Maurice Ile Durable
Policy and Strategy Action Plan to Propel Sustainable Growth

The Maurice Ile Durable (MID) Policy, and Strategy Action Plan was made public on 20 June 2013. It focuses on four MID priority programmes, namely energy conservation and renewables; cleaner, greener and pollution-free Mauritius; green economy; and ocean economy.

The Action Plan has been developed by a team of consultants from Mott MacDonald (UK) Ltd.

The preliminary cost estimates for the priority programmes are: Energy-Rs 5.1 billion; Cleaner, Greener, Pollution-free Mauritius-Rs 1.0 billion; and Green Economy-Rs 0.16 billion. However, costing for the implementation of the MID priority programme on Ocean Economy has been excluded for it will be developed at a later stage.

Some 130 projects/activities have also been proposed across the 5Es, that is Energy, Environment, Employment, Education and Equity, which would be implemented in the short, medium and long terms to bring coherence...
and to enhance existing activities by introducing new ideas for better sustainable development. It is recalled that the MID is a societal project that aims to deliver sustainable growth, with a vision for Mauritius to become a model of sustainable development.

The MID Action Plan will be implemented alongside the economic and social transformation plan and this interaction would provide the operational link between the long-term objectives and the three-year Programme Based Budgeting of Ministries, thus charting across the implementation and monitoring of set targets.

Some of the principal challenges are: establishing a clear pathway to achieve national and sectoral targets; ensuring that all Ministries give priority to the realisation of MID; reversing the decline of ecosystems and the natural environment; and ensuring that future investment in land development and infrastructure does not further reduce the sustainability of the Republic.

MID is fundamentally dependent on collaboration across the public, private and non-profit sectors and will transcend political cycles without having a life-expectancy attributed to it. The MID objectives will be promoted through quality of life being endorsed as the overarching goal composed of economic, social, cultural and personal factors.

Government has earmarked Rs 720 million over a period of three years for MID projects and the sum of Rs 200 million has already been approved. Out of the Rs 200 million, Rs 118 million will be used for renewable energy, and Rs 82 million for other projects.
University of Mauritius Confers Honorary Degree of Civil Law to President of Republic

The President of the Republic, Mr Rajkeswur Purryag, was conferred the Honorary Degree of Civil Law honoris causa by the University of Mauritius (UoM) on 13 June 2013 at the Octave Wiéhé Auditorium, Réduit. The Prime Minister, Dr Navinchandra Ramgoolam, and several other eminent personalities and the academia were present at the ceremony.

In his address, the President expressed his appreciation for having received this distinction and conveyed his gratitude to the UoM and professionals from the academia.

Mr Purryag gave an overview of his studies and career in the field of law and politics. He joined active politics in 1974, imbued with the commitment to serve the country and was motivated by the writings, works and actions of his political mentor, late Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam (SSR), whom he said, was a staunch socialist and a product of the Fabian Society.

He underpinned the importance of education and highlighted the pivotal role of the UoM in the socio-economic development of the country. Mr. Purryag qualified the 21st century as that of knowledge underpinned by science, innovation and ingenuity technology where he said, there will be an increasing need to equip the human resource with the necessary skills, competencies and aptitudes in order to face the onslaught of the emerging challenges.

Manufacturing sector
First-ever Award Event for Mauritian Exporters

Enterprise Mauritius will organise for the first time ever in the country, a “Mauritius Exporters Award”, to honour local businesses which have achieved sustainable export growth through innovation and commitment to international trade.

The competition is open to companies from the manufacturing sector in Mauritius. Companies that have exported for the past two years, that is 2011 and 2012, are eligible for nomination. The winners from each category will be honoured during a gala reception in August 2013.

This award will be in recognition of local manufacturing firms that have been successful in overcoming the international market challenges through innovation and leadership by increasing exports figures. It will also acknowledge the innovative and unique contributions to the Mauritian economy. The Exporters Award aims at enhancing the involvement of Mauritian enterprises in exporting and sustaining competitiveness in the global trading arena.

The Mauritius Exporters Award will further encourage domestic small and medium enterprises to promote their goods to foreign markets, foster product development, and reward the talent and innovative spirit of Mauritian exporters.
According to the Prime Minister, Mauritius has managed to surmount obstacles to succeed in its economic development. The country has stayed competitive and has created the necessary environment to attract investments while opening to innovations as well as foreign talents and expertise. Mauritius has also facilitated its fiscal administration by introducing a uniform 15% tax for individuals and enterprises alike. Strong and efficient institutions have equally been set up to reassure investors and economic operators. Moreover, the country has reformed its labour laws to offer better protection to employees.

