

Republic of Mauritius

White Paper

on

National Environment Policy (NEP)

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This White Paper defines the new National Environment Policy of the Republic of Mauritius, establishes a clear policy framework and sets appropriate environmental objectives and strategies. It is based on a review of key environmental issues, challenges and opportunities that are specific to our national context and it sets a policy framework under which we have to mainstream environmental considerations in all development programmes and projects. It serves as a guide and a tool for decision-making and action for both environmental management and economic development. The goal of this new environmental policy is therefore two-fold: it has to help in the management of our ecosystems which supports the economic growth of the country and it has to contribute to the improvement of the quality of life of the Mauritian population. This new policy will be implemented mainly through the revised National Environment Strategy and Action Plan detailing strategies and action plans and setting time-frames and targets.
- 1.2 In view of their specificities, specific chapters are dedicated to Rodrigues and other outer islands to better address their concerns, policies and strategies, on and above the overall policy framework for the Republic of Mauritius.
- 1.3 As a Small Island Developing State (SIDS), Mauritius has to face a number of inherent constraints and challenges. It is ecologically fragile and particularly vulnerable to natural disasters and to impacts of climate change. Our challenge is to ensure that all efforts to enhance economic resilience takes into account environmental protection and that all decision-making pertaining to development integrates economic, social and environmental considerations.
- 1.4 A prerequisite for an active environmental policy is the integration of environmental responsibility at all levels. In order to meet the challenges, Mauritius needs an environmentally conscious society where each citizen has the responsibility and duty to protect the environment. This policy emphasizes the importance of the need for all stakeholders to take an active part in environmental protection. A spirit of partnership must be realized throughout by all stakeholders.
- 1.5 Environmental policy-making has taken on an international dimension. Depletion of the ozone layer, global warming, effects of persistent organic pollutants, loss of biological diversity, exploitation of resources in our exclusive economic zone are some of the issues that necessitate regional and international cooperation. Environmental issues are also no longer restricted to environmental fora but are now also on the agenda of economic and political platforms such as the World Trade Organization, Multilateral Financial Institutions, the European Union amongst others. This policy will ensure that sustainable development is achieved through enhanced partnerships and networking with regional, sub-regional and international agencies and that appropriate information exchange and sharing of best practices are carried out.
- 1.6 Furthermore, this environment policy aims at taking into account social and cultural factors which encourage or discourage environmental protection, including gender-related considerations.

2.0 Rationale for a New Environment Policy

- 2.1 The present policies for environmental management are contained in several documents such as the National Environment Policy of 1991, the National Environmental Strategies of 1999, the National Forestry Policy of 2006 and other sectoral action plans. These policy documents need to be consolidated into a comprehensive policy statement in order to infuse a common approach for the various sectoral and cross-sectoral approaches to environmental management. As our development challenges have evolved over time, there is also a need to review the objectives, policy instruments and strategies. We also need a flexible policy framework with a built-in system for monitoring and review.
- 2.2 The need for a new policy is driven foremost by the fact that Sustainable Development is recognized as the dominant development paradigm in the present global context. Sustainability is one of the challenges of the new millennium. This environment policy framework, anchored in the concept of sustainable development, therefore incorporates the relevant recommendations of the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, the 2000 Millennium Development Summit, the 2002 Johannesburg World Summit and the 2005 Mauritius International Meeting on SIDS.
- 2.3 The Republic of Mauritius has stepped into the 21st century with important economic challenges. The 36% reduction in the guaranteed price of sugar, the dismantling of the multi-fibre agreement and the rising price of petroleum products have cumulated in increasing our economic vulnerability. Government has prepared an economic restructuring plan to consolidate the existing pillars of the economy and to develop new areas of growth such as Light Engineering, the Integrated Resort Scheme, Pharmaceutical, Information and Communication Technology, Marine Industry and Medical Tourism. Government is fully conscious that the long-term socio-economic success of the country is not possible without environmental sustainability and is therefore putting environmental concerns high on its agenda. A sustainable programme or project today needs to focus on growth, poverty alleviation, environmental management, gender and governance issues. There is ample evidence to show that whenever economic objectives of projects have solely been preferred, these projects have proved to be unsustainable ones.
- 2.4 The Government realizes that environment is a key driver of creativity, innovation and competitiveness across the world. This policy will ensure that investment in environmental sustainability leads to higher competitiveness.
- 2.5 The Government recognizes that there is a great potential for more growth in the tourism industry and associated Integrated Resort Schemes (IRS) projects. If we are to sustain the tourism industry, it is of crucial importance that the natural resources that nurture this industry be safeguarded. Mauritius must have a competitive edge on other countries offering similar tourism services and IRS projects and environmental quality can provide that competitive edge.
- 2.6 The Cleaner Production concept still remains to be widely adopted in the manufacturing industry, including SMEs, as well as in the services sector. We will also need to properly manage wastes generated from new industries such as from ethanol distilleries, sea-food industries and the Information and Communication

Technology companies. Consumerism is on the rise, bringing with it higher resources consumption and wastes generation. It will also be important to ensure that maximum economic, social and environmental benefits are obtained in the long term through the development of land released following sugar sector reforms.

- 2.7 Over the past two decades, Mauritius has graduated to an upper middle-income country leading to better quality of life in terms of economic prosperity. This has been followed by a change in life-styles and consumption patterns. Our present policy is production-focused and needs to integrate policies for sustainable consumption. While significant improvements can be made in resource efficiency (through initiatives such as Cleaner Production and Eco-efficiency) these environmental gains can be offset by increases in production associated with growing consumption patterns. On the whole, consumers are typically not exerting a powerful message in the market place for improved environmental performance, nor demonstrating a sufficient willingness to change their own consumption patterns. The present design of the production and consumption system is inadequate - rather than acting according to the circular principle of natural ecosystems, the flow of goods and services is essentially a linear system. Products are produced, purchased, used and dumped, with little regard to environmental efficiency and impacts. Government needs to develop a framework to enable a recycling-based society.
- 2.8 Given a greater emphasis and demand for environmental solutions, the Environment Industry will become a growth sector in the country and in the region. Government needs to work with the private sector to formalize this industry and encourage investment in it.
- 2.9 Our high dependence on fossil fuel and our proneness to exogenous shocks resulting from rising prices of oil products are increasing our vulnerability. Government will need to meet this challenge by developing renewable energy sources and increase national energy efficiency.
- 2.10 Government needs to diversify its environmental protection tools and approaches. New environmental policy instruments are more flexible than command and control approaches and stimulate innovation as well as reduce the costs of enforcement. For our new environmental policy to be effective, the best approach is to use a combination of instruments.
- 2.11 The Government considers it important that environmental policy should have a local basis and that people accept its importance. On the principle that local environmental problems should as a general rule be solved locally, the local authorities must be given additional responsibilities in many areas such as land management, waste management, community beautification programmes, enforcement and environmental awareness raising campaigns. This will need to be accompanied by the required authority and resources to be effective.
- 2.12 Mauritius needs to upgrade its built environment such that it is eventually recognised worldwide as a “Garden Island”. The new policy must ensure that an ambitious beautification programme, including countryside amelioration and landscape restructuring, is initiated and that higher quality architectural guidelines be adopted.

- 2.13 The need for a new policy also stems from the importance to have more effective collaboration and participation of major stakeholders in decision-making and project implementation. All major stakeholders including NGOs, Youth, Women, Private Sector, Religious leaders, Politicians, Academicians, and Researchers need to participate in the elaboration and implementation of sustainable development programmes and projects.
- 2.14 Environmental Education plays an important part in building a culture of environmental responsibility in Mauritians. The emphasis on environmental education needs to be strengthened through review of curricula and promotion of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities. Additionally, environmental education is a process and should target people of all ages in a sustainable development perspective.
- 2.15 This policy must also cater for the needs of cooperation at all levels as environmental policy making is more and more being considered from a regional and international perspective. Transboundary issues such as management of hazardous wastes, trade and environment aspects are addressed in various conventions to which Mauritius is party to. This policy will ensure that the provisions contained in the various Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) are implemented in synergy and that appropriate linkages are created to avoid duplication. Furthermore, as a member of the WTO, Government will ensure that environmental and trade policies are mutually supportive.
- 2.16 The National Environment Policy (2006) has been motivated by the above considerations and is intended to be a guide to action: in regulatory reforms, in implementation of programmes and projects for environmental protection and in stimulating partnerships between different stakeholders. It briefly describes the key environmental challenges currently and prospectively facing the country, the vision and objectives of the environmental policy, the guiding principles underlying policy action, the policy instruments used to arrive at targets, the strategic themes for intervention and the mechanisms for implementation and review.

3.0 Key Environmental Concerns and Challenges

This chapter summarises the main environmental concerns and challenges that are increasing the environmental vulnerability of the country. As a Small Island Developing State (SIDS), Mauritius has to face the following constraints and challenges which were confirmed in the Mauritius Strategy:

3.1 Land Resources

Mauritius is densely populated and has a limited area of land suitable for development. High quality land, particularly in prime coastal areas is scarce and is sought after by a variety of competing users. Key issues of concern include:

- Inadequately planned development especially in prime coastal areas
- Encroachment on environmentally sensitive areas
- Encroachment on coastal and inland green areas by inappropriate intrusion of concrete structures.
- Juxtaposition of conflicting land uses and need for proper integration of transport planning with land use
- Over-concentration of development in Central Business Districts of Towns and Villages.
- Loss of prime agricultural land to other uses.
- Lack of resources for upgrading and redevelopment of existing dilapidated urban areas

3.2 Water Resources

Despite high annual rainfall, Mauritius still needs to optimise collection and storage of water. With the present trend, it is expected that Mauritius might experience water stress conditions by 2025. Water availability can be a severe constraint to development if effective water resources management and sustainable water development are not pursued. The quality of water resources is also under threat due to industrial pollution, agricultural and urban runoff and sewage disposal. Key issues of concern include:

- Long term pressure on water resources and meeting demand during periods of drought
- Insufficient control of activities/land use in common aquifers recharge zones
- Degradation of watersheds
- Development of large dams
- Threat to groundwater quality from agricultural pollution, wastewater disposal and saltwater intrusion
- Pollution and eutrophication of river waters especially used for domestic water supply
- Collection, transport and treatment of wastewater
- Re-use of treated wastewaters/sludge
- Desalination
- High levels of unaccounted for water (UFW) in transmission and distribution networks.
- Impact of climate change and sea level rise on freshwater availability.

