Metro Express: Rs 18.8 billion project is the best solution to our long-term transport needs, says PM

This major Rs18.8 billion Metro Express project is the best solution to our long-term transport needs. It also fulfills many priorities set out in Government’s vision for sustainability: generating significant economic, environmental, and social benefits for the people of Mauritius.

The statement was made by the Prime Minister, Mr. Pravind Jugnauth at the Metro Express Design and Contract signing ceremony held on 31 July 2017 at Hennesy Park Hotel, Ebene.

After a bidding exercise, the contract has been awarded to Indian multinational Larsen & Toubro. The works will start in September this year and the first train of the Metro Express will depart from Curepipe station in early 2021.

The Prime Minister recalled that Government launched the Metro Express project in March 2017 to revolutionalise the local...
public transport system in Mauritius. The project will trigger construction on a grand scale and boost the economy throughout its construction, he stated, adding that the Metro Express project will thus generate employment and stimulate the local economy.

According to Mr Jugnauth, once implemented, the Metro Express system will also give rise to a number of busy metro stations that will be poles of local economic activities and development. While the introduction of Metro Express will certainly make travel in and out of towns much more efficient, it will also lead to improvements in other parts of the towns’ transport system, he stated.

As our country continues to evolve, we need to ensure that its growth is both economically sustainable and environmentally responsible, underlined the Prime Minister. For Mauritius, long-term economic and environmental well-being will depend to a large degree on its transportation system and it is clear that we are facing a transportation challenge, he pointed out. Consequently, the Metro Express project with 18 trains will not just accommodate riders. Its combination of speed, comfort and reliability will also encourage more people to use public transit, he added.

The 26 kilometre line covering 19 stations is designed with the potential for growth in mind, Mr Jugnauth said, adding that these design features will help to ensure expansion of the system, such as a future north-south that could include a direct connection to the airport. Departing from Curepipe, the Metro Express will reach Port Louis in 41 minutes.

The Metro Express Ltd has awarded the Turnkey Design and Construct Contract to Larsen & Toubro Limited for a fixed sum of MUR 18,799,880,000, inclusive of provisional sums works, and with no variation and extension of time of execution, and without being detrimental to the norms and the standards of quality and safety as spelt out in the Request for Proposal. The implementation of the project is scheduled to start in September 2017 and completed in November 2021.

The sector stretching from Rose Hill to Port Louis is expected to be operational in September 2019. Feasibility study and preliminary design and alignment of the Metro Express project have been carried out by the Singapore Cooperation Enterprise. The project will be partly funded by the Indian grant of Rs 9.9 billion and through a line of credit by the State Bank of Mauritius Infrastructure Development Company Ltd.
AUCIEFFA Forum in Mauritius
Addressing challenges hindering the retention of girls and young women in education systems

An Education Forum, aiming to address the challenges that impede the retention of girls and young women in education systems, and find solutions so as to bring about real and sustainable change, was held from 10 to 12 July 2017 at Intercontinental Hotel, in Balaclava. The central theme was Strategies for retention of girls and young women in educational systems.

Around 120 delegates coming from Member States of the African Union, Regional Economic Communities, Civil society organisations and development partners attended. Discussions centred on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics), TVET (Technical and Vocational Education), Teaching and learning environment/materials, and legal and institutional framework.

Mauritius Education Forum
Call for Action

Call for Action made by participants following the Forum include: Mainstreaming gender in STEM; Mainstreaming gender in TVET; Gender-sensitive teaching and learning environment in higher education; and, Legal and institutional environment to support right to quality education for girls and young women.

Recommendations comprise:

- Involving families, communities, media, religious/traditional leaders and other stakeholders in eliminating gender stereotypes in the learning and teaching environment/materials by enforcing and implementing the legal and institutional framework on girls ‘education.

- Reengineering the content and methodology of training offered in traditionally-female disciplines by introducing technology so as to change perceptions.

- ‘STEMitising’ the curriculum right from the lower levels of education system and allocation of sufficient budget to support girls in TVET through need-based bursaries.

Government strives to offer quality education to girls and young women
Countering Piracy
CGPCS’s 20th plenary session in Mauritius explores maritime safety strategies

The meeting was hosted from 5 to 7 July 2017 in Mauritius with the aim to devise a common plan to address the scourge of piracy and ensure maritime safety.

The CGPCS, a voluntary ad hoc international forum, brings together countries, organisations, and industry groups to combat piracy. Participants seek to coordinate political, military, industry and non-governmental efforts to bring to an end piracy off the coast of Somalia and to ensure that pirates are brought to justice.

