a legal requirement for any person intending to recruit Mauritian workers for employment in Mauritius and/or abroad.

- From January to November, 19 854 vacancies had been advertised and 907 jobseekers placed through “Choisir ou Travay”, a programme broadcast on national television during weekdays. The aim of this programme is to enable jobseekers to establish contact with employers and have easy access to jobs, thereby increasing their chances of placement.
From January to November, 4,854 persons had accessed the Audiotex system, a project of the Employment Service which aims at disseminating to a large audience vacancies available on the labour market through telephone. The telephone no. is 301 6080.

At 25 November, the number of valid work permits was 32,608, consisting of 21,321 permits issued to male workers and 11,287 permits issued to female workers. The majority of the workers are engaged in the “Manufacturing” and “Construction” sectors respectively. An analysis by country of origin shows that the majority of expatriate workers come from India, Bangladesh and China.
Green Mauritius
Sustainable development
A better living environment for all citizens
ENVIRONMENT AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT UNIT

Green Mauritius

Sustainable development

A better living environment for all citizens

Oil Spill Pocket Book

The oil spill pocket book summarises all necessary operational information from the national and regional oil spill contingency plans. It is designed to provide all necessary operational information in the event of an oil spill. The pocket book was updated in April.

RECOMAP Programme

The overall objective of the RECOMAP programme is to enhance sustainable management and conservation of the natural coastal and marine resources thereby contributing to poverty alleviation amongst the coastal population of South West Indian Ocean. This programme has a lifespan of five years (2006-2011) and is funded by the European Union.

World Environment Day 2008

World Environment Day (WED) is celebrated on 5 June as the worldwide flagship environmental event. Along with other activities, a ‘Cyclo-Rally’ organised with the participation of the youth laid emphasis on the fact that motorised vehicles are the prime producers of greenhouse gases.

An Open Day was held on 19 and 20 June at the National Environmental Laboratory.

Green School Project

The Green-school project is an environmental educational programme that promotes and acknowledges long-term school action for environmental protection. The project was launched on the occasion of the World Environment Day 2008 at the Bon Accueil SSS.

Proclamation of Environment Protection (Amendment) Act 2008

The Environment Protection Act (EPA) 2002 is the main piece of national legislative framework which provides mainly for environmental protection and sustainable development for present and future generations. In order to meet certain policy objectives and make it more responsive and adaptable to the emerging challenges of the new economic order the Act was amended and proclaimed on 15 July.
Demonstration Project: ‘Solid Waste Management in the Ports Area’

This UNEP/GEF WIOLaB project aims at demonstrating an integrated approach to the management of solid waste in Port Louis Harbour. A Memorandum of Understanding to the tune of USD 160 000 was signed between UNEP and MoE on 7 July.

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Preliminary Environment Report (PER) Approvals

In order to facilitate business, procedures for EIA and PER approvals have been streamlined. Given the importance of a close follow up on the implementation of projects by developers, the Environment Protection Act now provides for an EIA/PER Monitoring Committee so as to monitor compliance with conditions imposed in the EIA licence and PER approval and to ensure the safeguard of the environment. Moreover, for certain undertakings, several guidelines have been prepared to assist developers through self-adherence.

Clean Up the World 2008

The Clean Up the World activities were held during week end 19-21 September. The theme for 2008 was: “Start Today, Save Tomorrow: Clean Up Our Climate”. The campaign was marked by various activities around the island with the participation and collaboration of volunteers, NGOs, local authorities, beach authorities and other governmental organisations.

Coastal Protection Works at Flic en Flac

Some 300 metres of public beach have been reinstated at Flic en Flac. Based on the recommendations made by a Technical Committee, rehabilitation works comprised removal of casuarinas trees within 15 metres of the dynamic beach zone, removal of damaged gabions and beach reprofiling.
Use of native species for soil erosion control in Black River National Parks

This UNEP/GEF WIOLaB Demonstration project aims at reducing the land-based pollution in the form of terrigenous sediments that enter Morne lagoon through the Black River (Rivière Noire). A MoU to the tune of USD 150 000 has been signed between UNEP and the Ministry of Agro Industry, Food Production and Security.