3.3 **Air Quality and Noise**

There is a clear link between air emissions and the use of fossil fuel in our economy. This dependence on fossil fuel means that air emissions will continue to rise as the economy develops. Rising emission levels from vehicles, industry and power plants cause localised air quality problems due to:

- Industrial pollution.
- Irregular maintenance of heavy vehicles engines, leading to high emissions of particulate matter and other pollutants
- High dependence on fossil fuels and poor energy efficiency in industry.
- Poor fuel quality
- Traffic congestion
- Inadequate air standards for industrial emissions
- Difficulty in enforcement of legislation
- Insufficient application of the Cleaner Production concept and air pollution control technologies in industry and other sectors.
- Lack of air quality modelling expertise useful to predict impacts.
- Lack of regular monitoring needed to identify causes, assess impacts and formulate policies to address poor air quality.
- Noise pollution

3.4 **Biodiversity**

The flora and fauna of Mauritius has evolved over time into a unique biological resource characterised by a high degree of endemism. However, direct exploitation of the resources, human settlement and development as well as introduction of invasive alien species have adversely affected this biodiversity. To date, the remaining 1.6% of land area under native forests will be at stake if not protected.

The main challenges are:

- Insufficient knowledge and awareness on local biodiversity
- Insufficient knowledge and management of biodiversity in marine and freshwater ecosystems.
- Insufficient protection of biodiversity in privately-owned forests
- Destruction of habitats and ecosystem
- Invasion by alien species
- Insufficient knowledge for optimum use of species of medicinal and other values
- Inadequate benefit sharing derived from biodiversity use.
- Unsustainable use of natural resources
- Loss of wetlands
- Loss of biodiversity in caves and lava tunnels

3.5 **Coastal Zone**

The coastal zone of Mauritius is of vital importance for its socio-economic development. The coastal system protects the island from the natural forces of the ocean, provides income through tourism and fisheries, and is the focus of many

leisure activities. Intense pressure from sea and land based activities threatens to prevent its full socio-economic potential from being realised. The main issues of concerns are:

- Inadequate management of coastal areas/ Absence of an Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) plan
- Quality of built environment, coastal planning and architectural designs.
- Beach erosion and other coastal processes
- Loss of wetlands
- Poor lagoon water quality, including eutrophication, in localised areas.
- Loss of biological diversity in the sea and on the coast including loss of mangroves and other coastal species.
- Pressure of urbanisation on the coastal belt
- Pollution from fishing boats, pleasure crafts and ships including ballast water management.
- Conflict of interest among the multiple resource users.
- Management of islets and outer islands
- Vulnerability of coastal resources to climate change and sea level rise.

3.6 **Wastes**

Mauritius has solid waste management problems that are typical of small island states. Mare Chicose landfill is nearing saturation and will require extension to cater for the increasing amount of waste being generated. Presently, there is limited treatment and disposal facility for the hazardous waste sector. Key issues of concern include:

- Littering and illegal dumping, including disposal of bulky wastes
- Limited reduction, reuse, recycling and recovery
- Social impacts associated with waste disposal facilities
- Social aspects, including gender issues, of consumption patterns.
- Obsolescence of electrical and electronic goods
- Absence of a chemical profile and monitoring mechanism for sound chemicals management.
- Disposal of obsolete chemicals including dangerous chemicals
- Cost of treatment and disposal
- Insufficient capacity for Hazardous Waste Treatment and Disposal, including for contaminated containers/packaging and wastewater sludge.
- Absence of waste segregation at source.

3.7 **Environment and Health**

Inadequate environmental management can lead to significant impacts on human health and ultimately on the economic development of the country. Key issues of concern include:

- Poor sanitation at household level and surrounding environment leading to spread of vector-borne diseases

- Littering and illegal waste dumping, causing the proliferation of rodents, pests and insect vectors
- Improper use of pesticides and herbicides, causing food contamination and pollution of water resources
- Lack of a proper hazardous waste management system
- Localized air pollution episodes at industrial hotspots and vehicular air emissions along major roads
- Insufficient capacity and capability for enforcement of existing systems and legislations
- Inadequate control of pests, such as stray animals.

4.0 Vision and Objectives of the NEP

4.1 Our Vision

For the Republic of Mauritius to reach environmental sustainability and for us to have a clean and healthy environment.

Our Future Environment

Mauritius has an environmentally-conscious population. It has adopted sustainable production and consumption patterns; has a well planned land development and management strategy/policy; is resource and energy efficient in all sectors of the economy; is making optimum use of renewable energy sources and is a recycling-based society; has a built environment characterized by good architectural guidelines, beautiful townscapes with green areas and outdoor recreational facilities, such that the country is recognized as the “Garden Island”. An effective partnership exists between all stakeholders and there is a strong environmental ethic in the citizen. All the key resources on the island are protected and managed effectively. We have a clean and healthy environment that Mauritians feel proud of.

4.2 Our Mission

To enable our Republic to attain the highest level of environmental quality as a means to enhance the quality of life of our citizens, preserve our natural environment and advance our competitiveness. This will be achieved through continued innovation and vibrant partnerships with all stakeholders.

4.3 Objectives of NEP

(i) Conservation of Environmental Resources

To protect and conserve critical ecological systems and resources, and invaluable natural and man-made heritage which are essential for life-support, livelihoods, economic growth and a broad conception of human well being.

(ii) Intra-generational Equity

To ensure equitable access to environmental resources and quality for all sections of society, and in particular for poor communities as well as taking into consideration gender equity.

(iii) Inter-generational Equity

To ensure judicious use of environmental resources to meet the needs and aspirations of present and future generations

(iv) Integration of Environmental Concerns in Economic and Social Development

To integrate environmental concerns into policies, plans, programmes, and projects for economic and social development.

- (v) **Achieve Sustainable Production and Consumption patterns**
To adopt sustainable production and consumption patterns, to ensure efficient use of energy and environmental resources and achieve a recycling-based society. To make optimum use of renewable energy sources such as bagasse, ethanol, solar and wind energy, biomass and agricultural wastes.
- (vi) **Achieve the “Garden Island” concept**
To have a built up environment characterised by good landscaping and architectural designs.
- (vii) **Enhancement of Partnerships across Society**
The cooperation and partnership across all sectors is crucial to meet sustainability challenges and to build an environmentally sustainable Mauritius for generation to come.
- (viii) **Development of Environmental Ethics in the Citizen**
To inculcate environment stewardship in the society for the responsible care of the environment.
- (ix) **Promotion of policy dialogue**
To develop a policy dialogue culture at all levels with stakeholders in order to ensure an effective participation of the citizen.

5.0 Guiding Principles

The Policy is based on the following guiding principles underlying the different strategies and action plans in environmental management:

- I **Human Beings are at the Centre of Environmental Sustainability**
Every person needs a clean and healthy environment.
- II **Environmental Stewardship**
All citizens shall have a responsibility and duty to protect the environment.
- III **Maintaining Basic Ecological Integrity**
The diversity, health and productivity of our ecosystems will be maintained and managed effectively.
- IV **Sustainability**
Sustainable Development shall be the preferred development paradigm and Government shall ensure that environmental concerns are mainstreamed in economic and social development.
- V **Precautionary Principle**
Where there are credible threats of serious or irreversible damage to key environmental resources, lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation.
- VI **Polluter Pays Principle**
Government shall adopt the required measures and instruments to encourage the rational use of environmental resources. Polluters shall have to bear the consequences of their activities.
- VII **Use of Appropriate Technology**
The use of appropriate (environmentally-friendly) technology is a strategic national consideration.
- VIII **Preventive Approach**
The strategy for precaution of environmental pollution threat is based on the principle of control at source. The following hierarchy will apply:-
 - (i) Avoidance of pollution generation, i.e. activities aimed at the reconstruction of manufacturing and consumption practices to reduce the burden of pollutants through Cleaner Production.
 - (ii) Recycling i.e. re-circulation of materials and resources; recuperation of energy, water and raw materials from wastes and utilisation of wastes to reduce emissions into the environment; and
 - (iii) Treatment and disposal.

IX Science and Knowledge

Government shall promote the use of best science and data for effective decision making. This information shall be accessible and understood by all stakeholders. Traditional knowledge shall also be given due recognition and be fully utilized.

X Partnerships

Real commitment to safeguard the environment can be taken when all stakeholders play their role fully. Government shall strengthen collaboration and partnership with all stakeholders and incorporate their input in decision making.

XI Decentralisation

Local Authorities will gradually be empowered to address environmental issues more effectively at local level.

XII Environmental Education and Awareness

The Mauritian population, especially children and youth, will be educated and sensitised on environmental issues with a view to involve them in conservation, protection and management of the environment.

XIII Environmental Governance and Accountability

Transparency, accountability and good environmental governance practices will be cornerstones of our environmental policies.

XIV Global Code of Conduct

International and regional agreements and treaties pertaining to environmental management will be fulfilled. Regional and international cooperation will complement national processes and capacity.

