

## **World Environment Day 2023**

World Environment Day (WED) is celebrated every year on 5 June following a resolution adopted by the United Nations General Assembly at the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment in 1972. It constitutes the principal vehicle of the United Nations (UN) for encouraging worldwide awareness and actions for the protection of the environment.

The theme retained for this year is “*Solutions to Plastic Pollution*” and the campaign for WED 2023 will use the hashtag and slogan #BeatPlasticPollution. This theme underscores the importance of raising awareness and mobilising transformative action globally to address plastic pollution. The United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) has identified plastic pollution as one of the greatest challenges of the triple planetary crisis, that is climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss.

Plastic pollution bearing devastating impacts on ecosystems, biodiversity, the climate and human health needs our urgent attention. Following the UNEA resolution taken in February 2022 to eradicate plastic pollution, the recommendations of the “Turn the Tap Off Report 2023” of the UN focus on reducing plastic pollution through the three major axes: reuse, recycling, and reorientation and diversification in the plastics industry.

In the same line at national level, the Government is committed to make Mauritius a plastic-free country in the shortest delay. In this respect, various measures have been and are being taken at the level of the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change in collaboration with partners and stakeholders. These include the review of the legislative framework, promoting stewardship, sensitisation and awareness raising, research projects for evidence-based policy orientation and hiring of consultancy services for the development of a Roadmap for a plastic-free Mauritius, amongst others. Additionally, collaboration with regional organisations such as Indian Ocean Commission and Indian Ocean Rim Association in relation to marine debris is also being sought.

Moreover, to reinvigorate stakeholders’ environmental stewardship towards the needed change in mindset towards the ecological transition, the Ministry is organising an Awards Ceremony for the celebration of the WED in Mauritius. The awards aim to recognise and publicise the best environmental initiatives of local institutions and encourage similar future endeavours for a cleaner, greener and safer Mauritius.

It is our collective responsibility to address this issue and adopt sustainable practices in our daily lives. Every small action counts, whether it is opting for reusable alternatives like stainless steel straws, utensils, glass containers, bringing our own reusable bags and water bottles, or choosing products with minimal plastic packaging. By engaging in our communities, sharing knowledge, encouraging sustainable choices, supporting local initiatives and organisations working towards plastic-free alternatives and waste management solutions, we can make informed decisions that contribute to a cleaner, greener and healthier Mauritius.

Adopting a sustainable lifestyle goes beyond tackling plastic pollution alone. By integrating sustainability into our everyday lives, we can build a Mauritius that thrives in harmony with the environment and contribute to the well-being of our planet and a brighter future for generations to come. So, let us all be part of the solution and not part of the pollution.

**Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate change**