Regional Oil Spill Drill

Mauritius participated in the regional drill organized in Madagascar. A four-member delegation comprising officers of the Ministry of Environment and NDU, NCG and MPA was in Madagascar from 13 to 16 October and provided all the assistance needed by that country to combat a big ‘oil spill’.
Recovery of fuel/oil mixture from Fishing Vessel King Fish II

A team comprising two officers of the Ministry of Environment and NDU and staff of Ecofuel Ltd. proceeded to St. Brandon from 15 to 17 November (during the official sortie of the CGS Guardian vessel of NCG) to recover the oil/fuel from the wreck King Fish II which represented a series of threats to the marine environment.

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT UNIT (NDU)

Land Drainage Programme

Following the March 26 floodings in 2008, some 158 sites were identified as critical where immediate remedial measures were warranted. The Government came up with an Emergency Rehabilitation Programme with a budget envelope of almost Rs 1 billion in order to bring solutions to those critical sites.

In the aftermath of torrential rain on 17-18 September 2008, the National Development Unit in collaboration with the Local Authorities and the Road Development Authority embarked on another scheme involving a sum of Rs 150m to bring solutions to the different areas which experienced acute flooding. Fast track measures were initiated to address those flooding problems.

Citizen Advice Bureaux (CAB)

Thirty-five Citizen Advice Bureaux across Mauritius bring government services within the reach of the population. They translate the vision of government to “Put People first”. At the level of CAB offices, facilities are extended to poor and needy families for slab scheme, to put up dwellings with assistance from the Trust Fund for Vulnerable Groups, to assist young entrepreneurs to set up their enterprises and to arrange for attachment of unemployed in firms to alleviate problem of unemployment.

Study on NDU

Arrangements have been made for the Management Audit Bureau to conduct a study on NDU to reinforce its structure and to facilitate implementation of schemes.

Volunteers participating in Clean Up the World 2005 campaign
A customer oriented approach
Training to achieve excellence
Performance based assessment
For an output based culture
CIVIL SERVICE AND ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS

A customer oriented approach
Training to achieve excellence
Performance based assessment
For an output based culture

January

Implementation of Performance Management System (PMS)

The Training of Facilitators programme for the implementation of Performance Management System (PMS) in the Public Service was launched on 14 January.

The objectives of the training programme were to enhance the knowledge and skills of participants on PMS and to prepare them to facilitate the effective implementation in Ministries/Departments. One hundred and forty-seven facilitators, grouped in batches, participated in the training programme in January, July, and December.

Training Programme on Central Personnel System (CPS)

The Training Programme on the Central Personnel System (now Human Resource Management System - HRMS) was organised at the Computer Laboratory at the Atom House, Port Louis on 16 January. The training targeted officers of the Personnel Cadre and aimed at equipping them with the necessary skills and competencies and familiarising them with the Central Personnel System.

Training in Electronic Attendance System

This training programme, launched on 23 January, aimed at familiarising the 145 participants with the new Electronic Attendance Record Management System (EARMS) and carrying out the testing exercise.

February

Training in Medium Term Expenditure Framework/Programme Based Budgeting – MTEF/PBB

The Ministry organised, in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, the Training Programme in Medium Term Expenditure Framework /Programme Based Budgeting - MTEF/PBB on 4 February. This programme aimed at imparting training to officers who would be directly involved in the implementation of MTEF and PBB and at enhancing their knowledge and skills with a view to contributing to the effective implementation of MTEF/PBB in the Public Sector. Some 300 officers of the middle and top management levels followed the training programme.
Training in Customer Care and Quality Management through Open Distance Learning (ODL)

Following the signature of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Mauritius College of the Air, a training on Customer Care and Quality Management through the ODL mode was launched on 20 February. This on-going course targeted around 2,400 officers of different grades from all Ministries/Departments. At December, some 490 officers had already been awarded the certificate of completion and 166 others had completed the course.

May

Training Programme in Computerized Registry System (CRS)

The Training Programme in Computerised Registry System was organized on 13 May with the aim of providing some 65 Registry Staff with the necessary skills and knowledge required for the execution of their tasks, sensitising them on the procedures and processes for effective and efficient management of the Registry and assisting them to adapt to new technologies in a fast changing work environment.

Training in Negotiation Skills

A two-day training programme in Negotiation Skills was launched on 15 May. A total of 285 officers, grouped in 11 batches, attended the training during the months of May, June, October and November.

