Mauritius signs and ratifies the Paris Agreement adopted at the COP 21

Mauritius is among the first fifteen countries to have signed and ratified the Paris Agreement, a landmark achievement in the fight against climate change. The Agreement was adopted at the 21st Meeting of the Conference of Parties (COP 21) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

A high-level signing ceremony, convened by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, was held on 22 April 2016 at United Nations Headquarters in New York as a first step in implementing the Paris Agreement, which was adopted in Paris, France, on 12 December 2015.

The Agreement will be open for signature in New York, United States, until 17 April 2017. Countries will also need to adopt the Agreement within their own legal systems, through ratification, acceptance, approval or accession. The Agreement will enter into force when joined by at least 55 countries, which together represent at least 55% of global emissions. It has also set a long term temperature goal to hold the global average temperature increase well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels, and pursue efforts to limit the temperature rise to 1.5°C. The main provisions of the Agreement relate, inter alia, to mitigation, adaptation, finance and transparency of actions.

The Paris Agreement is considered as a bridge between today’s policies and climate-neutrality before the end of the century. With regards to mitigation, reducing emissions, Governments agreed amongst others, on the need for global emissions to peak as soon as possible, recognising that this will take longer for developing countries.

Ambassador Koonjul, Permanent Representative of Mauritius to the UN, signing the Agreement.
The 3rd ITU ALERT (Applied Learning for Emergency Response Teams), a five-day Regional Cyber Security Drill for the African region to enhance coordination to fight against cyber incidents, was launched on 4 April 2016 by the Minister of Technology, Communication and Innovation, Mr Etienne Sinatambou, at Le Méridien Hotel in Pointe aux Piments.

The cybersecurity event, hosted by Mauritius for the first time, was organised by the Ministry of Technology, Communication and Innovation, in collaboration with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), and international and local stakeholders. Around 20 African countries as well as several ITU partners were present.

The ITU ALERT had as objectives namely to:

• Enhance communication and collaboration among participating partner countries.
• Build capacity and improve the incident response capabilities of participants;
• Gauge and improve the preparedness of Member States in the identification, response, prevention and resolution of computer incidents;
• Demonstrate Mauritian organisations capabilities in evaluating the security posture and level of emergency preparedness in resisting and dealing with cyber security incidents.

The programme during the five-day event comprised the following:

• One-day workshop on current cybersecurity issues.
• Two-day Cyber Drill exercise.
• Two-day Capacity Building sessions.

Speakers were from Pricewaterhouse Coopers, EMTEL, Secure Services Mauritius Ltd, SILENSEC, INTELIUM and IBM.

Presentations focused on: Cyber Intelligence, stakeholders commitment to Information Security, Combating Shadow IT, the Evolution of Network Security Monitoring and How to Stay Ahead of the Hacker’s game, Communications with Stakeholders: A Critical Activity for National CERTs, and Cybersecurity and Incident Response.

The absence of institutional structures to deal with cyber incidents and attacks is a genuine problem in responding to cyber threats. It is against this backdrop that the ITU is helping countries to establish their National Computer Incident Response Team (CIRT), which serves as a national focal point for coordinating cybersecurity incident response to cyberattacks in the country.

The ITU ALERT has been organised in Zambia and Rwanda in 2014 and 2015 respectively.
The Correctional Youth Centre (CYC) for Girls, a correctional facility for delinquent juveniles up to the age of 18, built to the tune of Rs 3.7 million, was inaugurated on 27 April 2016 at Beau Bassin.

This project is in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child which establishes rights for all children less than 18 years of age and includes special protections for children in conflict with the law. The Government of Mauritius has made a commitment to respect, protect and fulfill the rights contained therein.

Present on the occasion, the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions, Mrs Fazila Daureeawoo, said that the correctional facility can help in victim empowerment by meeting victims’ emotional needs.

‘The probation service offers to the juvenile delinquents the supervision needed to make their society integration easier’, she added.

Furthermore, the Minister stated that it is necessary to review the rehabilitation programme of the young offenders as well as the working conditions of the staff.

She also said that a strategic plan has already been presented to Cabinet for the upgrading of the rehabilitation programme for the young offenders.

The Correctional Youth Centre for Girls

The correctional facility provides care, supervision and treatment to youth in a manner that recognises the unique needs of the adolescent. It places a strong emphasis on youth accepting responsibility for their actions and gaining individual competencies that will help them to avoid further offending behaviours.

The CYC for Girls helps youth in conflict with the law through appropriate programmes and services. The new facility offers teaching, cultural ceremonies as well as education, anger management and life skills programs. It also provides young girls with more effective programmes and more opportunities for rehabilitation.
Signature of MoU in the field of aquaculture

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for collaboration and cooperation in the field of aquaculture was signed early April 2016 between the Ministry of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries, Shipping and Outer Islands and Growfish International Ltd of South Africa.

The MoU is designed to facilitate scientific exchanges between the staff of the Albion Fisheries Research Centre and the technical team of Growfish International Ltd, in addressing fish breeding techniques, disease control and feed formulation.