Dr Ramgoolam intervened on the United Nations post-2015 development goals. He highlighted the importance of combating poverty, reducing infant and maternal mortality rate, and improving access to drinking water. Dr Ramgoolam invited African nations to ensure the participation of citizens in the realisation of development goals, and to seek sincere partnership agreements between developed and developing nations.

The Prime Minister also made a speech on peace and security on the African continent. He mentioned the contribution of Mauritius in the fight against piracy and the offer of US $ 500,000 to facilitate the holding of elections in Madagascar, a neighbour which “needs to get out of the crisis that is paralysing the free expression of democracy”.

The unstable political climate in Madagascar was on the agenda of the meeting the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Ban Ki-moon held with Dr Ramgoolam and the Mauritian delegation. During this meeting, the Prime Minister made a plea for more assistance by the United Nations to Small Island Developing States which are the most threatened by climate change.

Mr Ban Ki-moon lauded the efforts of Mauritius to meet its sustainable development goals, especially with its engagement to reduce its dependence on fossil fuels. Dr Ramgoolam affirmed that by the year 2015, Mauritius will be able to produce 35% of its energy needs by exploiting sources of renewable energy, while stating that Mauritius has managed to achieve almost all the Millennium Development Goals set by the United Nations in 2000. The issue of piracy and the contribution of Mauritius to fight this scourge, including the prosecution of suspected pirates on Mauritian territory, were also raised during the meeting.

It is to be noted that the initiative to offer of 50 scholarships recently made by the Prime Minister at the African Union Summit has been praised by Professor Jeffrey Sachs, consultant at the United Nations.
New Legislation and Facilities for Fire Services

A new legislation regulating the Fire Services, the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service Bill, was voted on 11 June 2013 at the National Assembly, repealing the Fire Services Act, which dates as far back as 1954.

The main objectives of this legislation are to provide for the setting up of the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service and make better provision for the prevention of and response to fires, and other incidents likely to endanger persons, animals, property or the environment.

This new legislation has been rendered necessary in the wake of the evolution of the role and functions of firefighters and new developments in different aspects of life-saving and property-saving actions. These, in particular, include intervention during and after natural calamities such as cyclones and floods, accidental or criminal fires, release of hazardous chemicals and toxic wastes, and road accidents.

With the enactment of the new Bill, the Government Fire Services has now been renamed as the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service, in order to encompass the core duties and functions of the Service, which is, response to fires and provision of rescue services. Legal provision has also been made for the Service to participate in national schemes for the management, prevention, mitigation and reduction of disasters and to assist the National Disaster and Operations Coordination Centre set up by Government to ensure timely disaster management response.

The Bill also caters for the possibility of setting up Volunteer Fire Brigades to promote community participation and ensure promptness in response and better coverage in case of emergencies. Volunteer fire brigades will be set up according to established criteria and training and protective equipment will be provided by the Service.

New Fire Station and additional facilities

- A new fire station is under construction at Tamarin on a portion of land of 4,200 square metres. The station, to the tune of Rs 44m, is expected to be operational by the end of 2013.

- As regards professional training, a plot of land has been identified at Riche Terre for the setting up of a Fire and Rescue Training Academy.

- On the logistics side, five modern water tenders for a contract value of approximately Rs 60m were acquired in the year 2011. These vehicles are fully equipped with a large range of fire-fighting and rescue equipment such as pumps, water monitors, rescue gears, breathing apparatus, and ladders designed to the highest standards. A modern aerial turntable ladder of Rs 35m has been delivered in January 2013 to equip the Service for attending fires and also perform rescue activities in high rise buildings.
National Archives launches Electronic Archives System

A sum of Rs 23m has been spent on the first phase of the electronic archives system which kicked off in 2009. With the electronic archives system, some 500 000 pages of national documents are currently available online after having been scanned, indexed and uploaded. The next phase of digitisation of national documents has started in June 2013.

The launching ceremony was graced by the Minister of Arts and Culture, Mr Mookhesswur Choonee, the Minister of Information and Communication Technology, Mr Tassarajen Pillay Chedumbrum, and other personalities.