The training programme was meant for officers of the mid-management level who are required to carry out negotiation in the course of their duties. The training was designed in such a way as to enable participants to better understand the techniques of negotiation and facilitation, especially in the context of the implementation of Performance Management System, Programme Based Budgeting and the new labour laws.
June  

In-house Course on PC Troubleshooting and Maintenance

The in-house training course for some 106 officers of the Ministry was launched on 3 June. It aimed at equipping the participants with the competencies, skills and techniques required for PC installation, upgrading, configuration and troubleshooting and enhancing their knowledge and providing them with hands-on technical experience. The extensive computerisation of processes and procedures in the Civil Service requires that all officers, who are end users of IT equipment, be not only computer literate but also efficient troubleshooters.

Africa Day of the Civil Service & Administration and United Nations Public Service Day

To mark these two events celebrated on 23 June each year, a series of activities are organised at the level of the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms and other stakeholders in the Public Service.

The main objectives are to reflect on the function of the Civil Service, its mission and its objectives, programmes and projects, problems and challenges, success and failures and to give recognition and make known the importance of the Civil Service.

July  

Public Service Excellence Award (PSEA)

Officially launched on 4 October 2006, the Public Service Excellence Award (PSEA) has become a much awaited yearly event. The ceremony for the second edition of the Award, PSEA 2007, was held on 3 July. The Excellence Award went to the Police Force.

The objective of the PSEA is to encourage innovation and excellence in the delivery of public services on an annual basis by recognising and honouring the efforts of those Ministries/Departments/Units/Divisions that have excelled in introducing and successfully adopting innovative tools and techniques to improve the provision of public services.

Training of Trainers Course for PMS Facilitator

A Training of Trainers (TOT) for 57 PMS Facilitators was organised on 22 July, in collaboration with University of Technology, Mauritius (UTM). These officers were involved in the implementation of PMS in their respective Ministries/Departments and were also interested in dispensing training in PMS to other officers of the service.

August  

Award Courses for Officers of the General Services Cadre

The Award Courses for Officers of the General Services Cadre were organised as from 28 August and 152 officers trained in 2008. Initially launched at the University of Technology Mauritius (UTM) in May 2004, these courses, aim at acquainting officers of the General Services Cadre, with the new concepts and latest trends in Public Sector Management. Officers mainly from the grades of Higher Executive Officer, Executive Officer and Confidential Secretary are trained in modules related to Communication, Management, Public Sector Policy and Computer Fundamentals. So far, 588 officers have followed the course.
September

Training Programme in Legislative Drafting

The training programme in legislative drafting for Officers of the administrative and technical cadre was officially launched on 2 September.

This two-day training programme, which extended up to 26 November, was jointly organised by the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms and the Attorney General’s Office. It targeted some 150 Public Officers of the Administrative and Technical Cadre.

The courses, conducted by Sir Victor Glover, former Chief Justice, aimed at sensitising participants on the role of the Instructing Officer and the Drafter, helping them to formulate Drafting Instructions and guiding them to peruse draft legislations effectively.

November

Improvement of Counter/Customer Services Scheme

An Electronic Search Room was inaugurated at the Registrar General’s Department on 6 November in line with the above Scheme, the objective of which is to upgrade and modernise counter/customer services of public service organisations. User-friendly guidelines on ‘Providing Quality Counter/Customer Services’ to assist organisations in putting in place quality counter/customer services were published in the form of a booklet launched on 3 July. The booklet has been widely distributed to public officers serving at counters in Ministries/Departments.

In financial year 2007 – 2008, 16 projects were funded under this scheme to the tune of Rs 2.2 million, including the setting up of the Petit Verger Prison Customer Centre, which was inaugurated on 21 February 2008.

Moreover, a customised Training in Quality Counter/Customer Service was imparted at the IVTB Ecole Hotelière Sir Gaëtan Duval in September/October to 87 public officers from 16 public service organisations who are posted at counters and/or who daily have to deal with members of the public.

ISO Certification Scheme

To instil a quality culture in the public service, the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms encourages Ministries/Departments to operate according to ISO 9000 standards set by the International Organization for Standardisation (ISO). As part of this commitment, the National Quality Week 2008 was held from 17 to 21 November.

