

**(b) Actions, policy guidance, progress, challenges and areas requiring urgent attention in relation to the SDGs and to the theme within the area under the purview of your intergovernmental body.**

***(b) (i) Actions, policy guidance and progress towards achievement of the SDGs under the purview of the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change.***

In line with the Government Programme 2020-2024, the Ministry of Environment is working on policies and actions geared towards ensuring sustainable consumption and Production and Climate Change adaptation and mitigation through resource efficiency and waste minimisation. In this context, circular economy and nature based solutions are being adopted to ensure that environmental performance is enhanced.

It is in this endeavour that Government is coming up with a Master Plan on the Environment (2020-2030) which comprises Policies and Strategies for the coming decade and a 5-year Action Plan. This is particularly relevant with a view to address systemic barriers characterising the environment sector as well as contemporary environmental challenges that have emerged over time. This shift is also required to meet international obligations such as the Sustainable Development Goals, the Nationally Determined Contributions under the Paris Agreement and other commitments at the national level. The aim is to bring about a transition towards sustainability to achieve a cleaner, greener, sustainable, low-emission and climate-resilient development pathway. A selected number of most pressing environmental issues as hereunder are being analysed in the Master Plan:

- Environmental stewardship (culture environnemental)
- Urban planning and environmental policy;
- Climate change;
- Coastal zone and marine environment;
- Biodiversity and natural resources;
- Pollution prevention and control;
- Solid waste management; and
- Control of plastic pollution.

The new strategy will direct the development path towards sustainability as well as change behaviour, values and attitudes, sustain measures already undertaken to address environmental degradation, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, disaster management, and biodiversity conservation amongst others. Enhanced sustainability strategies, policies and action plans will signal a new wave of thinking aimed at promoting stewardship of the country's natural, social and economic resources. The Master Plan will support the country in its quest to transition to a more ecological pathway.

**A- Actions, policy guidance and progress towards SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production**

A number of initiatives have been undertaken to catalyse the implementation of the African 10YFP for SCP for a transition to low-carbon, resource efficient and green practices in various economic sectors, thereby bringing about the transformative change for a more inclusive and sustainable development paradigm.

- **Sustainable lifestyle**
  - i **Development of Policy and Regulatory framework to curb down use of plastics and promote SCP**

The use of plastic bags was banned under the **Environment Protection (Banning of Plastics Bags) Regulations 2015** which entered into force in 2016. The Regulations banned the import, manufacture,

sale or supply of plastic bags including non-woven polypropylene bags with the exception of biodegradable plastic bags and exempted ones for essential uses as from 1st January 2016. This measure has been instrumental in reducing the use of plastic bags, thereby minimizing the generation of plastic waste and littering incidents. The Regulations have curbed the excessive use of plastic bags and have triggered a positive change in the behaviour of the public at large with respect to the enhanced use of long lasting eco-friendly bags. This measure has not only reduced plastic waste and littering in the environment but has also opened up windows of opportunities for our local entrepreneurs involved in the production of long lasting eco-friendly alternatives like tente raffia, tente vacoas, cloth bags, jute bags, amongst others.

However, due to loopholes in the law, the legislation has been further strengthened. The **Protection (Banning of Plastic Bags) Regulations 2020** provides for stronger penalties to deter the use of plastic carry bags. The Regulations will come into force in March 2021.

Moreover, with a view to further minimize the use of plastic, the Government has promulgated the **Environment Protection (Control of Single Use Plastic Products) Regulations 2020** to ban the use of short-lived plastic cutlery, bowls, plates, trays and take-away amongst. Same entered into force on 15 January 2021.

Aggressive awareness raising and sensitization are being carried out to educate the population of the negative environmental impacts of plastics, on the provisions of the regulation as well as penalties in case of non-compliance to same. This measure is opening new avenues for businesses to produce fibre-based alternatives made from palm and banana leaves.

Furthermore, the **Environment Protection (Polyethylene Terephthalate (PET) bottle Permit) Regulations 2001** is being reviewed to cope with the current challenges faced for post-consumer PET collection from the waste stream for recycling. The reviewed regulations aim to support the collection of PET bottles and achieve a target of 80% recycling rate to avoid dumping, littering and pollution as well as to support circularity.

## **ii Household Compost Scheme**

The household compost scheme has as objective the reduction of the amount of organic waste going to the landfill, and greenhouse gas emissions as well as the promotion of safer organic fertilizers for the production of healthier fruits and vegetables for consumption.