In his address, Minister Choonee said that as from now, the treasures of the history of Mauritius are just a click away and that by putting into place the electronic archives system, we are preserving for the future. He announced the construction of a building at Ebène Triangle, Réduit which will house both the National Archives Department and the National Library.

For his part, Minister Pillay recalled that the electronic archives system implemented at the National Archives Department is an example of Government’s policy to bring its services closer to the population and that access to the internet should be a basic human right as it would allow citizens to enjoy all Government services online.

UNESCO will help Mauritius in celebrating the 200 years of existence of the National Archives Department in 2015. On that occasion, an exhibition on Mauritius will be held at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris.

The National Archives has its origin from the early settlement of the island, dating as far back as 1721. However, its official operation as an institution was proclaimed in 1815 during the British rule.
**Meteorological Services to be Equipped with a Doppler Weather Radar**

The Mauritius Meteorological Station will by March 2015 be equipped with a Doppler Weather radar. A grant agreement in relation to the donation of the weather radar system was signed by Mauritius and Japan, on 10 June 2013 in the presence of the Prime Minister, Dr Navinchandra Ramgoolam, in Port Louis.

The Mauritian side was represented by the Secretary to Cabinet and Head of the Civil Service, Mr Suresh Chandra Seeballuck, and Japan was represented by the Ambassador-designate of Japan to Mauritius, Mr Ryuhei Hosoya, along with the Senior Representative of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Mr Hajime Watanabe.

The Agreement, to the tune of Rs 400 million, will not only help in acquiring the radar, but also finance the construction of a new radar building at Trou aux Cerfs. The building will also house a public gallery.

At the signing ceremony, Dr Ramgoolam recalled that the signing of the grant agreement is testimony of the bilateral ties that exist between Mauritius and Japan since 1969. He also said that after his meeting with his Japanese counterpart, Mr Abe Shinzo, during the 5th Tokyo International Conference on African Development in Yokohama, Japan, both countries have pledged to work towards further consolidating bilateral relations.

As a Small Island Developing State, Mauritius is highly vulnerable to the extreme weather patterns like the flash floods of March 2013, underlined the Prime Minister. The new radar, he said, will generate more accurate weather forecasts, a critical requirement, which will help prepare the population in facing the calamities.

For his part, Ambassador Hosoya stated that there is a need for more strategic focus to further the bilateral cooperation between Mauritius and Japan, and added that this grant agreement is a symbolic representation of cooperation between the two countries.
The Seeds Bill was voted in the National Assembly on 25 June 2013. It provides for the setting up of the National Plant Varieties and Seeds Office which will regulate the cultivation, production, trade, exportation and importation of any seeds of any variety of any kind of plant.

The Seeds Bill is in line with the reform process that the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food security has embarked for the improvement of service delivery to the farming community. It aims at strengthening and modernising the agricultural and agribusiness sector to make them more responsive to the emerging challenges in the sector.

The Bill also provides for the setting up of a National Plant Varieties and Seeds Committee which shall inter-alia advise on national policies relating to the seeds of any variety of any kind of plant and make recommendations for the improvement of the seed regulatory system and on the release of any variety in Mauritius. The Bill further makes provision for the registration of varieties and seeds, for testing, inspection and certification of seed.

According to the Minister of Agro-industry and Food Security, Mr S. Faugoo, the new legislation demonstrates the firm commitment taken by Government to diversify and strengthen the agri-food production sector to make it modern, competitive and sustainable with the overall aim of further securing food supply, stability and safety.

The Human Tissue (Removal, Preservation and Transplant) Bill, the object of which is to facilitate the removal and transplant of renal and other organs legally, was passed by the National Assembly on 18 June 2013.

The Bill which amends the Human Tissue (Removal, Preservation and Transplant) Act, provides for an authorised specialist to issue a certificate before a donation of non-regenerative tissue, instead of an authorised consultant.

It also provides for immunity from civil or criminal proceedings for members of the Board or of any committee set up under the Act, or other persons or bodies, with respect to the execution of their duties, or the exercise of their powers, in good faith under the Act. Provisions are also made for a higher penalty for breach of regulations made under the Act.

According to the Minister of Health and Quality of Life, Mr Lormus Bundhoo, in recent years there has been an emergence of medical institutions with high-tech infrastructure and facilities capable of providing high-tech medical care. ‘Both infrastructure and capacity building have evolved in a significant manner in the public and private sectors recently’, he said while presenting the Bill.