Six public service organisations have achieved MS ISO 9001:2000 certification in 2008 through assistance provided by the Ministry, namely the Energy Services Division of the Ministry of Renewable Energy and Public Utilities, the Cooperatives Division of the Ministry of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives, the Directorate Zone 3, the Elke Kux Pre Primary School, the Bon Accueil Government School and the Sodnac State Secondary School.

Mystery Shopping

Mystery Shopping is an innovative assessment tool introduced in the Civil Service in August 2007 to evaluate the level of service delivery in public service organisations from the viewpoint of customers, namely with regards to staff behaviour, physical environment, waiting experience and service delivery.

In 2008, the Mystery Shopping exercise was carried out at the following six sites - Companies Division, Passport and Immigration Office, National Identity Card Section of the Prime Minister’s Office, Rose Hill Social Security Office, Entomology Division and National Plant Protection Office of the Ministry of Agro Industry, Food Protection and Security.

The Mystery Shopping exercise carried out at the abovementioned six sites revealed that the offices were generally clean and tidy while some of the signs and symbols proved to be confusing for customers. Service delivery was quite good, but some of the waiting areas were at times crowded and disorderly organised. In terms of staff behaviour, it was noted that officers were knowledgeable but needed to improve upon their attitude towards customers.

Citizen’s/Customer Charter

To promote the delivery of quality customer services, the Administrative Reforms Division has been driving forth the publication of Citizen’s/Customer Charters for each Ministry/Department. This is an ideal tool to cut down on red tapism as all parameters and requirements needed to qualify for and benefit from a particular service are clearly spelt out, along with the time-frame within which the service should be delivered.

It thus clearly defines what is expected of both the customers /citizens on the one side and organisations on the other. As at date, 48 Ministries / major Departments have published their Citizen’s/Customer Charters, most of which are also posted on the websites of the respective Ministries.

The Customer Charter of the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms has been updated.
The All Africa Public Sector Innovations Award (AAPSIA)

The AAPSIA Award 2007 was awarded during the 6th Pan African Conference of Ministers of Public/Civil Service held in Gauteng, South Africa from 13 to 15 October 2008. The Mauritian Forestry Service, Biodiversity Unit, was the first runner up in the innovations category, in view of its Education and Awareness Programme. A total of 59 public service organisations from 10 countries spanning the African continent competed for the Award.

The main focus of AAPSIA is to recognise and award national governments across the African continent for their efforts in rendering services to their communities. It is based on ensuring continental ownership and leadership over governance and public administration interventions.

Winner of the Best Anti-Corruption Framework 2008

The Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms won the Integrity Management – Best Anti-Corruption Framework 2008 Award organised by the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) in collaboration with the Mauritian Quality Institute (MQI) in recognition of its drive to fight corruption through system enhancement and adoption of best practices.

PMS Implementation

Since the introduction of Performance Management System in the Public Service, 78 ministries/departments have embarked on this project and the system will be rolled out across the whole Civil Service by December 2009.

The reform initiative is meant to create a modern and efficient Public Service together by improving the quality and delivery of services.
Public Officers’ Welfare Council

Activities organised from January to December:

- Swimming Courses at Rivière du Rempart Swimming Pool, Souvenir Swimming Pool, Calebasses, Serge Alfred Swimming Pool, Beau Bassin and Le Pavillon Swimming Pool, Quatre Bornes – January to June
- ‘Une Ile à découvrir’- Excursions around the island in April, August and November
- Family Fun Day at the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam Botanical Garden, Pamplemousses, 18 May
- Cruises to Reunion Island for Public Officers - June and September
- Essay Competition on the theme “The Evolution of the Civil Service Since Independence of Mauritius” - June
- Quiz Competition in July involving forty-four teams
- Culinary Exhibition on 23 July
- Talk on “Keeping Cool Under Pressure” by Mr. John Douglas McConnel - 7 August
- Badminton Tournaments on 26 August at the National Badminton Centre, Rose Hill.
- Volleyball Tournament on 9 October at the Pandit Sahadeo Gymnasium
- Football Tournament on 16 October at Line Barracks Football Grounds
- Randonnée at “Le Dauguet” Health Track, Port Louis on 19 October
- 15th Edition of the Civil Service Kermesse on 9 November
- Family Fun Day – Le Belle Mare Waterpark & Leisure Village
YOUTH AND SPORTS

Preparing our youth for the future
Promoting a sports culture
Achieving excellence in sports
YOUTH AND SPORTS

Preparing our youth for the future
Promoting a sports culture
Achieving excellence in sports

YOUTH

National Youth Day Celebrations

To mark the 40th Independence Anniversary of Mauritius, the Ministry organized a Youth Carnival and Concert in which about 10 000 young people participated.

