

Ministère de l'Environnement,
de la Gestion des déchets et
du Changement climatique

LA CULTURE ENVIRONNEMENTALE



Les Assises de
l'Environnement

CAUDAN ARTS CENTRE / 16 -17 DECEMBRE 2019

BACKGROUND

As a Small Island Developing State (SIDS) with limited resources, Mauritius has to rely to a large extent on its natural environmental assets to face both external and internal pressures. The stakes are high and we need to have a resilient environment. Building our resilience relies on a shared understanding by all stakeholders that tomorrow's environment depends on how efficiently we are currently conserving our environmental assets. The foundation stone for environmental protection is laid through environmental stewardship. The concept of environmental stewardship is enshrined in the Environment Protection Act (EPA), which states that *"every person in Mauritius shall use his best endeavours to preserve and enhance the quality of life by caring responsibly for the natural environment of Mauritius"*. In other words, each one of us has the moral obligation to protect our environment. ✦



Government, with the collaboration of key stakeholders, has been actively involved in imparting environmental education to change the mind-sets of our fellow citizens to become environmental stewards. However, despite actions taken by Government and other stakeholders, it has been observed that many areas of our island are still in a deplorable state due to indiscriminate dumping, littering and various forms of pollution. The main cause for this situation is the irresponsible behaviour of some people and their disrespect towards the environment. Moreover, it seems that there is an unwillingness to adopt good environmental practices at the level of many individuals. One of the reasons for this may be that the means of communication used as to-date by Government may not be necessarily adapted to present needs and target audiences. It is therefore imperative that new and innovative approaches be adopted to promote environmental stewardship among the public, be it through sensitisation campaigns to ensure a fully environment-literate population or through other means.

“Every person in Mauritius shall use his best endeavours to preserve and enhance the quality of life by caring responsibly for the natural environment of Mauritius.”

Environment Protection Act 2002



Photo Credit : Pexel.com.# Lisa Fotios

VISION/TARGETS

To have an environmentally literate population

ISSUES OF CONCERN

- Irresponsible behaviour and throw-away society
- Black smoke emissions from vehicles and industrial pollution
- There is environmental awareness among citizens, but there is less interest in the adoption of good environment practices
- Means of communication may not necessarily be adapted to present needs and target audiences
- Few dedicated Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in environmental protection
- Present school curriculum does not adequately address emerging environmental issues

EXISTING POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

The Government has adopted the National Environment Policy (NEP) in 2007 and the National Environmental Strategies (NES) in 1999, which was reviewed in 2008. They established a set of appropriate environmental objectives and strategies including environmental education and awareness

EXISTING LAWS AND REGULATIONS

- The primary legislative framework for environmental protection in the Republic of Mauritius is the Environment Protection Act. Section 2, Part 1 of the Act lays emphasis on environmental stewardship
- Section 50L of the Income Tax Act 1995 (ITA) makes provision for corporate bodies to operate a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) fund. One of the priority areas of intervention of the CSR programme is environment and sustainable development

ACTIONS TAKEN/ONGOING

Regular sensitisation programmes for different target groups, including children, youth, women, senior citizens, private sector, NGO's and the public in general, are carried out by the Ministry of Environment to raise awareness on environmental issues

- More than 100 talks are delivered each year in schools, social welfare centres, community centres and Citizens Advice Bureau offices on environmental issues such as climate change, impacts and dangers of plastics, waste management, biodiversity, benefits of tree planting and sustainable lifestyle
- Radio talks and TV programmes are aired at prime time to sensitise a wider audience
- Short clips on environmental issues are digitally displayed in buses to sensitise passengers
- Thematic exhibitions and workshops are held to raise awareness on emerging environmental issues
- Environmental messages are displayed on electronic display board of municipal councils and on promotional magazines/catalogues of supermarkets
- Resource materials, such as pamphlets, toolkits, posters and flyers, have been developed for distribution



PROJECTS IMPLEMENTED/BEING IMPLEMENTED

- Waste segregation project in schools
- Painting competition
- Flower Mauritius competition
- Setting up of endemic gardens in primary and secondary schools
- “Environment Sustainable Development” competition for lower six students

PROPOSED ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION (NON-EXHAUSTIVE)

For a Cleaner and Greener Mauritius, it is imperative that new approaches be adopted for our ongoing sensitisation campaigns to ensure a fully environment literate population. Through this Assises, participants are encouraged to suggest simple and practical solutions for awareness raising and promoting an environmental culture

Where we are

- Low level of environmental stewardship
- Insufficient attention by citizens with regard to environmental protection
- Continued dumping and littering
- Black smoke emission
- Low adoption of green/clean technologies by industries

Where we need to go?

- All Mauritian citizens to become guardians of the environment

How to reach there?

By adopting certain measures such as

- Use of social media to sensitise the public, especially the youth community
- Enhance environmental education in school curriculum
- Project-based learning in schools
- Promote community-based environmental projects
- Revival of the Environmental NGOs desk at the Ministry of Environment
- Enhanced collaboration with private sectors for implementation of environmental projects such as tree planting
- Appropriate policies for waste disposal and provision of appropriate facilities around the island
- Stringent enforcement of existing environmental laws
- Incentives to industries to promote cleaner production
- Incentives to purchase energy-efficient vehicles and use clean fuel
- Encourage neighbourhood watch





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