6.0 Environmental Policy Instruments

Our environmental policy instruments have so far focused on the command and control approach. We need to diversify and adopt policy tools that provide more flexibility, reduce costs of enforcement and stimulate innovation. Effective implementation of this new policy will be supported by the following instruments.

- 6.1 **Voluntary Agreements, Codes of Conduct and Practices** – Schemes whereby actors (usually industry) take firm commitments to improve their environmental performance beyond existing legal requirements.
- 6.2 **Legal and Institutional Instruments** – imposing obligations with respect to target actors and gradual decentralization of environmental protection activities and provide the right enabling environment for implementation.
- 6.3 **Enforcement and Monitoring Systems** – The establishment of an efficient system for the inspection of compliance to environmental laws and the establishment of a monitoring system to evaluate the effectiveness of policies.
- 6.4 **Financial Support Programmes** – Innovative financing mechanism will be devised for investment in cleaner technology, demonstrative programmes, projects and environmental audits in SMEs. The potential of the Clean Development Mechanism in infrastructural developments will be investigated.
- 6.5 **Capacity Building and Research** – Research projects aimed at the implementation of sustainable development is supported. Programmes to upgrade the capacity of key stakeholders to implement the policies.
- 6.6 **Market-based or Economic instruments** – to provide incentives to change the behaviour of producers and consumers.
- 6.7 **Environmental Education** – An essential goal of environmental education should be inspiring the desire to act for the cause of environmental protection. To educate the population of all ages, especially the Children and Youth as future custodians of environment.
- 6.8 **Information and Awareness Raising** - Collection and dissemination of environmental information is an essential part of the environmental policy.

Efficient application of policy instruments involves targeting them as directly as possible towards specific environmental problems. This will require close coordination of different types of instruments.

7.0 Strategies in Priority Thematic Areas

The foregoing statement of policy objectives and principles are to be realised by concrete actions in different areas relating to key environmental challenges. Strategies and outlines of actions to be taken in priority thematic areas are enumerated below:

7.1 Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity

Objective

The biodiversity shall be managed in such a way that it will ensure conservation of habitats and ecosystems, protection of native fauna and flora, enhance crop and animal production to meet food, health and other socio-economic needs of the growing population. Viable populations of naturally-occurring species will be maintained to ensure that biological diversity can continue to evolve.

National targets

- (i) A representative selection of habitats and ecosystems of the Republic of Mauritius shall be protected and managed for future generations.
- (ii) Major disturbances such as infrastructure development shall be avoided in threatened habitats and ecosystems e.g. in Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs) and in vulnerable ecosystems important ecological functions shall be maintained.
- (iii) Harvesting and other use of living resources including biota shall not cause species to become extinct or endangered.
- (iv) The introduction of alien species through human activity shall not damage or impair ecosystem functions.
- (v) Populations of threatened species shall be maintained or restored to viable levels.
- (vi) Enhance community access to nature areas and nature parks.
- (vii) Implement the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan and the approved National Forestry Policy.

Strategies and Policy Instruments

The Government will:

- Conserve and protect nature areas: Identify and document environmentally sensitive areas for land-use plans; continue to rehabilitate, enhance and manage native (indigenous & endemic) species.
- Promote public awareness and involve the public in nature conservation; document and update our biodiversity through regular biodiversity surveys; ensure that databases on biodiversity are readily accessible to users.
- Establish a Protected Area Network to manage ecosystems.
- Establish networking with local and international research institutions to exchange expertise and knowledge.

- Review the legal, economic and administrative policy instruments with a view to improving and coordinating the management of threatened, environmentally sensitive areas and private forests.
- To promote public/private partnership in biodiversity management.
- The obligations of biodiversity-related conventions, such as Ramsar, UNCCD and UNFCCC, shall be implemented through domestication of provisions into the local legislations to enable enforcement and compliance.
- Support the adoption of the Convention on Biodiversity guidelines, such as the one pertaining to biodiversity and tourism, by strengthening the national scientific and administrative knowledge base for its implementation.

7.2 Land-Use

Objective

To promote the sustainable use of land resources of Mauritius and achieve a holistic approach to land-use planning, which optimizes the economic, social and environmental benefits from land-use.

National Targets

- (i) Implement recommendations of the National Development Strategy and its operational plans. (The NDS also encompasses a number of sectoral plans such as the Integrated National Transport Sector Strategy).
- (ii) Not to sacrifice long term environmental sustainability for short term development benefits.
- (iii) Identify and map Environmentally Sensitive Areas to ensure their effective management and protection.
- (iv) Protect, manage and develop forest ecosystems.
- (v) Build capacity for Strategic Environment Assessments.
- (vi) Gradually decentralize Enforcement and Monitoring Activities to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and Local Authorities.
- (vii) Establish guidelines and carrying capacity for key activities and sectors in different zones.
- (viii) Integrate land use planning and infrastructural developments (e.g. transport, wastewater treatment, water supply etc) within the planning framework.
- (ix) Ensure implementation of recommendations of the National Sugar Sector Strategic Plan whereby 60,000ha of land will be mechanised and 33,000ha put under irrigation.

Strategies and Policy Instruments

The Government will:

- Improve the efficiency of land-use planning through the appropriate legislative framework: A new Land Area Management System (LAMS) will be introduced; Outline Schemes will be regularly reviewed.

- Integrate environmental considerations in land-use planning. Carrying capacity will be determined prior to development; Post-EIA monitoring will be reinforced.
- Create an enabling environment for sustainably enhancing agricultural productivity and promoting agricultural diversification and food security. In the context of the sugar sector reforms, research shall be undertaken on alternative value-added crops and alternative uses of sugar-cane released lands.
- Enhance capacity of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and the Local Authorities to undertake enforcement and monitoring activities.
- Develop a clear strategy plan for tourism development and the sustainable development of Rodrigues, Agalega, St Brandon and other islets.
- Upgrade skills on strategic planning.
- Enhance sensitisation, awareness and communication strategies for sound land uses.
- Promote the conservation of agricultural land and improvement in quality of food crops, with specific programmes targeting women (especially unofficial women farmers).

7.3 Water Resources Management

Objective

Ensure the sustainability of water supply both in terms of quantity and quality and maintain the ecological functions of our aquatic ecosystems.

National Targets

- (i) Ensure reliable water supply (*in terms of quality and quantity*) for domestic, agricultural and industrial uses.
- (ii) Ensure that surface and ground water quality continues to meet standards and guidelines.
- (iii) Achieve significant water conservation in industry, domestic and agriculture sectors.
- (iv) Sustainable re-use of treated wastewaters.
- (v) Develop and implement a water quality indexing system for our surface waters
- (vi) Preserve the ecological integrity of our aquatic ecosystems.
- (vii) Ensure water quality by managing watersheds on a sustainable basis.
- (viii) Establish protection perimeters and levels for rivers, lakes, reservoirs and boreholes.
- (ix) Increase areas under forest in catchment areas.

Strategies and Policy Instruments

The Government will:

- Promote the Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) approach.
- Promote the Sustainable Production and Consumption concept in the water sector.

- Manage Water Demand through optimised water use in industries, through water conservation programmes in households, e.g. through appropriate sensitisation, tariffs and water pricing, reduction of potable water losses in the transmission and distribution network.
- To pursue the modernisation of irrigation systems to make it more efficient and effective.
- Ensure water quality by working in partnership with all industries to ensure that they do not pollute water resources through cleaner production techniques, regulations, economic instruments and water quality monitoring.
- Implement sustainable wastewater collection, treatment and disposal systems.
- Enhance physicochemical and biological water quality monitoring systems.
- Encourage Innovation and Education by reaching out to the public and raising their awareness about the importance of protecting our water resources and by tapping on international expertise and knowledge to keep abreast with best practices in water resources management. Consolidate water education at the formal level.
- Promote research on novel water treatment technologies, water conservation techniques and on sustainable re-use of treated wastewaters.
- Consider mandating the installation of water-saving devices in building regulations.
- Optimise re-use of treated wastewater.

7.4 Air Quality and Noise

Objective

Air pollution and noise problems shall be prevented or minimised to protect health and increase welfare of the citizens.

National Targets

- (i) The ambient air quality standards shall be met.
- (ii) Introduction and reinforcement of sectoral air emission standards such as for Power Plants, Industries and Incinerators.
- (iii) Introduce an Air Quality Indexing system to communicate air quality to the public.
- (iv) Vehicle emissions shall meet national standards.
- (v) Enhance public transportation as an attractive alternative to private cars.
- (vi) Encourage the use of bicycles to ease traffic congestion.
- (vii) Encourage renewable and clean energy.
- (viii) Noise pollution shall be reduced drastically from the present level.

Strategies and Policy Instruments

The Government will:

- Adopt an integrated approach towards air pollution control comprising prevention, enforcement, monitoring and education.
- Introduce incentives to promote the use of renewable energy sources.

- Promote energy efficiency in all economic sectors through cleaner production technologies, energy label schemes, educational materials and energy audit schemes in industry and business community.
- Reduce Emissions from Industry, power plants and incinerators by raising energy efficiency and through the use of best available technologies for pollution control.
- Reduce vehicular emissions by reviewing vehicular and fuel quality regulatory standards periodically; promote the switch from conventional to green vehicles and encourage more commuters to use mass transport system.
- Draw up a cost effective strategy for policy instruments to achieve the national target for noise reduction.
- Cluster polluting SMEs in dedicated zones.
- Ensure proper land-use planning and improve impact assessments through the use of Air and Noise modelling.
- Strengthen the monitoring and enforcement capacity of all enforcing agencies to ensure strict compliance to air and noise regulations and standards.

7.5 *Marine/Coastal Zone Management*

Objective

Sustainable use and development of the coastal zone through Integrated Coastal Zone Management targeting multiple objectives (e.g. tourism, fisheries, conservation), as well as of the marine resources in the Exclusive Economic Zone.