The MoU also serves as an umbrella agreement that sets forth the general terms and conditions under which Growfish International Ltd will use the facilities at the Albion Fisheries Research Centre namely the renovation of the ponds and maturation facilities.

Set up in 2010, Growfish International Ltd is involved in commercial aquaculture activities aimed at the production of high value fish species for the export market.

Growfish International Ltd would invest around Rs 1.4 billion ($40 million) which includes sea cages, land hatcheries, quarantine facilities, larval husbandry facility, maturation nursery for juvenile fish production and a fish processing facility.

The company projects to create around 100 jobs and has outlined that investment will be made in the human capital through training and development programmes aimed at university graduates enabling the development of a competent Mauritian core to drive the project forward. In addition, the company has also proposed to collaborate with the University of Miami for the development of the local manpower needs of the company.

The company has identified four marine sites on the west coast of Mauritius to develop its farms. Additionally an area of around three hectares will be required to house the inland facilities for the project. Promoters are in the process of identifying suitable areas on the west coast. The company aims to produce an estimated 5,000 tonnes in the early stages of the project, which may rise to 20,000 tonnes over the next five years.

As regards the fish species, the cobia has been identified as a potential species. This species grows very well under the Mauritius climatic conditions and is ready for harvest within 8 to 9 months. This fish species will be exported mainly to European and Asian markets and will also be sold through specific outlets in Mauritius.

The Project

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Tertiary Education: Elaboration of an Action Plan for the sector’s strategic plan

An Action Plan for the Tertiary Education Strategic Plan (TESP), built on three cross cutting issues namely Human Resource Leadership, Management and Development (Governance); Education as an Agent for Change (pedagogical methodologies); and Research as the main engine for an Innovative Knowledge Hub, commissioned by the Delegation of the European Union to Mauritius, and elaborated by a team of Consultants was presented to Government in April 2016.

The five strategic goals of the TESP are addressed as being a function of these cross cutting issues, that is, Widening access and ensuring equity; Improving quality and relevance of teaching and learning; Internationalisation of tertiary education; Enhanced research and innovation; and Strengthening of governance and financial sustainability.

The Action Plan fits within the context of the vision of Government to transform Mauritius into a knowledge-based economy by 2025 in the light of a globalised economy. In fact, the world economy requires higher skills, more research and innovation, and competitiveness. Hence, the Mauritian Government is putting focus on innovation as the driving force for creating jobs and welfare.

It is recalled that measures adopted by the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research to improve the functioning of the Tertiary Education sector include:

- Improvement of the functioning of feeder channels to tertiary education through the Nine Year Schooling Project at Primary and Secondary levels.
- Diversification of post-secondary education through the strengthening of the TVET and Polytechnics subsectors.
- Consolidation of legislation and regulation of the Tertiary Education Sector through the Higher Education Bill to be worked out with the help of an expert from the Commonwealth.

A series of activities were organised in the context of the World Immunisation Week (25 to 29 April). These include:

- The launching of the polio switch as recommended by WHO.
- Distribution of a pamphlet “Guide sur la Vaccination”.
- Sensitisation campaigns on the importance and benefits of vaccination.

The World Health Organisation has declared the last week in April as the World Immunisation Week in order to promote the importance of vaccination and provide an opportunity to countries to strengthen immunisation services and systems.

The theme of the Immunisation Week was “Close the Immunisation Gap – Immunisation for all throughout life”. The WHO Africa Regional Office is, simultaneously, observing the Africa Vaccination week under the theme “Close the Immunisation Gap. Stay polio free!.”
Mauritius has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for Institutionalising Cooperation in Radio Astronomy in Africa in the context of the African Square Kilometre Array (SKA) project. The MoU was approved at the third SKA African Partner Countries Ministerial Meeting on 15 April 2016 in Muldersdrift near Johannesburg.

The MoU was signed by the Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research, Mrs Leela Devi Dookun-Luchoomun, and two other Ministers attending the meeting, namely South African Science and Technology Minister, Ms Naledi Pandor; and Botswanan Infrastructure, Science and Technology Minister, Mr Nonofo Molefhi. The MoU will be signed by the other Ministers in their respective countries in due course.

The SKA is an international programme to create the world's biggest radio telescope array. The core sites for the SKA will be in South Africa and Australia. During Phase 2 of the programme, outstations will be set up in a number of other countries. The SKA African partner countries, that is Botswana, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia and Zambia will each host at least one outstation.

South Africa and the eight SKA African partner countries are also partners in the African Very Long Baseline Interferometry (AVN), being developed with South African expertise. This involves the conversion of obsolete large telecommunications dishes into radio astronomy antennas and is also covered by the MoU.

The main objective is to strengthen cooperation amongst the partner countries of the SKA in the field of radio astronomy and the African Very Long Baseline Interferometry Network project for the eventual implementation of the project.

This initiative will enable to develop a competent community of researchers and scientists to undertake radio astronomy studies across the partner countries; and, build institutional capacity in universities, research institutions and government departments that are necessary to promote the development of radio astronomy programmes and initiatives.