Five hundred young people participated in the ‘défilé’ held during the official function at Champ de Mars.

Spécial Vacances Programmes

Various leisure activities were organised by the Ministry to cater for young people during their school holidays. The programmes were extended to reach more than 15 000 youth in deprived regions and also benefited adolescents in homes and orphanages.

Popularization of the African Youth Charter

Mauritius was among the four African countries to have ratified and signed the African Youth Charter. The Ministry has started to popularise the Charter among youngsters in order to make them aware of their rights and obligations towards national development. Secondary school students participated in a Powerpoint Presentation Competition.

Inter College Poster Competition on Life Skills

A Poster Competition was organised in June and July for Secondary School students. Many students participated in the competition and the best posters were rewarded.

International Youth Day “Youth and Climate Change - Time for Action”

Young people were sensitised to impacts of climate change. They participated in the cleaning and planting of mangroves at the Terre Rouge Sanctuary.
National Youth Achievement Award

The International Gold Encounter 2008 was held in Mauritius in October in the presence of His Royal Highness Prince Edward. Delegates from foreign countries such as UK, Australia, Japan, India, etc. participated in this programme. During two weeks, various activities were organised including hiking, literary and social work. Young people from Mauritius who won the National Youth Achievement Award also participated in the IGE 2008.

Launching of I-Cafés in Youth Centres

ICT development among young people is in line with the vision of government to make Mauritius a cyber island. Young people were provided with training in IT in all youth centres, which are equipped with modern installations including internet connection. The I-Café project was launched in October.

Youth Excellence Award

The Youth Excellence Award Ceremony was held at Rajiv Gandhi Science Centre in November to reward young people who have shown perseverance in the development of initiatives in projects in the following areas:

(i) Artistic Pursuit
(ii) Community Work/Social Integration
(iii) Entrepreneurship and Initiatives for Employment Creation
(iv) Preservation/Protection of the Environment; and
(v) Youth Leadership

Ongoing Activities

- Leadership Training Courses for youth leaders
- Sensitisation campaigns on HIV/AIDS, Drugs and Sexuality
- Organisation of literary activities for secondary schools students
• Training of young people in entrepreneurship and the business world
• Collaboration with CONFEJES - Ten projects sent to CONFEJES were prized
• Youth Exchange Programmes with other countries
• Organisation of Regional and Community based activities by the Youth Centres
• Training of peer educators and counsellors

SPORTS

Beijing 2008 Olympic Games

Boxer Bruno Julie won bronze medal, the very first in the history of Mauritius, at the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games held from 8 to 24 August. Gerard Collin went through the first round reaching the 8ème de Finale. The Government offered cash prizes of Rs 600 000 to Bruno Julie, Rs 100 000 to Gerard Collin and Rs 180 000 to Jean Claude Nagloo, the National Boxing Coach. Athlete Stephan Buckland received Rs 300 000 for reaching the semi finals in 200m.

6e Jeux de la CJSOI

The 6e Jeux de la CJSOI were held in Seychelles from 27 July to 2 August. Mauritius came out first in the overall competition with 24 Gold, 23 Silver and 18 Bronze medals respectively. The 7e Jeux de la CJSOI will be held in Reunion Island.

16th National Sports Meet

Visually Handicapped Persons Sports Federation participated in the meet held in Ludhiana, India, from 17 to 20 November. Mr. Richard Souci won a Gold Medal in 200m and a Bronze Medal in Long Jump. Mr. Mohammad Sorabally won Silver Medal in 400m.
High Level Sports Unit

The High Level Sports Unit was restructured and new board members appointed.

Cash Prizes

Cash Prizes were awarded to athletes Ryley Rose, Boxe Française World Vice Champion and Fabrice Baulluck, Kick Boxing 3rd place World Champion.

Paralympic Games Beijing 2008

A special cash prize of Rs 10 000 was offered to athlete Richard Souci who participated in Athletics and Rs 10 000 to athlete Pascal Laperotine who participated in swimming.