National Targets

- (i) Preserve the ecological integrity of the coastal zone ecosystems, including mangroves and coastal wetlands.
- (ii) Zoning of lagoons.
- (iii) Increase Marine Protected Areas.
- (iv) Improve ecological assessment and monitoring of coral reef ecosystem.
- (v) Improve lagoonal water quality.
- (vi) Improve public access to prime beaches.
- (vii) Provide and upgrade public beach infrastructure and amenities.
- (viii) Control of beach erosion through appropriate technology.
- (ix) Control pass creation or enlargement.
- (x) Harmonise coastal development with its surrounding environment taking into account its carrying capacity.
- (xi) Encourage all tourism and tourism-related enterprises to adopt eco-labelling schemes and implement Environmental Management Systems.
- (xii) Minimise pollution from nautical activities.
- (xiii) Improve islet management and development.
- (xiv) Protect and enhance the coastal heritage.

Strategies and Policy Instruments

The Government will:

- Establish a comprehensive ICZM framework for the planning of the coastal zone
- Strengthen collaboration within the ICZM framework to avoid duplication of work and to make judicious use of resources.
- Develop a strategy for capacity building related to ICZM. This will include capacity building in operation and maintenance of wastewater treatment plants. Local expertise and traditional knowledge will be encouraged.
- Enhance Socio-Economic Resilience by ensuring the sustainable harvest of marine resources to sustain the sea food hub.
- Encourage offshore fishing vis-à-vis artisanal lagoonal fishing
- Enhance Public-Private-Community partnerships in community beautification programmes and to upgrade coastal amenities.
- Promote a sustainable tourism industry, including ecotourism, and work towards a 'Green destination' status for Mauritius.
- Improve Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) system related to coastal zone developments.
- Further develop capacity in policing our EEZ and its resources.
- Promote Regional and International Cooperation under the various Multilateral Environment Agreements (MEAs), *inter alia*, the Nairobi Convention dealing with the protection, management and development of the marine and coastal environment.

7.6 The Built Environment

Objective

To achieve a sustainable built environment through smart growth characterized, amongst others, by quality architectural designs, aesthetically pleasant surroundings with green spaces and recreational facilities for all inhabitants.

National Targets

- (i) Government will adopt a policy of integrated design and architectural coherence for the built environment including energy-efficient building designs and use of eco-friendly materials. Awareness will be raised among stakeholders.
- (ii) Develop and implement a Community Beautification programme in all districts of the Republic in partnership with the private sector, community organisations and the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and local authorities.
- (iii) Implement a continuous tree-planting campaign for the greening of our built-up areas.
- (iv) Local Authorities will provide free advisory services on design and architecture in accordance with Planning Policy Guidance.
- (v) Abate eyesores such as derelict buildings and illegal poster-sticking through proper regulations

- (vi) Develop recreational areas and green spaces.
- (vii) Preserve the built and cultural heritage sites.
- (viii) Establish new constructions and building standards in the context of climate change and Tsunami.
- (ix) Rationalise urban-related practices to enhance the environment. (including urban drainage system, refuse collection, greening of the environment and creation of more parks and garden, all as vital temperature regulating factors).

Strategies and Policy Instruments

Government will:

- Review of the legal framework for the promotion of energy efficiency in buildings.
- Encourage public-private-community partnerships for National Community Beautification Programmes.
- Clustering of activities and transport to reduce traffic congestion and vehicular emissions.
- Encourage public and mass transportation systems.
- Facilitate efforts to create green spaces and recreational facilities in rural and urban areas.
- Promote the organization of activities and competitions and recognize such undertakings.
- Raise awareness on the need for good design of the built environment for its social, environmental and economic benefits.
- Promote the development of skills in design and landscaping through education and capacity building.
- Ensure high architectural design quality in all permitting and licensing system.
- Urge all local authorities to develop a local Agenda 21 plan taking all above into consideration.
- Consider incentives for the preservation of built and cultural heritage.

7.7 *Environment and Health*

Objective

To improve human health and quality of life through environmental management.

National Targets

- (i) Manage the risks posed by chemicals, hazardous and radioactive wastes and other pollutants.
- (ii) Collect, handle, treat and dispose of all solid and hazardous wastes in an environmentally sound manner.
- (iii) Protect drinking water resources from pollution.
- (iv) Domesticated and implement provisions of relevant Multilateral Environmental Agreements.
- (v) Develop a dedicated program of Sound Management of Chemicals, and National Database on Chemical Substances and Hazardous Wastes.

- (vi) Encourage clean-up campaigns in collaboration with all stakeholders to minimize incidence of environment-related infectious diseases.
- (vii) Strengthen enforcement of regulations against littering/dumping and unsanitary conditions.
- (viii) Manage human-induced and natural disasters effectively.

Strategies and Policy Instruments

Government will

- Ensure that adequate measures are taken to eliminate and minimize environmental health impacts of development projects.
- Consider the use of economic instruments to reduce pollution load and disposal of chemicals and wastes in the environment.
- Rally the support of all Mauritians to attain a higher standard of environmental hygiene.
- Review the legislative and institutional framework for a more effective enforcement against unsanitary conditions.
- Consolidate policies and good practices for the sound management of chemicals, radioactive and hazardous wastes for the welfare of workers and the public.
- Ensure that the provisions of Multilateral Environmental Agreements related to environmental health are effectively implemented.
- Ensure development of contingency plans as a national and regional preparedness measure in the event of human induced and natural disasters.
- Develop an appropriate national and regional network for sharing information and expertise towards improved environmental health.
- Improve pest management, in particular stray animals.

7.8 Sustainable Production and Consumption

Objective

Achieve sustainable consumption and production patterns

National Targets

- (i) Set up and operationalise the National Cleaner Production Centre in the short term.
- (ii) Reduce significantly material and energy consumption within manufacturing organisations through eco-efficiency tools.
- (iii) Develop and implement market-based instruments to foster energy efficiency and increase the generation of renewable energy.
- (iv) Promote an Environment Industry contributing to the GDP in the short to medium term.
- (v) Ensure that the business sector has regular Environmental Reporting.

- (vi) Introduce a Government Green Procurement Policy.
- (vii) Promote green consumerism.
- (viii) Promote sustainable farming and develop a food security plan.
- (ix) Promote clean and affordable technology

Strategies and Policy Instruments

Government will

- Develop a 10-year framework of programmes in support of national initiatives to accelerate the shift towards sustainable consumption and production.
- Encourage industry to adopt cleaner production through applying regulations, using economic instruments; providing support measures and obtaining external assistance; encourage financial institutions to incorporate sustainable development considerations in their decision-making processes.
- Consider making Cleaner Production Opportunity Assessments mandatory through regulations.
- Provide consumers as well as producers with incentives to move towards more sustainable consumption patterns and lifestyle choices:
 - Lead by example through green procurement policies that promote the diffusion of environmentally sound goods and services;
 - Provide a consistent policy framework through awareness raising schemes;
 - Encourage community-based debates that question and challenge the sustainability of current production and consumption patterns.
- Strengthen the Enforcement Capacity for industrial pollution control.
- Design information and training programmes to assist SMEs to achieve sustainable production.
- Encourage industries to adopt voluntary policy instruments such as environmental management systems, Codes of Conduct, Certification and public environmental reporting, taking into account such initiatives such as the ISO Standards and the Global Reporting Initiative Guidelines on Sustainability reporting. Introduce an Environmental Reporting Award to give recognition to such companies.
- Develop an aggressive awareness raising campaign on the importance of sustainable production and consumption patterns, targeting among others our youth, through inter alia, education, public and consumer information, advertising and other media.
- Consider the use of Life Cycle Assessments and Product Service Systems tools in policy-making
- Consider the introduction of Eco-labelling schemes and Environmental Product Declarations as consumer information tools.

- Enhance the use of market-based instruments such as environmental taxes in order to support sustainable production and consumption patterns.
- Develop opportunities for the Environment Industry.
- To pursue and consolidate the development of a modern non sugar sector, whilst improving standards of living of the population and increasing demand for better and safer food products.
- To promote the installation of underground electricity lines.

7.9 Energy and Environment

Objective

To meet national energy needs with increased efficiency and environmental sustainability.

National Targets

- (i) Achieve significant energy conservation in all sectors of economy in the short to medium term.
- (ii) Increase the share of renewable energy in the energy mix.

Strategies and Policy Instruments

Government will:

- Develop a national action plan on sustainable consumption of energy.
- Promote energy conservation through the efficient use of energy in industrial, domestic, buildings and transport sectors.
- Promote access to energy-efficient technologies, renewable energy and advanced clean energy technologies that are affordable and readily adaptable to the island.
- Establish a National Cleaner Production Centre in the short to medium term.
- Introduce energy and fuel-economy labelling schemes.
- Promote access to better fuel quality
- Encourage demonstration projects on renewable energy (e.g. solar, biomass).
- Enhance power generation such as through combined heat and power (CHP) technologies.
- Encourage co-regulation of emissions from stationary sources e.g. by industry
- Explore ways to increase the use of biofuels such as ethanol to reduce dependency on fossil fuel.
- Make maximum use of instruments contained in MEAs such as the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM).
- Investigate the use of "Carbon offset" programs in the tourism sector whereby informed tourists can make up for the carbon dioxide their trips have created by supporting programs for planting trees and energy-saving projects in Mauritius.

7.10 Waste minimisation

Objective

Wastes shall be managed in a manner that it further promotes minimisation and reduces environmental and health impacts. Resource use will be optimized through waste minimization, reuse and recycling.