The Contact Group, created in January 2009 pursuant to United Nations (UN) Security Council Resolution 1851, often meets in plenary sessions at the headquarters of the UN. Its four Working Groups meet regularly around the world to develop and implement national counter-piracy policies and programmes.

The Working Groups are:

- Capacity Building which focuses on strengthening the ability of regional partners to cope with maritime crime. It is co-chaired by the United Kingdom and the Indian Ocean Commission.
- Virtual Legal Forum co-chaired by Portugal and Mauritius supplants Working Group 2.
- Maritime Counter Piracy and Mitigation Operations co-chaired by Japan, Seychelles, and the United Arab Emirates. It serves as the main CGPCS interface with the shipping industry and oversees the Shared Awareness and Deconfliction mechanism to coordinate operational entities patrolling off the Horn of Africa.
- Disrupting Pirate Networks Ashore under Italy’s leadership. It focuses on tracking financial flows, and provides political support to the newly formed Law Enforcement Task Force.

Schemes to provide assistance to cooperatives societies

Several schemes to assist cooperatives societies will be implemented by the Cooperative Development Fund, operating under the aegis of the Ministry of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives. The Schemes are namely, the upgrading of Cooperative Societies Scheme; the Scheme for Market Fair for Cooperative Societies; the Scheme for Acquisition of IT Facilities; and the Education Scheme for Cooperative Societies.

The upgrading of Cooperative Societies Scheme aims to provide assistance for the purchase of equipment and other relevant tools; the promotion of bio and green products, eco-packaging, quality and attractive labelling, barcode certification and value-added activities; and the provision of consultancy services.

As for the Scheme for Market Fair for Cooperative Societies, it will provide assistance for the organisation of market fairs. On the other hand, the Scheme for Acquisition of IT Facilities will provide assistance for the procurement of a computer or a laptop.

As regards the Education Scheme for Cooperative Societies, it will assist members of Societies to attend training courses locally or abroad.
Africa’s development requires people who are not only strong, but also educated and innovative. There is consensus that education is paramount to poverty alleviation and gender and youth emancipation.

This statement was made by the Prime Minister, Mr Pravind Jugnauth, on 4 July 2017 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, where he was intervening at the 29th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Heads of State and Government of the African Union (AU).

The theme of the Summit was Harnessing Demographic Dividend through Investments in Youth. Focus was likewise on the implementation of AU’s Agenda 2063 with Mauritius being the first country invited by the AU to make an interim report on the Agenda’s implementation.
In his address, the Prime Minister emphasised the importance to concert efforts in developing a strong educational sector in Africa that would build the capacity of Africans to transition into a knowledge-based society. He also shared Mauritius’ experiences on the implementation of Agenda 2063, and underscored the measures taken for the holistic development of Youth, particularly the reform in the education system, training in ICT, the promotion of sports activities, and the introduction of the back-to-work programme for young women.

Agenda 2063, Mr Jugnauth pointed out, has been mainstreamed within the national development plan of Mauritius with allocation of funds for its implementation. The Agenda has put the welfare of the African people at its core and the Mauritian Government fully subscribes to this objective by taking bold actions to improve citizens’ wellbeing and through a series of initiatives to uplift vulnerable groups, he said.

Moreover, the Prime Minister expressed his appreciation for the unity demonstrated by AU Member States at the United Nations (UN) General Assembly on the request for an advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legal consequences of the separation of the Chagos Archipelago from Mauritius in 1965. The draft resolution which was tabled by the Republic of Congo on behalf of AU Member States at the UN was adopted by a resounding majority.

“This is a historic achievement for the African Union and Mauritius is most thankful and proud of the solidarity of AU Member States. As we continue the struggle to complete the decolonisation of Mauritius, we count on the continued support of the AU and all its Member States,’ the Prime Minister stated.

**AU’s 29th Ordinary Session**

The Assembly examined reports on peace and security in Africa, terrorism and violent extremism, progress made on the continental free trade area, reform of the Security Council, and implementation of Agenda 2063.

Mauritius was honoured with the African Gender Scorecard Award 2017 in the category “Employment and Entrepreneurship”. Heads of State and Government also commended Mauritius on the holding of the African Economic Platform, and further endorsed the offer of Mauritius to host the second edition of the Platform in March 2018.

**About Agenda 2063**

It is a strategic framework for the socio-economic transformation of the African Continent over the next 50 years. Agenda 2063 seeks to accelerate the implementation of past and existing continental initiatives for growth and sustainable development.


