

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

LUTTE CONTRE LA POLLUTION



Les Assises de
l'Environnement

CAUDAN ARTS CENTRE / 16 -17 DECEMBRE 2019

TECHNICAL SESSION 2

BACKGROUND

The high level of development in Mauritius makes our environment more vulnerable due to the associated risks of pollution. The major development in the country's infrastructure, massive growth of industries, hotels, amongst others, have put a lot of pressure on the country's natural resources and require urgent reconsideration on environment protection.

Environmental pollution is considered as the contamination of the physical and biological components of the earth/atmosphere system to such an extent that normal environmental processes are adversely affected (Environmental Management: Science and Engineering for Industry, 2017). Various forms of pollution include, amongst others: air pollution, noise pollution, water pollution, land pollution, plastic pollution and soil contamination.

Despite considerable efforts put in by the relevant ministries and authorities to mitigate pollution throughout the island, pollution still remains a major threat. In this regard, there is a need for the Government to pursue its continuous battle against pollution and along the same vein strengthen its institutional and legal framework to increase efforts in terms of reconciling development and environment protection. Furthermore, it is felt that there is a need to increase people's awareness on the importance of environmental protection and inculcate environmentally responsible behaviours, thus promoting environmental stewardship.

The theme "Lutte Contre la Pollution" aims at an integrated approach for the protection and management of the environmental assets of Mauritius. It will enable a tripartite platform involving the public and private sectors as well as the civil society to discuss on issues pertaining to environmental pollution and to come up with practical, innovative suggestions as well as proposals on changes in the existing legislation, institutional framework, enforcement mechanisms and sensitisation.

This theme is also linked to two other related thematic areas namely: solid waste management and control of plastic pollution.



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VISION/TARGETS



The Republic of Mauritius attaches prime importance to both national and global environmental problems. The Government fully acknowledges the serious consequences resulting from the degradation of the environment and its impact on the quality of life, health and on the economy. The recommendations of the "Assises" will also enable Mauritius in meeting the requirements under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Vision 2030.

The vision of the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change is to achieve a "cleaner, greener and safer Mauritius" in a sustainable manner through the protection and management of our environmental assets.

ISSUES OF CONCERN

- "Incivisme généralisé" (irresponsible behaviours such as littering, dumping on barelands, noise pollution from bungalows/wedding halls, loud music in residential areas, smoke and odour nuisances arising from food preparation in residential and public areas)



- Black smoke from diesel-driven vehicles on the road

Photo credit : Le Défi Moteur Mag.

- Incompatible/bad neighbourhood activities due to inappropriate land use planning, e.g. odour, flies and other sanitary nuisances arising from small-scale rearing of animals in residential zone



ISSUES OF CONCERN



- Wastewater discharge onto public roads and, water drains and watercourses

- Backyard burning and setting fire to sugarcane fields causing smoke and odour nuisances



- Growing industrial development near residential areas (e.g. *La Tour Koenig*)
- Industrial pollution mainly due to the release of untreated effluent into the environment and burning of fossil fuels (the latter also contributing to emissions of sulphur dioxide, particulate matter and greenhouse gases such as nitrogen oxides and carbon monoxide)
- Enforcement is a cross-cutting issue due to scattered legislation among various enforcing agencies

EXISTING POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

The Government has adopted a National Environment Policy (NEP) in 2007 and a National Environmental Strategies (NES) in 1999 (which has been reviewed in 2008) for policy framework and environmental objectives and strategies.

A number of strategies, policy instruments and national targets have been identified in various sectors as follows:

- Increase in electricity generation from renewable energy sources by at least 35% by 2025;
- Improvement in fuel quality in both industrial and transport sectors;
- Reaching 80% sewerage connection across the island by 2033;
- Reduction of average fuel consumption from current 8 l/km to 4 l/km;
- Reduction of the amount of solid waste being landfilled (promoting reduction, reuse and recycling); and
- Phasing out of hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs) (ozone depleting substances) under the Montreal Protocol by 2025.

EXISTING LAWS AND REGULATIONS

The main legislative framework for environmental protection in the Republic of Mauritius is the Environment Protection Act 2002. In addition to the Environment Protection Act 2002, other legislation have been enacted to protect the environment, including amongst others: Building Control Act 2012, Beach Authority Act 2002, Forest and Reserves Act 1983, Fisheries and Marine Resources Act 2007, Local Government Act 2011, Rivers and Canals Act 1863 and the Public Health Act 1925.

ACTIONS TAKEN/ONGOING

- An interim storage hazardous waste facility has been set up in 2017 to ensure proper management of hazardous wastes
- Dangerous chemicals are prohibited and/or controlled under the Dangerous Chemicals Control Act 2004
- Monitoring of ambient air is carried out at problematic areas for remedial actions
- An Air Quality Index system (AQI) for Mauritius is being developed to better inform the citizens of Mauritius about the quality of air they are breathing
- Reinforced enforcement and sensitisation campaigns on littering and dumping are on-going for a cleaner and greener Mauritius
- As a proactive approach, the Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) mechanism ensures that environment considerations are given at the planning stage of major projects to minimise any potential environmental impacts. Moreover, monitoring of compliance of conditions attached to EIA licences and Preliminary Environmental Report approvals is carried out accordingly
- The Environment Protection (Industrial Waste Audit) Regulations were introduced in 2008 to promote a clean and green environment and mitigate the associated adverse health and environmental impacts from industrial waste
- The Prime Minister's Office launched the Citizen Support Portal in 2017 to ensure that complaints and suggestions are promptly addressed. The platform connects all ministries, departments, local authorities, parastatal bodies and citizens
- Creation of Police de l'Environnement in 2000 which operates a 24-hour hotline