Distribution of compost bins along with sensitization and awareness raising targeting farmers, women cooperatives and households is being undertaken to empower the community on Sustainable Consumption and Production practices and sustainable lifestyles as well as to encourage same to change their behavior towards waste generation and disposal through green waste sorting and composting and organic farming. From 2016 to date around 15,500 compost bins have been distributed.

## **iii Rainwater Harvesting Scheme**

Mauritius as a water-stressed country faces water scarcity problems during periods of droughts and this is further exacerbated by climate change. To this end, Government is promoting the Rainwater Harvesting Scheme for the capture of rainwater for non-potable uses in schools, public buildings and private residences.

Rainwater harvesters have been distributed in 19 women centres and local authorities with advisory services been provided by AREU to small planters.

In the year 2017-2018 additional grant for installation of 39 Rain Water Harvesters was received. Rainwater Harvesting System has been fixed in around 90 schools and socio cultural organisations. The 2020-2021 budgets make provision for the supply of an additional 45 units of Rain Water Harvesters to schools under the Covid 19 Project Development Fund (PDF).

#### **iv Solar Water Heater Scheme and the Small Scale Distributed Generation (SSDG) Net-Metering Scheme to promote solar energy**

The Solar Water Heater Scheme aims to promote the use of renewable solar energy and reduce emissions of pollutants as well as greenhouse gas into the atmosphere.

A series of fiscal incentives and schemes have allowed a shift to renewable energy. These include the provision of financial grants for the installation of solar panels by small and medium producers and Solar Water Heater by 73,480 Mauritian households, 4 hospitals and in 10 Schools (solar PV).

The second phase of the Small Scale Distributed Generation (SSDG) Net-Metering Scheme has been launched to allow Small Independent Power Producers (SIPPs) to install of up to 2 MW of Photo Voltaic systems not exceeding 5 kW. The fiscal scheme devised for the SSDG Net Metering Scheme allows the SIPPs to secure low-interest loans with local banks and also deduct the investment for buying and installing a PV power generator under the scheme from the income tax return. Implementation of the scheme has allowed the integration of 9MW of new photovoltaic installations in Mauritius.

The “**Solar Home Project** with installation of roof top solar panels by some 500 individuals has allowed generation of around 7MW electricity per year to the national grid. It is planned to increase this connection to 10,000 low income households in the social tariff category, over the next 5 years.

These schemes aim to empower individuals to produce their own electricity from renewable sources, thus decreasing pressure on the national grid. This will in turn reduce the use of fossil fuels and decrease greenhouse gas emissions.

#### **v Sustainable Public Procurement**

The **Public Procurement Act** has been amended to make provision for sustainability criteria to be integrated as a requirement for the procurement of goods by the public sector. This policy measure seeks to drive the demand and supply chain for sustainable products and support SMEs involved in green businesses. It is also a means to promote resource efficiency, curd pollution and control use of chemicals thus enhancing environmental protection. With a view to further support green Micro, Small and Medium Sized enterprises (MSMEs), Government has increased their margin of preference for contracts under the Public Procurement Act by up to 30 %.

#### **vi SWITCH Africa Green (SAG) programme**

The Ministry is implementing the **SWITCH Africa Green (SAG)** project, a European Union initiative aimed at supporting and promoting the development of inclusive green businesses and eco-entrepreneurship, based on the adoption of sustainable consumption and production practices for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and SMES in the Manufacturing, Agriculture and Tourism sectors.

- The **MauriGAP Certification (Mauritian certification for international Green Agricultural Practices)** has been developed to certify planters who adhere to sustainable agricultural practices. Small farmers have benefitted from training and capacity building under the SWITCH Africa Green project to adopt sustainable agricultural practices in their cultivations, making them compliant to the level 1 of the MauriGAP Certification for sustainable food production. Several innovative techniques in the agricultural sector are being promoted to enhance the sustainability; safety and traceability of agro-products. The private sector has been promoting the SMART Agricultural practices which are based on organic food cultivation techniques.

- A **standard for treated animal manure** has been developed to enhance adoption of good agricultural practices, to green the economy and empower Small and Medium Enterprises as potential suppliers of safe and healthy food. The standard aims at setting out the specifications to treat raw manure for safe handling in order to protect the environment and human health from contamination risks. Compliance to these standards will ensure the protection of the environment against pollution risks, quality sustainable fertilizer for food crop production and access to safe food. Capacity building of stakeholders including farmers on the standard along with the treatment method to be adopted to meet specification of standard has been undertaken.
- **Greening the Agricultural Sector through capacity development on pesticide residue testing at the National Environmental Laboratory**

The National Environmental Laboratory (NEL), the scientific arm of the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change performs as accredited laboratory (MS ISO/IEC 17025), a number of physicochemical and microbiological analyses to assess surface and groundwater quality. It also collaborates with other laboratories for monitoring, analysis and reporting. However, pesticide analysis in environmental media (surface and ground water) is not currently being carried out at the NEL or other governmental laboratories on a regular basis due to lack of skills to perform the required testing analysis.