Government considers data as a vital resource to fuel economic growth and also recognises that data has become the new oil in today’s digital world. To that end, the recommendations formulated by the World Bank in its Open Data Readiness Assessment (ODRA) Report, commissioned by the authorities, will be implemented by the Ministry of Technology, Communication and Innovation (MTCI).

The ODRA was carried out to identify datasets that can be released as open data in the context of an Open Data programme for Mauritius. The country is moving forward with the programme conducted in partnership with the World Bank.

**ODRA Report recommends:**

- The MTCI joining the Open Government Partnership and working with other stakeholders so as to ensure that opportunities for open data are included in policies on innovation, public financial management, procurement reform, tourism sector, and transport improvement.

- Universities and Colleges to include data skills in the curriculum or student activities.

Open Government Data is a philosophy and is increasingly a set of policies that promotes transparency, accountability and value creation by making government data available to all.
The reform project of the water sector, with an estimated USD 875 000 as preparatory costs, will enable the Central Water Authority (CWA), after a five-year period, to supply water regularly all year round and achieve financial equilibrium through performance improvements, tariff reforms as well as reduce water losses in the distribution system.

The Global Infrastructure Facility is providing USD 875 000, out of which USD 475 000 is being allocated for advisory services to be provided by the World Bank and, USD 400 000 to the International Financial Corporation. The Mauritian Government will contribute USD 400 000, for which Rs 14 million is provided in Budget 2017-2018.

The water reform project aims at addressing the problem of water supply in Mauritius. In fact, Mauritius is classified as a water-stressed country and is expected to fall under the water-scarce category by 2020 reveals a study carried out by a team of the World Bank. The aquifers are over-exploited and rainfall is unpredictable due to climate change.

The World Bank was appointed in December 2015 by Government to conduct the study on the reform of the distribution and supply of water and provide strategic advice and support for the design and implementation of a Private and Public Partnership for the CWA and for potable water sector reform.

The World Bank recommended a holistic solution to redress CWA’s financial situation, plan future investments and attain the target of 24/7 water supply. The appointment of a Private Operator to operate and maintain the potable water distribution system of the CWA on a 15-year affermage contract was proposed.

Under this public-private sector arrangement, the private operator is responsible for operating and maintaining the utility but not for financing the investment. It does not own the infrastructure but would share capital planning functions with CWA to ensure consistency of capital expenditure with improved performance targets. The operator would finance minor investments in technology and equipment.

Any rise in revenue arising from tariff increase before or after the affermage contract will be to the benefit of the CWA and not to the private operator. The operator will be paid a fee based on key performance targets such as improved service quality and reduction of water losses.

The CWA will remain a parastatal organisation and continue to own all the water supply pipelines, the water treatment plants and service reservoirs. It will monitor the service provided by the private sector operator and will be responsible for business planning, capital expenditure and proposing customer tariffs.

In February 2017, Government agreed to implement the World Bank’s recommendations. The services of the Bank was enlisted for advisory services, and the International Financial Corporation as Transaction Adviser.
The formulation of a buoyant Digital Mauritius 2030 Strategy for Mauritius which would rest on several enablers which include the legal framework, regulatory arrangement, data protection foundations and institutional framework was the focus of a consultative workshop held on 20 July 2017 at Sofitel L’Imperial Resort and Spa, Wolmar, in Flic-en-Flac.

The one-day workshop brought together captains of the industry from the public and private sectors to strategise on the future of Digital Mauritius over the distinct timelines of 2020, 2025, and 2030. Five themes were discussed during the workshop: ICT infrastructure including broadcasting; E-Government and business facilitation; Talent Management; Cybersecurity/cybercrime; and Innovation and emerging technologies. Participants were encouraged to come up with actions required for each of the enablers during the brainstorming sessions.

The workshop is in line with the Economic Vision 2030 of the Government which aims at transforming the ICT industry into a key sector by fostering innovation and creativity, and developing a sustainable and high value-added economy that will provide more accessible and higher-value opportunities for the Mauritian citizens.

Additional thematic consultative workshops will be organised so as to finalise the Strategy paper which will be presented to Government for approval on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of Independence of Mauritius.

Thirty-six new e-Services aimed at enhancing prompt and effective public service delivery were launched on the 13 July 2017 at Cyber Tower 1, in Ebène.

The e-Services spanning several sectors will help create a sustainable link between institutions and citizens for better, smarter and timelier service delivery. The pool of information made available by technology may serve to call for urgent assistance in emergency situations, and issues such as child neglect, abuse and abandonment can now be reported online. The service of e-reporting will also help in safeguarding children against potential risks and harm.