Artificial Football Turf

An artificial football turf was laid at St François Xavier Stadium.
THE JUDICIARY

Easing access to the Justice system
Reform of the Courts system
Speedy delivery of justice
THE JUDICIARY

Easing access to the Justice system
Reform of the Courts system
Speedy delivery of justice

Privy Council Judicial Committee in Mauritius to hear appeals

The Judicial Committee of the Privy Council held a one-week session in Mauritius in September, upon invitation of the Government authorities, to hear appeals from the decisions of the Supreme Court of Mauritius pending before it.

This course, it is hoped, will minimise the costs incurred to appeal to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, as parties may retain services of Counsel practising before the Mauritian Bar to appear in such appeals, and they will be dispensed from travelling to England for the purposes of the hearing of the appeal.

New Divisions at the Supreme Court

The implementation of the recommendations of the Presidential Commission set up to examine and report upon the structure and operation of the judicial system of Mauritius and chaired by Lord Mackay has been started by the constitution of the following divisions to expedite Court business at the Supreme Court:

First sitting of the Privy Council in Mauritius
• **Criminal Division**

To hear and determine criminal matters within the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court, including drug cases tried without jury. One Judge has been assigned to the Criminal Division.

• **Family Division**

To determine all family matters such as divorce petitions, motions for alimony and custody of children, etc.

• **Commercial Division**

To deal with bankruptcy matters, applications under the Companies Act, any dispute relating to bills of exchange, bills of lading, disputes between traders, matters connected with offshore business or arising out of arbitration or relating to patent, trade mark and any other matter of a commercial nature.

Two Judges have been assigned to each of the above divisions.

In order to speed up hearing and determination of cases, and to reduce the heavy backlog of outstanding cases before the Supreme Court, eight additional posts of Puisne Judges were created and five appointments have already been made.

**Optimal space management and infrastructural developments**

To alleviate the acute problem of office space – the Supreme Court being located in a listed building with no scope for any addition to it – a private building was rented to liberate space for the creation of additional Chambers and Courtrooms within the Supreme Court building to accommodate the newly-appointed Judges.

The space liberated at the New Court House by administrative sections which have moved to the newly rented building will be converted into five additional Courtrooms to be utilized by newly appointed Magistrates.

Infrastructural developments have been undertaken at District Court level to provide decent conditions to the staff and simultaneously, to enhance the services provided by the Courts, thus ensuring that mission and vision of the Judiciary of providing a fair and impartial system of Justice for the resolution of disputes in a timely and efficient manner are met with.

Moka District Court now sits in part of a building of Rose Hill District Court to hear and dispose of cases pertaining to Moka District – the old building at Moka was leaking profusely, was not conducive to health and was beyond repairs.

A new construction is envisaged to house Moka District Court.

Flacq District Court House – a listed historical building – is at present being renovated.

Plans have been finalized for the construction of a new building to house the Black River District Court.

**Archives**

A building in the vicinity of Port Louis has already been identified to house the central archives for the Judiciary in the near future.
Major Bills introduced
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Major Bills introduced in 2008

The Private Security Service (Amendment) Bill

The Bill amended the Private Security Service Act 2004 to provide for the application of certain provisions of the Act to security guards employed in a night club, discothèque, private club or restaurant selling liquor and providing entertainment, or by any licensee under the Gaming Regulatory Authority Act 2007.

The Tourism Authority (Amendment) Bill

The Bill amended the Tourism Authority Act 2006 in order to make better provisions regulating the operation of tourist enterprises, pleasure crafts, and in particular to enable the Tourism Authority to issue provisional closing orders, provisional pleasure craft licenses and enforcement notices; streamline certain provisions of the Act to facilitate its implementation; and give to the Minister the power to make regulations to implement a points system for the suspension of a skipper’s license.

The Environment Protection (Amendment) Bill

The Bill amended the Environment Protection Act 2002 in order to provide for the setting up of three committees and to empower local authorities to enforce environmental laws falling within their respective administrative areas.

The Notaries Bill

The Bill repealed the Notaries Act and replaced it by a new Act which takes into account recent developments in the exercise of the profession of a notary and contains a more appropriate set of rules for the regulation of the profession.