The NEL is now coming forward with the development of a framework for capacity building and sustained monitoring programme under the Switch Africa Green Programme. The project will assist in greening the agricultural sector in line with the vision of the government to strengthen food security and sustainable agricultural development and environmental protection in the country.

- **Promotion of circular economy through industrial symbiosis**

For sustainable waste management in industries, **industrial symbiosis** is being promoted for the setting up of eco-enterprises in fields such as recycling and up-cycling. Industrial symbiosis aims at enhancing resource efficiency of industries through material tracking i.e identification, quantification and analysis of all significant material inputs and outputs. Processes such as co-generation, re-use of materials, recycling and wastewater treatment, and are being promoted to bring down production costs and transition to more resource efficient production practices.

This technique, which is part of a circular economy model, encourages industries to use one factory's waste as raw material to produce other end-products. To-date, some 25 linkages have been developed through seminars and forums organized with industries.

- **Development of sustainable value chain in the tourism industry**

With a view to integrate sustainability in the tourism sector, a **Tourism Eco-Label MS 165**, has been developed along with provision of support scheme to empower Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) meet the eco-label criteria. The label comprises standards pertaining to energy and water conservation measures; biodiversity conservation, green purchasing, sustainable construction, and pollution minimization measures. Compliance by tourism operators to the label will ensure the adoption of environmental protection practices and hence contribute to enhancing environmental quality.

Mauritius is implementing the "Improving Sustainable Tourism in Mauritius through greening the value chain of Tour Operators (**SUS-ISLAND**) project under the SWITCH Africa Green programme. The project seeks to promote market-oriented sustainable tourism in Mauritius by translating customer's needs in sustainable tourism products (offers) to the inbound Tour Operators (TOs) and their suppliers (hotels, tour guides, handicraft makers). Activities of the project include the capacity building of tourism operators on sustainability principles as well as increase public awareness and create the market for sustainable tourism products. Additionally, hotels are being encouraged to adopt environment friendly practices, such as, adopting energy efficient designs in their infrastructure, use

of energy efficient appliances (lighting, air conditioners, freezers), replacement of plastic components (example: plastic water bottles) by long-lasting alternatives.

- **Supporting sustainable livelihoods**

The SWITCH Africa Green (SAG) programme with focus on provision of necessary skills and enabling environment to MSMES and SMEs to transition to a greener and more sustainable production pattern has helped to a certain degree achieve sustainable livelihoods in Rodrigues Island as well. There has been the setting up of new and innovative business streams in recycling, bio-farming, use of natural products in handicraft making, production of carry bags and beauty products. Fisherwomen have been trained on propagating and processing agricultural products such as gombava based chili pastes. Value added products from the soaps, scents, pickles and candles are being produced from the plant derivatives as alternative livelihoods.

The SWITCH Africa Green programme has provided the necessary technical and financial support to promote the greening of SMEs in the Agricultural, Manufacturing and Tourism sectors. Networking activities are being organized to promote sharing of knowledge and best practices which will contribute to the adoption of these green policies and encourage replication. Thus, women groups, Cooperatives and farmers are being sensitized on how to adopt sustainable production practices and green their businesses or to engage in smart and innovative green business ventures.

## **vii Responsible Solid Waste Management**

A new **Solid Waste Management Strategy** developed will focus on “**Prevention and Environmentally Responsible Consumption**” to help reduce waste generation and enhance reuse. The strategy encourages sustainable practices such as home composting of organic wastes (food wastes, yard wastes) to reduce per capita global food waste at the consumer level and aims to promote increase in “**Resource Recovery**” by substantially enhancing recycling.

Government came up with a “**civic amenity centre**” which is operational since December 2020. The centre allows households to dispose of their bulky wastes including construction and demolition debris and waste oil.

## **viii Hazardous Waste Management**

There has been mainstreaming and domestication of relevant provisions of international environmental agreements in national legislative frameworks. These include the **Vienna Convention and the Montreal protocol, the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, Minamata Convention on Mercury, the MARPOL 73/78.**

The **National Oil Spill Contingency Plan** deals with any oil spill occurring in Mauritius, Rodrigues and the outer islands. It provides for an integrated Government/ industry organisational framework capable of effective and prompt response to oil pollution to protect the natural and human-made environment. It sets out the roles, duties and responsibilities of relevant national authorities before, during and after an oil spill; and provides for a Tiered Response approach to deal with the various types and extent of spills in different locations.