E-Services

Some of the 36 new e-Services launched relate to Registration of a Radiation source; Application for ICT Awareness Course in Cyber Caravan; Application for statement of ranking – top 500 scholarship rank order; Application for Legal Aid; Online submission of customer feedback at Regional Cooperative Centre; and Contact/Query Form at the Child Development Unit. To-date over 69 Government services are available online to provide 24/7 electronic service to citizens. All online transactions are encrypted and secured. In order to make use of the e-Services, applicants need to register online.

The e-payment infrastructure and ‘go-live’ of e-Services with payment to enable the Mauritian citizen transact with Government is also accessible. Ten services are live for payment. In addition to new e-services, the MTCI is also developing mobile apps for the convenience of citizens. Ten mobile apps are currently under development: Smart Traffic Monitoring (up-to-date traffic information); and, Smart Police Force App (Police notifications during events like Maha Shivratre, Père Laval and Cavadee festivals).
Alleviation of Poverty: Launching of the Marshal Plan Social Contract

The Marshal Plan Social Contract, an agreement whereby eligible families benefit from a monthly subsistence allowance from the Government over an initial period of one year, was launched on 21 July 2017 during a one-day workshop in Port-Louis.


The Marshall Plan Social Contract is an agreement signed between the eligible families and the Ministry as well as NEF. It makes provision for conditions relating to health, education, employment and training and participation in family empowerment programmes.

Under the Marshall Plan Against Poverty, over 8,000 families are now benefitting from subsistence allowance. The plan covers areas such as social protection, social housing, social inclusion and community development, access to education, and development of competencies, among others.

It is to be noted that the NEF will be restructured for an effective service to the poor as highlighted in Budget 2017-2018. In this regard, a Case Management Manual was launched to provide the field staff with practical implementation guidance in the alleviation of poverty. A Directory of Services and Service Providers was also made available to give information about the programmes, services and facilities offered to the people in need.

SSDG Net Metering Scheme: Public encouraged to generate their own electricity

The Central Electricity Board (CEB) has launched the second phase of the "CEB 2015 SSDG Net Metering Scheme" which is in line with Government's policy to encourage the public to generate their own electricity from renewable energy sources.

The aim is to integrate a total of 2 MW Small Scale Distributed Generation (SSDG) in the Mauritian grid and to offer the opportunity to small power producers to produce electricity using solar photovoltaic and wind technologies. The 2 MW is allocated to two customer categories in the form of 1 MW reserved for Domestic Customer Category and 1 MW for IRS, RES and Three-phase domestic customers.

Under this scheme, prospective prosumers will not have to make investment in costly battery energy storage system as they will benefit the energy storage capacity of the grid free of charge. Qualified Prosumers will thus be able to generate their electricity during the day, especially from the solar photovoltaic source, and store it into the grid to be used in the evening and night or even for future uses.

This option is also free of charge from the CEB. Also, part of the initial investment (15%), only for SolarEnergyUnit, can be recouped through a relief in tax payment.

The scheme operates under the net billing principle. After commissioning of the SSDG, the owner first uses the electricity produced by the SSDG and exports any surplus to the CEB grid, which is "banked" in his/her account as kilowatt-hour (kWh) credits. This contributes to the reduction of his monthly electricity bills. The savings on the electricity payments to the CEB can be used to pay for the investment made in the acquisition of the renewable energy system.
The project Mainstreaming Biodiversity into the Management of the Coastal Zone in the Republic of Mauritius, to the tune of USD 4 664 521, was the focus of an inception workshop held on 13 and 14 July 2017 at Ravenala Attitude Hotel, in Balaclava.

Since coastal zones are essential features in the socioeconomic development agenda of the country, the project will, consequently, benefit both Mauritius and Rodrigues by safeguarding our biodiversity while tackling the impacts of climate change and negative externalities of coastal development effectively.

Accordingly, the goals and beneficial outcomes of the project were discussed during the workshop which was jointly organised by the Ministry of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the United Nations Development Programme.

The project, which will be implemented over a period of five years, is funded by a grant from the GEF. The primary objective is to mainstream the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystem services into coastal zone management and into the operations and policies of the tourism and physical development sectors in Mauritius through a ‘land and seascape wide’ integrated management approach based on the Environmental Sensitive Areas (ESAs) inventory and assessment. Issues pertaining to threats to biodiversity and ecosystem function will also be dealt by ensuring that 27 000 ha marine and coastal ESAs are an integral part of planning and implementation mechanisms relating to coastal development and the tourism sector. The project will also ensure mitigation of threats to marine and coastal biodiversity and protection of fishery resources in at least 20 000 ha of seascapes through the improved management of Marine Protected Areas and no-take zones, and assist in erosion control and ecosystem services restoration.