More About SKA

The SKA is a 2 billion EURO international scientific project coordinated by the Office for the SKA Organisation (SKAO), which is headquartered at Jodrell Bank Observatory, near Manchester, United Kingdom. It was established in December 2011 as a not-for-profit company in order to formalise relationships between the international partners and to centralise the leadership of the project.

This project will consist of the world's largest and most sensitive radio telescope, about 50 times more sensitive, and up to 10 000 faster (in terms of its survey speed) than the best radio telescopes of today. It is expected to have a significant impact on Africa’s drive towards a knowledge economy, wherein information flow is supercritical and underpins the character of a knowledge economy.

Eleven countries, represented by their local research organisations, are current members (Australia, Canada, China, Germany, India, Italy, New Zealand, South Africa, Sweden, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom).
Government to implement measures to revamp the handicraft sector

Government will implement a number of measures to revamp the handicraft sector and make it economically viable. The measures include the setting up of a Handicraft Training Academy, incorporating a Mauritian Craft Lab and a Research and Development Unit, to provide technologies for manufacturing and work sheds for artisans to develop new products and the reviewing of the label ‘Genuinely Mauritius’, and the commissioning of a modern, appealing and striking label. Moreover, there will be the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with Mauritius Duty Free Paradise, and the Association des Hôteliers et Restaurateurs de l’île Maurice for the display and sale of local handicraft products. The development of a market strategy and organisation of local and international fairs regrouping artisans is also in the pipeline. Furthermore, a Ministerial Committee, under the Chairmanship of the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism and External Communications, has been set up to look into new avenues of marketing of local handicraft products.

The use of innovative technology to confer a comparative advantage on improving the competitiveness of the handicraft items and the patenting of designs of handicraft items and the protection of artistic works of artisans through the Copyright Act, are also among measures announced to boost this sector.

Monitoring for Environment and Security in Africa Programme

The Mauritius Meteorological Services and Particip GmbH, Germany will sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) concerning cooperation in the implementation of on-site training within the framework of the implementation of the training strategy of the Monitoring for Environment and Security in Africa (MESA) Programme.

The overall objective of the programme is to support African decision-makers and planners in designing and implementing national, regional and continental policies and development plans towards sustainable development with a view to advancing the socio-economic progress and well-being of African populations towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The main objectives of the MOU are to establish the general modalities for the joint implementation of MESA training activities, and define the overall areas of collaboration. Particip GmbH has been designated as the lead institution of a consortium responsible for delivering on-site training for the implementation of the Programme for the component focusing on capacity building for weather forecasting through access to satellite data and imageries.
The 2015 Survey on Household Out-of-pocket Expenditure on Health was carried out to determine the extent of catastrophic expenditure on health and assess health service utilisation rate by households.

The survey also helped to estimate the magnitude of financial risk protection mechanisms among households seeking care and treatment in the private sector.

The Survey revealed, among others, that for the Financial Year 2014, households’ spending on health amounted to approximately Rs10.81 billion.

Moreover, it stated that hypertension and diabetes were at the top of the list of the most commonly reported diseases and that public health institutions remain the main providers of health care services.

The results of the survey would be used to develop the National Health Accounts 2015 in line with “A System of Health Accounts 2011” produced by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Eurostat and the World Health Organization.

Consequently, the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life, in collaboration with the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare and the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions, will conduct an aggressive sensitisation campaign on the prevention and management of non-communicable diseases.

Cooperative Sector to be revamped through a series of measures

The Cooperative Sector will be revamped through a series of measures, namely by the Cooperatives Act 2005 being reviewed to respond to the new challenges and the evolving needs of cooperators.

In addition, the Office of the Public Sector Governance is carrying out an exercise for the restructuring of the Cooperatives Division of the Ministry of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives for improved service delivery.

Government is also promoting the development of cooperatives in emerging sectors, such as bio-farming, aquaculture and green economy.

As regards cooperators in the sugar sector, they are being sensitised on the fairtrade concept and the importance of grouping to benefit from assistance from Fairtrade Certification. The cooperative dairy sector is for its part being reviewed with the assistance of the Afro-Asian Rural Development Organization.

Another major step has been the introduction of the Mauritius Excellence Awards for Cooperatives. These are being organised annually to enhance visibility of cooperative societies, and provide national recognition for best practices in the sector.
National Heritage

The following religious and cultural sites have been designated as national heritage further to the recommendations of the National Heritage Fund.

- Al Aqsa Mosque at Plaine Verte
- Aroul Migou Dhandayuthabani Swami Kovil at Clemencia
- Cohan Tai Biou Pagoda (Kwan Tee Pagoda) at Les Salines, Port Louis
- Mitr Mandal Samaj at Sainte Croix
- Monument of Maha Rana Pratab at Bell Village
- Monument commemorating the Centenary of Indian Immigration at Port Louis
Pandurang Kshetra Mandir at Cascavelle

St Jean Presbyterian Church at Port Louis

Maheswarnath Shivala at Triolet

Shri Simhadri Appanah Alayam at Beau Vallon

St François d’Assise Church at Pamplemousses

St James Cathedral at Port Louis

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