The Law Practitioners (Amendment) Bill

This Bill amended the Law Practitioners Act to provide for: the setting up and functioning of law firms; the status of a legal consultant; the registration of law firms, foreign law firms, joint law ventures and foreign lawyers; the framework for the regulation of the practice of foreign law and international law in Mauritius; and related matters.

The Public Bodies Appeal Tribunal Bill

The object of the Bill was to provide for matters pertaining to the Public Bodies Appeal Tribunal set up under the Constitution.

The Tribunal shall hear and determine an appeal made by any public officer, or any local government officer, against any decision of the Public Service Commission or the Local Government Service Commission, as the case may be, pertaining to an appointment exercise or to a disciplinary action taken against that officer.
The Constitution (Amendment) Bill

The Bill amended the Constitution in order to set up a Tribunal which shall have jurisdiction to hear appeals made by public officers against decisions of such Commission established under the Constitution, and by employees of such public bodies, as may be prescribed.

The Finance And Audit (Amendment) Bill

The objects of the Bill was to amend the Finance and Audit Act to provide for the introduction of Programme-Based Budgeting (PBB) to achieve improvements in fiscal sustainability, allocative efficiency and improve operational efficiency in Government administration.

The preparation of estimates of expenditure would henceforth be based on programmes and subprogrammes on a 3-fiscal year rolling basis, specifying the resources to be allocated and the outcomes to be achieved and outputs to be delivered. With effect from 2010 the financial year would be a calendar year.

The Truth And Justice Commission Bill

The object of the Bill was to establish a Truth and Justice Commission to make an assessment of the consequences of slavery and indentured labour during the colonial period up to the present and for that purpose conduct as complete as possible an analysis on slavery and indentured labour.

The Commission will make recommendations to the President on measures to be taken following its assessments and its findings with a view to achieving social justice and national unity.

The Marathi-Speaking Union Bill

The object of the Bill was to provide for the establishment, operation and management of the Marathi-Speaking Union.

The Tamil-Speaking Union Bill

The object of the Bill was to provide for the establishment, operation and management of the Tamil-Speaking Union.

The Telugu-Speaking Union Bill

The object of the Bill was to provide for the establishment, operation and management of the Telugu-Speaking Union.

The Fashion and Design Institute Bill

The object of the Bill was to provide for the establishment of the Fashion and Design Institute through the integration of the Department of Technology of the University of Mauritius, the School of Design of the Industrial and Vocational Training Board and the Textile and Apparel Development Centre of Enterprise Mauritius.

The Bill also spelt out the responsibilities of the Institute, that is promote excellence in the field of fashion and design technology, organise training courses and programmes at different levels and provide research and consultancy services.
The Finance Bill 2008

The Bill provided for the implementation of measures announced in the Budget Speech and for the strengthening and streamlining of certain provisions relating mainly to revenue and public finance.

The Seafarers’ Welfare Fund Bill

The object of the Bill was to provide for the establishment of the Seafarers’ Welfare Fund in order to cater for the social and economic welfare of seafarers and to dissolve the Seafarer’s Welfare Fund established under the Merchant Shipping (Seafarer’s Welfare Fund) Regulations 2002 and to take over and manage its assets and discharge its liabilities.

The Courts (Amendment) Bill

The object of the Bill was to amend the Courts Act to provide that the retiring age of a Judge of the Supreme Court shall be 67 years unless a person holding office as a Judge elects that the amendment shall not apply to him.

The Utility Regulatory Authority (Amendment) Bill

The Bill amended the Utility Regulatory Authority Act 2004 in order to provide for the appointment of Chairperson and Commissioners of the Utility Regulatory Authority by the President on the advice of the Prime Minister given after consultation with the Leader of the Opposition.

It also provided for the Authority to examine and make recommendations to a licensee in respect of any Power Purchase Agreement proposed to be signed, or entered into by it and in respect of any management services contract, operation and maintenance contract or any other contract which it proposes to enter into in relation to water services or waste disposal services.

The Local Government (Amendment) Bill

The object of the Bill was to amend the Local Government Act to provide for the remuneration of deputy mayors, vice-chairmen of district councils, municipal councilors and district councilors.

The Additional Remuneration Bill 2008

The main object of the Bill was to provide for the payment of an additional remuneration to all employees of the private sector.