National Targets

- (i) The growth in the quantity of waste generated shall remain lower than the rate of economic growth.
- (ii) Raise the overall recycling rate of Municipal Solid Wastes to 25%.
- (iii) Setting up of a hazardous waste treatment facility.
- (iv) Reduce and eventually eliminate anti-social behaviours (littering and illegal dumping).
- (v) Optimise resource recovery.

Strategies and Policy Instruments

The Government will:

- Develop an Integrated Sustainable Solid Waste Management (ISSWM) Strategy.
- Ensure the setting up of a sustainable collection and recycling infrastructure for key waste streams.
- Increase recycling of organic and green waste by promoting projects in composting and public awareness raising campaigns.
- Ensure that Local Agenda 21 processes in the local authorities prompt measures to improve waste management solutions by involving local inhabitants and the business community.
- Reinforce the environmentally sound management of waste treatment and disposal facilities.
- Reduce waste at source.
- Promote a culture of active participation in waste minimization and recycling across all sectors and including gender considerations.
- Develop a consumer market for recycled products to enhance the viability of recycling.
- Encourage the development of an environment industry through incentives, capacity building, research and innovation.
- Consider the use of economic instruments to promote recycling and the introduction of fiscal measures on the use of hazardous materials.
- Provide a legal framework for establishing a recycling based society to promote waste recycling measures. Centered on this legislation, individual regulations will be established to include the following: effective utilization of resources, container and packaging, Extended Producer Responsibility, Construction Material Recycling, Food Recycling, green procurement etc.

- Develop a mechanism for generators to meet the cost of treatment and disposal of waste.
- Establish a National Waste Information System that will allow the compilation, processing and dissemination of data on wastes.
- Provide the appropriate infrastructure to encourage and improve recycling.

7.11 *Natural and Man-made Disasters Management*

Objective

The objective of Government is to enhance preparedness of the country so as to address the impacts of extreme weather events, climate change and sea level rise and other environmental disasters (*including Tsunamis and earthquakes*).

National Targets

- (i) Improve national and regional coordination for early warning systems.
- (ii) Enhance the preparedness of the local population.
- (iii) Improve land use planning including coastal zones as a means to mitigate the impacts of disasters.
- (iv) Prepare an integrated action plan to better respond and adapt to impacts of climate change, sea level rise, tsunamis and other disasters.
- (v) Set up a panel of experts for disaster management.

Strategies and Policy Instruments

Government will:

- Continuously improve its early warning system and response contingency plans to enhance the security of the population.
- Further upgrade plans to respond more efficiently to disasters and for prompt restoration following the event.
- Reinforce regional and local networking for information sharing and for the early warning system.
- Reinforce/ implement policies/guidelines for mitigation of disasters.
- Promote capacity building in the field of disaster management.
- Introduce gender considerations in disaster preparedness.

7.12 *Environmental Governance*

Objective

Transparency, accountability and good governance practices will be cornerstones of environmental policies.

National Targets

- (i) Set up an environment court.
- (ii) Develop Sustainable Development Indicators to provide a basis for measuring progress.
- (iii) Publish State of Environment Reports every five years.
- (iv) Encourage environmental stewardship in all sectors, including as part of Corporate Social Responsibility.
- (v) Establish a mechanism to ensure environmental grievances are effectively addressed;
- (vi) Comply with obligations under bilateral and Multilateral Environmental Agreements to which Mauritius is party.
- (vii) Introduce a Natural Resource Accounting System in Mauritius.

Strategies and policies

Government will:

- Increase participation and accountability for environmental performance.
- Ensure that there is corporate responsibility to care for the environment.
- Strengthen environmental monitoring and reporting systems and ensure that the citizen is given better access to environmental information through the website and other multi-media tools.
- Motivate all private and public actors to integrate environmental considerations into their activities.
- Strengthen the institutional and legislative framework for enforcement.
- Designate an Ombudsman for environment.
- Further encourage participation of private sector, local communities and the public through the local Agenda 21 action plans and other related instruments.

7.13 Capacity Building, Research and Innovation

Objective

Ensure continuous capacity building activities in all sectors and facilitate the implementation of environmental policies to meet the challenge of sustainability through research and innovation.

National Targets

- (i) Ensure the provision of up-to-date information and regular training in key areas for public and private sector.
- (ii) Consider the setting up of a Centre for Environmental Education including training in collaboration with tertiary institutions. This will be a one-stop centre for training in environmental skills and management, catering for both local and regional customers.

- (iii) Ensure the provision of funds for the financing of innovative eco-efficient projects submitted by research institutions, educational institutions, businesses, NGOs and individuals.
- (iv) Promote the integration of sustainability thinking into the innovation process of research institutions as well as in businesses through capacity building and awareness-raising.
- (v) Enhance Research & Development.

Strategies and Policy Instruments

Government will:

- Strengthen collaboration with educational institutions/Academia to design tailor made courses for professionals in the field of Environmental Management and sustainable development.
- Consolidate and promote life-long education programmes for the general public including the school community and other target groups.
- Strengthen the capacity of enforcing agencies through regular capacity building activities.
- Promote research in education for environment and sustainability.
- Promote research on cleaner and more efficient industrial processes, renewable energy resources, sustainable agricultural practices, control of vector-borne diseases, risk management, beach erosion, chemicals and hazardous waste management and other sectors.
- Promote the environment industry in Mauritius through greater use of technology and capacity building.
- Stay at the forefront of innovation and adopt best practices from the world to achieve environmental sustainability.

7.14 *Environmental Education and Awareness*

Objective

To reinforce environmental education and awareness to develop an environmentally literate population in order to enhance environmental protection and stewardship.

National Targets

- (i) Further integrate environmental issues in the educational curricula at pre-primary, primary, secondary and tertiary level.
- (ii) Improve access to environmental information.
- (iii) Prepare and implement the National Action Plan on Environmental Education
- (iv) Launch Award Schemes to recognize outstanding individuals, organizations and companies that are role models of environmental protection.
- (v) Consolidate awareness campaigns on environment topics through the media, dissemination of brochures, pamphlets, leaflets and through electronic media to students and the general public.
- (vi) Promote value-based environmental education.

Strategies and policy instruments

Government will:

- Encourage networking to make optimum use of expertise at all levels including NGOs and CBOs to promote environmental education and awareness.
- Optimise the use of the Environment Information System.
- Integrate national sustainable development strategies and environmental education within the education system in the framework of the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, 2005-2014.
- Promote environmental education and awareness programme targeting all those in public and private sectors whose activities affect the environment as well as to the general public.
- Highlight public information policy.
- Engage children and youths on issues pertaining to the environment.
- Encourage children and youth, especially girls and women, to study science and increase their knowledge on environmentally sustainable practices.
- Foster responsible environmental ethics in school children through co-curricular and extra-curricular activities.
- Consider the possibility of having environmental education as a cross-curricular context at tertiary level.
- Develop new strategies with the media to promote sustainable development.
- Develop a communication strategy to disseminate environmental information through the media.
- Work closely with institutions having common interest in environmental issues including the cultural heritage.
- Optimise use of ICT as an environmental education tool.

7.15 *Community Partnerships*

Objective

Achieve a close partnership among the public sector, private sector and the community for an environmentally-conscious nation.

National Targets

- (i) Strengthen joint public, private and community sectors ownership of environmental concerns.
- (ii) Build stronger partnerships between the public, private and community sectors for environmental protection and land use planning.
- (iii) All local authorities will develop local agenda 21 in the short term which emphasises on community partnership.
- (iv) Organize an 'environment week' as well as similar events.
- (v) Annual submission of environmental projects for consideration for funding.
- (vi) Set up focus groups discussion on key environmental issues.

Strategies and Policy Instruments

Government will

- Encourage Environmental NGO/CBOs activities
- Encourage focus group discussions through the National Network on Sustainable development
- Develop an action plan for partnership activities throughout the year including environment weeks and cleaning-up campaigns.
- Encourage partnerships through Local Agenda 21 action plans developed by local authorities.

7.16 Institutional, Legislative and Planning Framework

Objective

Government will reinforce existing institutional and legislative framework to create a strong and effective policy and enforcement system. It will also ensure that all national and local development plans fully integrate environmental concerns.

National Targets

- (i) As part of a Local Agenda 21, establish and maintain various environmental committees at local level to ensure more effective coordination in environmental decision-making processes and implementation.
- (ii) Review the membership and accountability of the Environment Coordination Committee and the Environment Liaison Officer Committee.
- (iii) All Ministries to carry out an audit of implementation of existing legislation.
- (iv) Strengthen enforcement and environmental monitoring planning at the local level.
- (v) All Local Authorities shall ensure that development is done according to proper environmental planning.
- (vi) Setting up of an Investigation Unit or Prosecution Unit to deal with cases related to environmental offences.
- (vii) Setting up a body to certify and validate new technologies being transferred and marketed at national level.

Strategies and Policy Instruments

Government will:

- Provide the necessary legislative and institutional framework as well as resources to implement the National Environment Policy.

- Conduct regular review of the relevance and appropriateness of all Government policies, strategies, plans, programmes, legislation, norms and standards impacting on the environment in order to fine-tune them with the NEP.
- Develop a coordinated approach to the integration of environmental concerns in the policy processes of all public institutions.
- Carry out periodic review of the National Environment Strategy (NES).
- Ensure that the NES shall be the key instrument for national environmental planning and implementation of development programmes.
- Develop guidelines and set standards for EIAs. Ensure public participation through mandatory stakeholder consultation by the proponent during the preparation of the EIA.
- To further empower the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and the local authorities to undertake decentralized environmental management.
- Strengthen the capacity of all relevant institutions for effective ex-post monitoring and control.