PROJECTS IMPLEMENTED/BEING IMPLEMENTED

- The use of dichloro-diphenyl-trichloroethane (DDT), a dangerous insecticide, in port and airport has been ceased since 2011
- Unleaded petrol was introduced in 2002 to reduce the release of lead into the environment
- The sulphur content in diesel was gradually reduced from 2500 ppm to 50 ppm in 2012 to reduce harmful vehicular emissions
- The sulphur content of fuel oil for use on board of a ship shall not exceed 0.50% m/m as from January 2020 under the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL)
- In 2019, the Government ratified the Kigali Amendment to phase down the use of Hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) (refrigerants used in the refrigeration and air conditioning sector) which have a high global warming potential
- As from June 2019, car dealers need to affix a Fuel Consumption and Carbon Dioxide Emission Label to promote awareness on energy-efficient cars
- Excise duty on hybrid and electric vehicles was reduced in 2016 and 2019 to make these vehicles more affordable under the Global Fuel Economy Initiative (GFEI)
- A home solar project (which includes the installation of 10,000 roof-top solar panels) was set up in 2018. Some 2000 households have been equipped with the roof-top solar panels
- The Government has facilitated the implementation of projects related to wind and solar farms to increase electricity generation from renewable sources
- Presently, about 26% (representing 83 000 households) of the population is connected to the public sewer system. By 2020, it is expected that around 16 000 additional premises will be connected, thus bringing the network coverage to 30%
- The Government of Mauritius has embarked on a national project to monitor nitrate pollution in the waterways entering bay of Port Louis. The project is being done in collaboration with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)



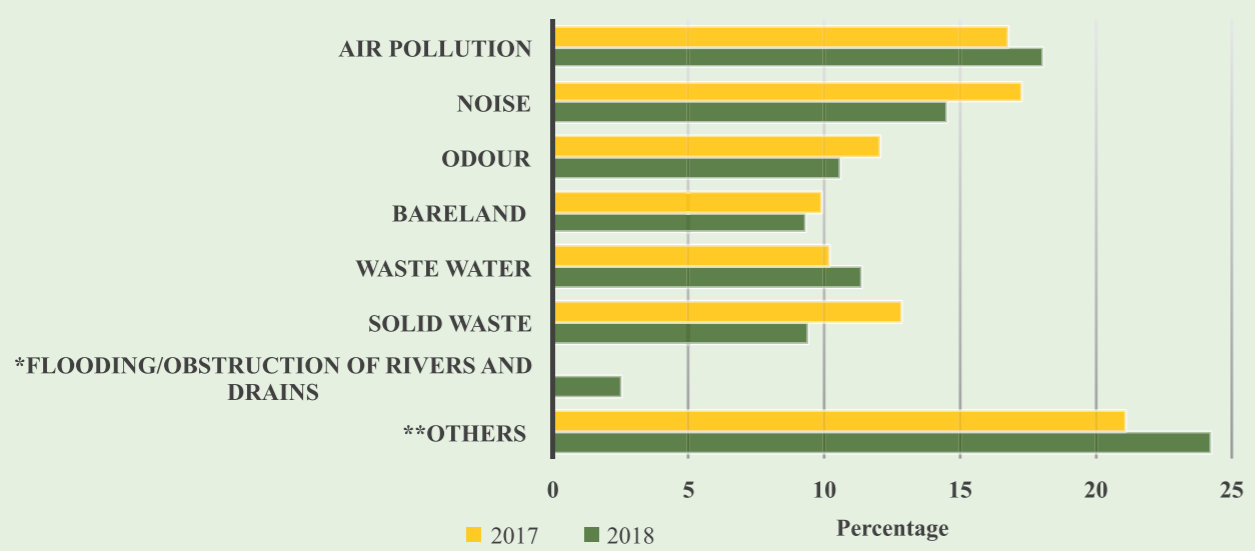
PROPOSED ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION (NON-EXHAUSTIVE)

WHERE WE ARE

- Littering and dumping of wastes are recurrent practices
- Vehicular and industrial emissions are among the major sources of air pollution
- Several mechanisms are in place to control pollution, namely: Environment Impact Assessment, Preliminary Environment Report and Industrial Waste Audit
- The Citizen Support Portal is in place to facilitate prompt handling of complaints

Percentage of complaints received by category at the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change is as shown below:

Categorisation of complaints for 2017 and 2018



Source: Statistics Mauritius, 2019

Note:

- *Complaints regarding flooding/obstruction of rivers and drains were recorded in category "Others" prior to 2018. As from 2018, a separate category "Flooding /Obstruction of rivers and drains" has been added to the list of categories.
- **Category "Others" includes backfilling, erosion, illegal construction, objections to projects, law and order, land conversion, land reclamations, landslides etc.



WHERE WE NEED TO GO ?

- Clean air
- No littering, dumping and discharge of wastewater into the environment
- Environmentally responsible behaviours from all citizens of Mauritius
- A culture of self-compliance to environmental standards by industrialists

HOW TO REACH THERE ?

- Strengthening enforcement (e.g. development of standards for areas not covered such as odour nuisances, reinforcement in human resources and capacity building for all enforcing agencies)
- Review of legislative framework (e.g. definition of magnitude of activities such as rock quarry, animal rearing)
- Review and strengthening of institutional framework (e.g. decentralisation of enforcement at local authority level)
- Adoption of innovative, best practices and technology transfer in pollution control;
- Aggressive sensitisation campaigns
- Encourage sustainable consumption and production
- Better use of Citizen Support Portal for a culture of proximity with the population and prompt addressing of complaints, requests and suggestions
- Strengthened enforcement
- Sustainable waste management



A pollution free Mauritius



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