It is the opportune moment to consolidate the legislative framework and to come up with appropriate regulations in order to allow transplant surgery to be carried out with all necessary safeguards, the Minister stressed.
Smart Government Workshop

A workshop on ‘Smart Government’, organised by the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology in collaboration with Samsung Southern Africa, brought together, on 17 June 2013 in Ebène, more than 100 participants from different ministries, departments and the private sector.

The aim of the workshop was to share information on available e-government services and the draft e-government strategy. The new e-Government strategy which is currently being finalised is expected to shift the focus more towards citizens and businesses.

It is recalled that the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology has embarked on the elaboration of an e-Government strategy with the purpose of developing a national e-Government agenda that meets the needs of citizens and businesses. Over the past 15 years, Government has invested heavily in the competitiveness of different ministries and departments to improve productivity and enhance efficiency of service delivery to citizens and the business community. Some 65 e-services have been developed and are available online.

The ICT-BPO sector is emerging as a driving force in the Mauritian economy. The sector contributes to 6.7% of GDP of Mauritius and has registered an average annual growth rate of 12% over the last five years. It is the third pillar of our economy. Government is committed and taking additional steps to positioning the island as a regional ICT hub.

VPM Duval Investment Mission in China

The Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Mr Xavier-Luc Duval, was at the head of an investment mission in China from 24 to 30 June with a view to promote Mauritius as an investment hub and a gateway to Africa.

The delegation comprised of officials from his Ministry as well as representatives from the Board of Investment (BOI) and the private sector.

In the margins of his mission in Beijing, VPM Duval participated in the Beijing Joint Investment Seminar organised by BOI Mauritius in collaboration with the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT) to promote Mauritius as an investment destination.

Discussions focused on positioning Mauritius as a hub for the maritime traffic being given its strategic location in the golden triangle of opportunities next to the African continent. The possibility of making Port Louis Harbour a hub in the region that would act as a platform between Asia and Africa was also discussed.

VPM Duval had working sessions with high officials of the HAIER Group, a specialist in home appliances and visited an aquaculture institute in that city. In Shanghai, he participated in a Joint Investment Seminar organised by BOI Mauritius in collaboration with the CCPIT.

Delegation from the Global Fund for HIV

A two-member delegation from the Global Fund for HIV was in Mauritius at the end of June 2013. The visit lies in the context of the New Funding Model developed by the Global Fund.

The key objectives of the mission were to review progress of on-going grants (Round 8 HIV/AIDS with the National AIDS Secretariat and PILS) and discuss performance of CCM’s oversight function as well as areas of collaboration.

The delegation briefed the Mauritius Country Coordinating Mechanism (CCM) of further grants which Mauritius is eligible to apply for in view of its present performance, and on the application process.
Launching of Women entrepreneurship leadership programme

The 2013 edition of Women entrepreneurship leadership programme, aiming at developing the leadership skills of women entrepreneurs, kicked off on 3 June 2013 at the National Women Development Centre, Phoenix. The programme also aims at building the confidence required to become a leader in the community as well as providing women entrepreneurs with the required knowledge and techniques to empower them to become active members of the business community.

The programme is a joint initiative of the National Women Entrepreneur Council (NWEC), Women in Networking (WIN) and Soroptimist Ipsae, a global leading women’s service organisation. It is run over three months. Selected candidates are offered the course free of charge.

Twenty-five women entrepreneurs are taking part in this year’s edition which is being funded, to the tune of Rs 200 000, by Lafarge Mauritius through its corporate social responsibility endeavour.

After completion of the programme, participants will be awarded cash prizes for best business plan, the most transformed business idea and the most innovative idea for marketing.

Medical Examinations
India-Mauritius collaboration

Mauritius is enlisting the support of the National Board of Examinations of India for the organisation of examinations for Pre-Registration House Officers and Dental Surgeons prior to their registration by the Medical and Dental Councils of Mauritius, respectively.

In this context, an Indian delegation led by Dr Vishwas Mehta, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Health of India, was in Mauritius from 16 to 21 June 2013.

The team had discussions with relevant stakeholders about the modalities for the setting up of such examinations. It is expected that following consultations with all parties concerned, a framework to carry such examinations will be proposed.