7.17 *Regional and International Cooperation*

Objective

To have an effective collaboration with various regional and international organization in order to solve environmental problems

National Targets

- (i) Continue to work closely with regional and inter-governmental organisations, such as the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) countries, on common environmental concerns.
- (ii) Remain committed to international environmental efforts and obligations under international environment treaties
- (iii) Government will undertake a capacity building exercise to enhance the negotiation skills of its technicians for effective participation in environmental negotiations at international level
- (iv) Implement in the short term the recommendations of the National Implementation Plan for the management of Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs).
- (v) Domesticating the provisions of MEAs and implement action plans on other conventions and protocols
- (vi) Government will upgrade the capacity to effectively manage scarce ODA and sustain performance to attract renewed ODA.

Strategies and Policy Instruments

Government will:

- Intensify collaboration with partners at regional and global levels to tackle environmental challenges

- Enhance SIDS-SIDS cooperation within the AIMS region and the other SIDS for optimum resource utilization.
- Seize the benefits of globalisation and improve competitiveness. Relationships with countries with which Mauritius holds historical relations as well as with other development partners will be reinforced.
- Give the necessary support to work out the SADC Environment Protocol to enhance environmental protection in the sub region.
- Enhance the mechanism and collaborate fully with the IOC to enable a successful implementation of the Mauritius Strategy.
- Stage international environmental events that could help to facilitate transfer of best practices.
- Enhance and explore environmental agreements with partner countries.

8.0 Rodrigues

8.1 Background

The strategies and policy instruments in chapter 7 of this White Paper are intended to improve environmental management across the whole Republic of Mauritius, including Rodrigues. However, in view of specificities of Rodrigues, additional concerns, strategies and policy instruments have been elaborated below.

8.2 Introduction

As in the case for mainland Mauritius, Rodrigues strongly relies on its natural resources and is exposed to extreme climatic conditions including frequent cyclones, droughts, tsunamis, and floods which cause damage to infrastructure and economic and social activity. Its vulnerability stems from factors including isolation from the national centre of commerce and government, narrow economic base, fragile ecology, underdeveloped public services and a small traditional business sector with little technical development. Hence, the need to avoid standardization. One of the main objectives of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly is to make of Rodrigues an ecological island.

8.3 Rationale for a New Environment Policy

During this past decade, Rodrigues has undergone several major developments. In fact, the island has experienced an accelerated growth in almost all sectors including agriculture, fisheries, housing and industrial sectors among others. However, all these developments have obviously had great impacts on the environment of Rodrigues.

Rodrigues has particular problems with regards to deforestation, soil erosion, water availability and storage, siltation in lagoons, lagoon sand extraction and squatting.

The forthcoming development and new global challenges will further impact on Rodrigues environment. As such, much needs to be done to ensure an ecologically sustainable development, including by preserving the cultural identity of Rodrigues in this process.

Rodrigues has embarked on a change wagon. In 2002, a directly elected Regional Assembly was established in Rodrigues giving powers for local planning and management of the island's economy. An Island Development Strategy (2002) was also adopted and provides for better land use, improvement in services, better communications and transport, the attraction of inward investment and the diversification of the economy.

8.4 Key Environmental Concerns and Challenges

This section summarises the critical sectors in the field of environment which require focus and where actions can be proposed.

8.4.1 Land Resources

Rodrigues has been severely deforested over a long period of time and farming and cattle grazing, the mountainous terrain and cyclonic rains have exacerbated soil erosion which has reduced soil fertility.

Biodiversity remains threatened, although reforestation programmes are being undertaken to assist in curbing soil erosion and prevent further species decline. Squatting has occurred throughout the island due to significant delays in processing lease applications and lack of enforcement over many years. Key issues of concern include:

- Poor land use management and inadequately planned development
- Insufficient awareness of major stakeholders of land-related issues, such as land use planning, economic/social/ecological value of scenic landscape
- Lack of enforcement of legislations, such as cattle walk regulations
- Absence of legislation to compel lessees to maintain soil fertility and carry out anti erosive works onto plot of leased State land
- Land degradation, unsustainable agricultural practices and land pollution
- Land tenure

8.4.2 Water Resources

There are severe problems in Rodrigues with regard to water supply. Many homes have limited supply even though piped water connections exist. Harvesting of rainwater, which is not yet widespread, is a key issue as is replenishing of aquifers and groundwater supplies. There is no centralized sewerage system. Key issues of concern include:

- Lack of storage capacity and insufficient supply of water to users
- Lack of research into water resources affecting health and quality of life
- Lack of irrigation system, which hinders agricultural productivity and development of agro-processing industry
- Weak institutional framework for water management
- Absence of testing, analytical and monitoring facilities of water resources
- Absence of cost recovery charges for water supply
- Unaccounted for water (UFW)
- Saltwater intrusion in underground freshwater resources.

8.4.3 Coastal Zone Resources

The lagoon is under pressure from unsustainable fishing practices which have destroyed coral and over-exploited fish stocks. The tourism industry is in its infancy but has tended to concentrate on the coast. The impact of silt, resulting from land erosion, on the lagoon has recently been shown however to have had little adverse effect on marine eco-systems. Key issues of concern include:

- Unsustainable use and planning of coastal zone
- Absence of monitoring on coastal water quality, coral health, sand mining, wetlands and other coastal resources

- Inadequate management of islets
- Beach erosion
- Absence of mapping of sensitive areas
- Lagoon sand extraction
- Insufficient awareness of coastal issues like the sustainable use of the coastal zone, its economic/social and ecological benefits
- Management of passes
- Over fishing of the lagoons with destructive fishing practices depleting fish stock
- Lack of upland management practices that would protect the lagoon and reef ecosystem (sewage network/treatment, animal straying causing erosion, soil conservation and sediment control, effluent control from agriculture)
- Lack of ICZM plan for the island

8.4.4 Biodiversity

Rodrigues now has the dubious distinction of being one of the most degraded tropical islands in the world, although both its terrestrial and marine biodiversity importance remains high. Most of the genetic diversity of all currently cultivated crop species and reared livestock species originate from crops and livestock introduced in the remote as well as recent past. Key issues of concern include:

- Absence of a Terrestrial Protected Area Network
- Absence of gene bank allowing genetic erosion
- Marine Protected Area Network not yet developed
- Invasive Alien Species is a threat to the maintenance of ecosystem services, mainly *Accacia nilotica*
- Absence of contingency plan for the conservation of the Rodriguan fruit bat after/during cyclones
- Insufficient inventory/baseline data of biodiversity resources.
- No initiative to identify/assess overseas holdings of Rodriguan genetic resources and specimens so as to secure access and benefit sharing.
- Poor phytosanitary controls/ hybridisation/ loss of genetic characteristics
- Customary grazing practice
- Lack of capacity and resources
- Lack of scientific monitoring

8.4.5 Wastes

The growing population together with the growing number of visitors and patterns of increased consumption are producing greater volumes of solid waste, though the level of consumption is still relatively low in Rodrigues. Key issues of concern include:

- Lack of individual and collective responsibilities – lack of awareness in waste reduction activities
- Absence of community based rural collection programmes
- Pollution by plastic carry bags, empty bottles, used batteries, rocks, used oil, used tyres etc...
- Fragmented approach to waste management and absence of policies

- Inadequate waste collection, treatment and disposal facilities
- Absence of research in innovative waste management technologies

8.4.6 Education, awareness and sensitization

Environmental education and associated activities aim at fostering a sense of personal environmental responsibility and a greater motivation and commitment towards the protection and management of the environment to make of Rodrigues an ecological island.

Key issues of concern include:

- Insufficient aspects of the local environment in the primary school curriculum.
- Insufficient environmental issues addressed in secondary level curricula.
- lack of awareness in the individual citizen on his/her rights and responsibilities to adopt environmental stewardship
- lack of best environmental practices

8.4.7 Environmental Sanitation

Properties in rural areas and small settlements are generally served by on-plot septic tanks and soakaways. Currently there is no system of building regulation inspection and many of the installed septic tanks have been poorly designed and constructed and consequently contribute to pollution of adjacent properties, water courses and potentially the important groundwater resources. Key issues of concern include:

- disposal of noxious and offensive matters in public bins or in public places
- defective sole septic tank with waste water leaching field
- animal straying/contamination of water
- poor drainage system
- absence of a pest management plan

8.4.8 Institutional framework for environmental management

The present institutional arrangements for environmental protection and natural resources management in Rodrigues have developed on an incremental basis over a long period. The island lacks a comprehensive regional environmental policy. Key issues of concern include:

- Insufficient capacity (staff and resources) to undertake broad environmental management responsibilities
- Weak legal and institutional framework
- Absence of a laboratory and documentation centre
- Scattered responsibilities amongst different stakeholders resulting in insufficient coordination and environmental issues being managed in a fragmented approach

8.4.9 Living environment and national heritage/culture

The natural beauty and scenic landscape setting of the countryside, particularly the mountains and hill tops, should be protected for their unique character and not just their ecological value. They form landscape features and provide distinctive backdrop to most settlements on the island. Key issues of concern include:

- Lack of management of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
- Lack of awareness of the economic and social role of the scenic landscape setting of the countryside and their ecological value.
- Absence of built environment of local distinctiveness.
- Heritage are not identified and protected enough.
- No measures to develop intangible cultural heritage.