The Time Bill

The Bill provided that regulations may be made fixing the time and period of summer time, and in default of such regulations, summer time shall be one hour ahead of the standard time during the period last Sunday of October in any year to last Sunday of March in the following year.

The Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill

The Bill amended the Road Traffic Act in order to make it an offence for a person to wear a full face protective helmet other than for riding a motorcycle or an auto-cycle; or riding as a pillion rider on a motorcycle or an auto-cycle.
The Employment Rights Bill

The object of the Bill was to revise and consolidate the law relating to employment, contract of employment or service, minimum age for employment, hours of work, payment of remuneration and other basic terms and conditions of employment with a view to ensuring appropriate protection of workers.

The Employment Relations Bill

The object of the Bill was to amend and consolidate the law relating to trade unions, fundamental rights of workers and employers, collective bargaining, labour disputes and related matters.

The Dangerous Drugs (Amendment) Bill

The object of the Bill was to amend the Dangerous Drugs Act in order to provide for a person who unlawfully possesses, sells, distributes, delivers, transports, imports or exports dangerous drugs listed in Schedules II and III of the Act to be liable to prosecution as a drug dealer or drug trafficker, as is the case presently for dangerous drugs listed in Schedule I. The amendments also provide for the freezing and forfeiture of assets for such offences and for higher penalties.

Section 32 of the Act which had been declared unconstitutional and void by the Supreme Court and the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council was repealed.

The Construction Industry Development Board Bill

The Bill consolidated and improved on the law relating to the regulation of the construction industry.

The main objects of the Bill were to establish the Construction Industry Development Board as the regulatory body which shall be administered by a Council comprising representatives from different sectors of the construction industry. It also provided for the registration and deregistration of consultants and contractors and the temporary registration of foreign consultants and contractors.

The Judicial Provisions Bill

The Bill amended a number of enactments: to provide for heavier penalties for certain offences and increase the sentencing jurisdiction of the District Courts and the Intermediate Court; and to abolish fixed sentences and other mandatory sentences as well as to restore to the Courts their sentencing discretion in respect of all offences.

The Lavims (Project Implementation) Bill

The Bill made provision for the implementation of the Land Administration, Valuation and Information Management System (LAVIMS) Project in so far as it relates to setting up a digital cadastral database and empowering authorised persons to enter premises for that purpose, for survey and land use planning and for the valuation of the premises for the purposes of any tax, rate or due.

The Equal Opportunities Bill

The object of the Bill was to ensure that every person has an equal opportunity to attain his objectives in various spheres of activities and that no person is placed, or finds himself, at a disadvantage, by reason of his status, namely, his age, caste, colour, creed, ethnic origin, impairment, marital status, place of origin, political opinion, race, sex or sexual orientation.
The Bill prohibits any form of discrimination in a direct or indirect manner on the ground of status. Additionally, it prohibits discrimination by victimisation. These prohibitions from discrimination shall apply to employment activities, education, provision of goods, services or facilities, accommodation, disposal of immovable property, companies, partnerships, “société” or registered associations, clubs, access to premises and sports.

The Bill also provides for an Equal Opportunities Division which shall be a division of the National Human Rights Commission.

The International Arbitration Bill

The object of the Bill was to implement in Mauritius law the Model Law on International Commercial Arbitration adopted by the United Nation’s Commission on international Trade Law in June 1985 and to create a regime for international arbitration wholly separate and distinct from that which is applicable to domestic arbitration.

The Child Protection (Amendment) Bill

The Bill amended the Child Protection Act to provide for a Child Mentoring Scheme for children who are victims of neglect, those who are in distress and those suffering from mild behavioural problems or having problems of social adaptation.

The Prevention Of Terrorism (International Obligations) Bill

The main object of this Bill was to allow Mauritius to adhere to international counter-terrorism instruments to which it is not yet a party.

The Road Traffic (Amendment No. 2) Bill

The Bill amended the Road Traffic Act in order to enforce more effectively the law by providing the issue of fixed penalty notices for offences detected by means of a prescribed device, like a photographic enforcement device.

The Insolvency Bill

The object of the Bill was to reform the law relating to the insolvency of individuals and companies, and in particular to provide fair procedures for realising and distributing the assets of insolvent individuals and companies, and to impose penalties on the fraudulent and reckless trading and management of assets leading to insolvency and place appropriate sanctions on profligate individual and commercial behavior.