8.4.10 Global issues

Rodrigues by the nature of its size and isolation is exposed to extreme weather conditions and is particularly vulnerable to threat of natural and environmental disasters and have very limited capacity to respond to and recover such disasters. Key issues of concern are:

- Climate change and sea level rise
- Tsunami
- Change in the migratory path of pelagic fish, thus affecting the fishing industry
- Higher tides causing extensive flooding and damage to vital coastal infrastructures

8.4.11 Tourism

The tourism strategy set out in the National Strategy provide, for the promotion of development of the tourism potential but at the same time to safeguard the special cachet of the island. Tourism projects should be integrated into the local economy and environment and norms should be established for controlling development. The most appropriate form of tourism is seen as being small-scale simple facilities with a mixture of special interest activities like ecotourism. Key issues of concern include:

- Insufficient promotion of the Rodrigues destination
- Lack of involvement of the local population, including local community not optimising benefits from their natural and cultural heritage out of tourism
- Ecotourism strategy for Rodrigues not finalised
- Lack of commitment of hoteliers and the other stakeholders of the tourism industry to make the protection of the environment an integral part of the day to day management of hotels and the other operations of the tourism industry

8.4.12 Sustainable Production and Consumption

This should respond to basic needs and bring a better quality of life while minimizing the use of natural resources and toxic materials as well as emissions of wastes and pollutants over the

life cycle of the service or product so as not to jeopardize the needs of the future generation. Key issues of concern include:

- Dependency on imported goods and preference for imported goods rather than domestic goods
- New development opportunities for promoting local product not tapped
- Insufficient awareness and use of economic instruments to promote sustainable production and consumption
- Unsustainable lagoon fisheries and under exploitation of off-lagoon marine resources
- Insufficient rain water harvesting and storage
- Under exploitation of solar and wind energy

8.5 **Additional Strategies and Policy Instruments for Rodrigues**

8.5.1 Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity

The Rodrigues Regional Assembly will:

- Protect and manage marine and terrestrial biodiversity in a sustainable way.
- Develop and implement a Rodrigues invasive alien species action plan.
- Investigate scope for artificial propagation techniques.
- Establish a threatened and endangered plant species technical committee.
- Develop monitoring protocols for birds of Rodrigues, such as Fody, Warbler and Seabird colonies
- Establish a contingency plan for the conservation of the bat during and after cyclones.
- Develop a Rodriguan niche and label.
- Develop and implement a native insect strategy.
- Undertake research and document traditional knowledge associated with each accession under ex-situ protection.
- Identify/assess overseas holdings of Rodriguan genetic resources and specimens secure access and enable benefit sharing, wherever applicable.
- Introduce regulations for the harvesting of medicinal plants.

8.5.2 Land-Use

The Rodrigues Regional Assembly will:

- Finalise its National Development Strategy
- Develop outline scheme and local plans for regions in Rodrigues.
- Streamline the grant of leases in line with the outline scheme.
- Promote mass sensitization programmes about optimum land use, the economic and social role of the scenic landscape setting of the countryside and their economical value, the role of planning being to regulate development and uses of land in public interest and within the principle of sustainable development.

8.5.3 Water Resources Management

The Rodrigues Regional Assembly will:

- Develop appropriate sustainable water resources to meet present and future demand
- Introduce and develop wastewater management practices that minimize environmental impact and safeguard public health.
- Strengthen institutional capacity for water resources management.
- Introduce comprehensive water monitoring.
- Undertake a cost recovery charging study with a view to charge higher cost for better provision and sewerage disposal.
- Set up of a new sewerage treatment plant.

8.5.4 Air Quality and Noise

The Rodrigues Regional Assembly will:

- Introduce a Prevention of Noise Regulations.
- Set up a laboratory.
- Introduce appropriate regulations to control the import of old vehicles.
- Set up a mobile air quality monitoring section

8.5.5 Marine/Coastal Zone Management

The Rodrigues Regional Assembly will:

- Monitor very closely the sand extraction activities at Banc Catherine and allow for the slow take-off for the use of rock sand instead of coral sand.
- Examine ways of changing the bad weather allowance policy to curb down unsustainable fisheries.
- Set up a Marine Protected Area Network.
- Introduce a beach management plan.
- Set up a Coastal Zone Management Unit.
- Conduct sensitization programmes on beach-lagoon-coastal ecosystem with a view to increase involvement of stakeholders and community stewardship of lagoon resources.
- Legalise the minimum 30 metres set back.
- Consolidate and create marine parks.

8.5.6 The Built Environment

The Rodrigues Regional Assembly will:

- Organise theoretical and technical training on minor and simple landscaping works for people to embellish homes, offices, school premises so as to enhance the aesthetic beauty of Rodrigues.

- Provide public beaches, schools and traffic centres with compost toilets.
- Set up community forests.
- Involve community and private sector in the setting up of spaces for gardens, ‘parcours de santé’, landscape areas, linear parks, etc...
- Set up a “Service Conseil Logement”.

8.5.7 Environment and Health

The Rodrigues Regional Assembly will:

- Consider the introduction of compost toilet in Rodrigues.
- Organise awareness programme on the suitable use of traditional medicine.
- Introduce regulations to improve environmental sanitation.
- Introduce regulations to compel lessee of State Land to maintain soil fertility and carry out anti-erosive works.

8.5.8 Sustainable Production and Consumption

The Rodrigues Regional Assembly will:

- Set up a task force to examine ways of changing the bad weather allowance policy.
- Introduce regulations to reduce fishing pressure in the lagoon.
- Monitor the ecological impact of sand extraction on the lagoon environment.
- Encourage consumers to make alternative consumption choices in favour of cleaner products and services.

8.5.9 Energy and Environment

The Rodrigues Regional Assembly will:

- Encourage the use of wind and solar energy.

8.5.10 Waste Minimisation

The Rodrigues Regional Assembly will:

- Set up a new sanitary landfill at Grenade.
- Develop an integrated waste management programme in Rodrigues.
- Organise sensitization programme on waste reduction initiatives, recycling and proper disposal.
- Set up a suitable scrap yard in Rodrigues.
- Develop appropriate policies for the exportation of used oil, used tyres and used batteries for recycling.
- Extend cleaning works over the whole island.
- Introduce an ecological waste management regulation.
- Encourage source segregation of wastes and the practice of reduce, reuse and recycle.

- Provide material recovery facilities.
- Set up a number of community based rural collection programme.
- Introduce regulations to develop product responsibility in bottlers and establish a deposit refund system to encourage return of glass, plastic and PET bottles.
- Introduce regulations to ban the use of plastic carry bags.
- Encourage composting of organic wastes.

8.5.11 Natural and Man-made Disasters Management

The Rodrigues Regional Assembly will:

- Activate its Oil Spill Contingency Plan.
- Improve and develop natural disaster preparedness plans.

8.5.12 Environmental Education and Awareness

The Rodrigues Regional Assembly will:

- Develop an action plan on environmental education for inclusion in the revised National Environmental Action Plan.
- Set up environment corners in schools.

8.5.13 Institutional, Legislative and Planning Framework

The Rodrigues Regional Assembly will:

- Improve coordination of various stakeholders in environmental management
- Enhance enforcement of legislations
- Develop guidelines and set standards for Preliminary Environmental Reports.
- Update the environment action plan for Rodrigues.

9.0 Outer Islands

9.1 Background

The strategies and policy instruments in chapter 7 of this White Paper are intended to improve environmental management across the whole Republic of Mauritius, including outer islands. However, in view of specificities of outer islands, additional concerns, strategies and policy instruments have been elaborated below.

9.2 Introduction

The outer islands forming part of the Republic of Mauritius, like St Brandon, Agalega and other islets, are relatively pristine. Their size and remoteness from mainland Mauritius pose specific challenges in promoting development, whilst at the same time preserving their very fragile ecologies.

9.3 Rationale for a New Environment Policy

During this past decade, the outer islands have been under pressure from leisure, eco-tourism/hotel development and fishing projects. Such development is likely to have significant impacts on their ecosystems.

In view of the degree of sensitivity and vulnerability of the islets, it is important to assess all the potentials and constraints for sustainable development of those outer islands.

The terrestrial and marine biodiversity is rich and relatively still pristine in condition. Freshwater resource is scarce as a result of the geology of the sandy islands, with salt water intrusion being common. The climate is typical oceanic tropical type and the islands are vulnerable to tropical cyclones and sea level rise. Communication with mainland Mauritius is not well developed. Limited infrastructure has been put up on some of the islands, with St Brandon being inhabited only seasonally. In order to sustainably exploit fisheries resources, fishing operations in the area of St Brandon is allowed through a precautionary approach involving the licensing of fishing vessels. Erosion and accretion of sandy beaches is a dynamic natural phenomenon, but needs to be taken into account. Disposal of solid wastes needs also to be improved.

9.4 Key Environmental Concerns and Challenges

This paragraph summarises the critical sectors in the field of environment which require focus and where actions are proposed.

9.4.1 Land Resources

The geology of the outer islands is primarily sandy and coralline in nature. Onion and coconut plantations in Agalega represent the only forms of agricultural development. Key issues of concern include:

- Absence of a land management plan.

9.4.2 Water Resources

The outer islands rely on rainwater and on underground water not contaminated by saltwater intrusion. There is no centralized sewerage system *per se*. Key issues of concern include:

- Inadequate water collection and storage
- Contamination of ground water, especially from salt water intrusion
- Absence of monitoring of water resources

9.4.3 Biodiversity

The terrestrial and marine biodiversity of the outer islands contains a rich genetic diversity in a relatively pristine state. Coconut plantation has developed and is intended to increase. Key issues of concern include:

- Absence of a biodiversity management plan.
- Lack of monitoring/inventory of biodiversity resources
- Lack of scientific monitoring

9.4.4 Coastal Zone

The tourism industry is in its infancy but has tended to concentrate on cruise leisure activities, with excursions inland. Fishing is carried under quotas. Key issues of concern include:

- Absence of an integrated zone management plan
- Absence of monitoring on coastal resources, including coastal water quality
- Management of islets
- Beach erosion

9.4.5 Wastes

Though the level of consumption is still relatively low in the outer islands, waste has not been properly managed. Key issues of concern include:

- Absence of a well-defined policy and strategy on solid waste management for the outer islands.
- Inadequate waste water management systems.

9.4.6 Education, Awareness and Sensitization

The national campaigns undertaken in mainland Mauritius do not reach the outer islands. Key issues of concern include:

- Lack of knowledge of the local environment
- Insufficient environmental education activities at primary education level.

9.4.7 Environment and Health

Chemicals, hazardous wastes, wastewaters represent health hazards. Key issues of concern include:

- Disposal of toxic substances or wastes
- Stray animals
- Contamination of freshwater

9.5 Additional Strategies and Policy Instruments for Outer Islands other than Rodrigues

9.5.1 Land-Use

The Government will:

- Development appropriate land management plan
- Streamline the grant of leases
- Monitor impact of development activities, if any, on the land cover.
- Allow only modest eco-tourism projects.

9.5.2 Water Resources Management

The Government will:

- Develop appropriate sustainable water resources management to meet present and future demand
- Introduce and develop wastewater management practices that minimize environmental impact and safeguard public health.
- Introduce water monitoring.
- Promote rainwater harvesting.
- Investigate innovative methods of freshwater collection and storage, such as desalination.

9.5.3 Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity

The Government will:

- Protect and manage marine and terrestrial biodiversity in a sustainable way.
- Undertake regular inventories/surveys of species/populations.
- Develop appropriate management plans.
- Consider the designation of some of the islets as World Heritage sites.

9.5.4 Marine/Coastal Zone Management

The Government will:

- Monitor fisheries resources and adjust fisheries quota accordingly on a regular basis.
- Regulate marine resource exploitation, such as shells.
- Respect the 30 metres set back for infrastructure development.
- Create marine parks.
- Monitor beach erosion.

9.5.5 The Built Environment

The Government will:

- Define architectural guidelines in line with the specificities of the outer islands.
- Optimise the use of local materials, especially renewable ones, in construction.
- Consider the promotion of sustainable energy buildings.

9.5.6 Environment and Health

The Government will:

- Consider the introduction of compost toilet in outer islands.
- Plan the import and sustainable use of chemicals and products to minimise the generation of hazardous wastes.

9.5.7 Energy and Environment

The Government will:

- Encourage the use of renewable sources of energy.

9.5.8 Waste minimisation

The Government will:

- Develop an integrated waste management plan for outer islands
- Set up a proper sanitary landfill at designated outer islands.
- Organise awareness campaigns on waste reduction initiatives, recycling and proper disposal.
- Develop appropriate schemes for the export of bulky and hazardous wastes such as used oil/tyres/batteries for recycling.

9.5.9 Natural and Man-made Disasters Management

The Government will:

- Operationalise an Oil Spill Contingency Plan for outer islands.
- Build awareness of the local population with regard to response and evacuation strategies in the event of disasters, including tsunamis.

9.5.10 Environmental Education and Awareness

The Government will:

- Develop an action plan on environmental education for implementation at school level.

10.0 Organization of the Environmental Protection System

Government is conscious that Environmental Management is a cross-cutting responsibility which requires leadership. The Ministry of Environment and National Development Unit will continue to provide the leadership and act as a catalyst to enable effective environmental management in all sectors. The Ministry, through its technical departments, maintains the primary responsibility of ensuring environmental protection, planning, monitoring, coordination and awareness-raising. All key organizations also mainstream environmental concerns within their work at both planning and implementation stages.

The National Environment Commission (NEC) is the supreme environmental body chaired by the Prime Minister and comprising of all the Ministers dealing with environmental protection. It is the highest policy-making body mandated to monitor and review the work of public departments dealing with the protection and management of the environment and make recommendations accordingly.

The Environment Coordination Committee (ECC) is steered by the Ministry of Environment. Public departments and enforcing agencies dealing with environmental protection meet on this platform to ensure that policies are being implemented and that environmental laws are being complied with. The committee also advises the Minister on matters relating to pollution control measures and codes of practice for environmental protection.

The Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) Committee is another platform where concerted actions are initiated by pertinent public organizations during the review of new projects. Recommendations made by all authorities concerned are listed in the promoter's EIA license and EIA post-monitoring exercises ensure compliance thereto.

The Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) Committee has over the years established itself and is active in coastal zone management through the active collaboration of all stakeholders.

Under the Environment Protection Act, Enforcing Agencies play a key role in pollution control and environmental protection. The Ministry of Environment & NDU ensures coordination at the level of the Environmental Liaison Officers (ELO) meeting. Desk officers of all Enforcing Agencies and Local Authorities deal with environmental complaints in a concerted approach. In NEP 2006, all enforcing agencies will be made accountable by mandatory submission of regular reports on enforcement activities to the NEC/ECC. The Police de L'Environnement now plays a key role in the enforcement mechanism especially for the control of littering, illegal dumping, vehicular emissions and abatement of nuisances such as noise and eyesores.

Government will consider in the medium term the setting up of an autonomous pollution control agency, to coordinate enforcement and monitoring, and that would work in close collaboration with gradually increased decentralisation at the level of Local Authorities.

This new policy also enhances the role of Local Authorities. They will be requested to develop Local Agenda 21 Action Plans while their officers will be empowered to act

as authorised officers under the EPA. CAB offices and local police stations shall also be expected to play a more active role in attending to the needs of the local people regarding environmental issues.

Government intends to enhance the existing system for environmental protection through the setting up of new platforms for discussion and consultation and the enhancement of the existing ones. Indeed, real commitment to safeguard the environment can be taken when all stakeholders have a role to play. The National Network for Sustainable Development under the chairmanship of the Ministry of Environment will play a key advisory role in indicating how environmental programs can be strengthened. It involves all stakeholders including non governmental organizations, local authorities, community based organizations, and the business community. The forum will establish a series of permanent, on-going, sector sustainability focus groups. Each focus group would address a specific sector. These focus groups will have a mandate of improving environmental performances in their respective sectors, the overall competitiveness of the sector and the health of Mauritians. They would be asked to identify ambitious environmental objectives on the broadest range of issues, with clear strategies and time-frames for action.

11.0 Implementation

This White Paper has come up with a number of policies and tools designed to enhance environmental protection and to effectively mainstream environmental concerns into economic development activities. Government will develop an Implementation Plan which will detail the concrete actions to be undertaken for the implementation of the Policy. The plan shall be in line with Government's Programme and the priorities defined in the National Environmental Action Plan II under the National Environmental Strategies (NES).

Furthermore, the Environment Coordination Committee would be coordinating the development of sectoral action plans by line ministries as well as their implementation.

12.0 Review of the Policy

We live in a rapidly changing global community, in a rapidly developing country. Environmental issues evolve over time and scientific understanding of environmental matters improves. To devise an immutable Environmental Policy in this dynamic situation would be unwise. The policy would require updating every few years in light of new knowledge and developments as well as a comprehensive review in about a decade. The following provisions are, accordingly made for review, updating and renewal of NEP 2006:

- A. Undertake consultations every three years with diverse stakeholders for example through the National Network for Sustainable Development.
- B. Undertake a comprehensive review of the New Environment Policy every ten years.

The worth of any policy can be measured by its implementation. This new NEP outlines a significant number of new and continuing initiatives for enhancing environmental conservation. These require the coordinated actions of diverse actors.

A periodic, high-level review of implementation of the different elements of NEP 2007 is essential. This would enhance the accountability of the different public agencies responsible for implementation. Accordingly, the NEC will be requested to review the implementation of NEP 2007 once a year. The findings of the review would be publicly disclosed, so that stakeholders are assured of the seriousness of the Government in ensuring implementation of the Policy.

13.0 Consultation Mechanism

A copy of the draft White Paper was circulated, in April 2006, to all ministries and the Rodrigues Regional Assembly for views and comments. Views and comments received have been integrated in the draft to facilitate further consultation in the form of thematic working sessions. The latter have been organised with ministries, some parastatal bodies and local authorities to further discuss and incorporate, as far as practicable, their views, comments, sectoral policies and strategies.

Cabinet approval was sought and obtained for the public consultation process.

The public consultation process was officially launched by the Honourable Minister of Environment on 10 August 2006. The updated (second) draft White Paper on the National Environment Policy was thus made accessible to the non-governmental sector, including the general public and the private sector, for views and comments. The public was advised through press communiqué that the draft NEP was available on the Ministry of Environment's website and at local authorities, CAB offices and MOE Resource Centre. The deadline for comments was 22 September 2006. About 40 comments from the general public, NGOs and private sector organisations were received and incorporated as far as possible in a revised draft.

Concurrently, the views and comments of international organisations to which Mauritius is party, in particular the Secretariat of Multilateral Agreements, were also sought on the draft White Paper.

The National Network for Sustainable Development was held on 5 October 2006 and considered the compiled comments received. Additional comments of the members of the NNSD were submitted and taken on board as far as was practicable.

The third draft, incorporating all relevant comments at this stage, was circulated in December 2006 to line ministries for final views, prior to being validated at the level of the dedicated interministerial meeting.

Subsequently, approval of the National Environment Commission and Cabinet would be sought.

13.0 Conclusion

Environment is nowadays a key driver of creativity, of innovation and of competitiveness around the world. The long term economic success of Mauritius is not possible without environmental sustainability. Achieving environmental sustainability is a complex task as it calls for deep-rooted changes and for action at all levels: from public to private, consumer to producer, global to local.

This new environmental policy is geared towards integrating social, economic and environmental objectives. Faced with the various constraints that are inherent to SIDS and the need to re-design the architecture of our economy in this globalised world, Mauritius has no other choice than to adopt the path of sustainable development. Environmental quality must enhance our quality of life and help to advance our competitiveness. Action-oriented strategies in this new environment policy have been designed to achieve this aim. It relies on effective partnerships between all stakeholders.