An **Interim Hazardous Waste Storage Facility** is operational since 2017 to ensure proper collection, storage, and prompt exportation to licensed disposal facilities of industrial and chemical wastes, including paint, obsolete pesticides, pharmaceuticals, gas cylinders and aerosols.

Increasing volumes of waste, more specifically e-waste is a challenge for Mauritius. In line with the Polluter Pay Principle, the Ministry of Environment is in the process of developing ‘**The Environment Protection (Extended Producer Responsibility for Electrical and Electronic**

**Equipment) Regulations** to put the responsibility of collection, disposal and recycling of electronic waste upon the importers and distributors.

#### **ix Setting up of a Consumer Information System**

As consumers become more aware of the impacts of their consumption trends on the environment, a progressive rise in the demand for eco-friendly and sustainable products is being noted. To this end, the Ministry is currently working on the setting up of a **Consumer Information System** to empower consumers in the Republic of Mauritius through the provision of credible product sustainability information so as to allow informed decisions and choices at the point of purchase. The system will guide consumers choose a green product over a normal one thereby increasing the demand for green and environment friendly products.

#### **x Greening of the Public Sector**

The Greening of the Public Sector project is another major initiative in the pipeline. It aims to encourage public organisations to green their activities through the adoption of best environment practices. These include conservation of energy and water, waste minimization, paperless work, the adoption of sustainable technology and business practices to sustain and improve service delivery.

### **B- Policies and actions geared towards ensuring SDG 13-Climate change mitigation and adaptation**

This Ministry is fully engaged in the implementation of Goal 13 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which involve taking urgent actions to combat climate change and its impacts.

Mauritius, as a Small Island Developing States, is not spared from the prevailing global climate crisis experiencing frequent flashfloods and landslides. While SIDS contributes only 1% of the global GHG emission, they are the ones to suffer most from the adverse impacts of climate change. According to the 2020 edition of the World Risk Report, Mauritius is ranked as the 53<sup>rd</sup> country with the highest disaster risk. The country is among the most exposed to natural hazards because of its geographical position within an active tropical cyclone basin.

The coastal area with white sandy beaches is one of the major assets for our economy. However, over the last decade sea level rise of the order of 5.6 mm per year, which surpasses the global average of 3.2 mm per year and an increase in storm surges and swells, has caused severe erosion and coastal degradation. 13 kms of coastline has eroded over the period (1967-2012) and the width of some of our pristine beaches has shrunk by up to 20 metres with some 18,500 m<sup>2</sup> of beach area having been lost several beaches taken together.

As regard to projections, according to the UN report ‘SIDS in Numbers 2017’, Mauritius was projected to become a water stressed country by 2025, that is, in hardly 4 years from now. Moreover, the report has also projected that our agricultural production may decline by as much as 30% by 2050. A study conducted by the US National Academy of Sciences, has also underlined that the chances of a major tropical cyclone occurring in the southern Indian Ocean basin will increase by 18% every decade.

Over a number of years, to address the adverse impacts of climate, drought, land degradation, floods and landslides the following measures have been undertaken:

- The setting up of a Climate Change Division at the level of the Ministry of Environment since 2010.

- The development of a **National Climate Change Adaptation Policy Framework** (2012) for the Republic of Mauritius to integrate climate change and disaster risk reduction into policies, strategies and plans in key sectors such as water, agriculture, terrestrial ecosystems, fisheries, marine ecosystems, tourism and coastal management.
- The development of a **National Disaster Risk Reduction Strategic Framework and Action Plan** (2013) to identify riverine vulnerable coastal communities exposed to inland flooding, coastal inundation and landslides.
- The setting up of the **National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Centre (NDRRMC)** (2013) to coordinate with all stakeholders and ensure that risk reduction and preparedness planning is included at all levels of the country, from individual and communities, to Government policy and strategy.
- Mauritius submitted its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) in September 2015, prior to the UNFCCC 21<sup>st</sup> Conference of Parties which was held in France in December 2015.
- Mauritius was among the first 15 countries to ratify the Paris Agreement in April 2016. Besides the obligations of developed country parties to the UNFCCC, for the first time developing country parties pledged for a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, subject to support from international community.
- A number of initiatives to operationalize the Paris Agreement as hereunder have been undertaken /initiated:
  - Formulation of the National climate change mitigation strategy and action plan for sectors such as energy, waste and agriculture.
  - Formulation of a National **Climate Change Adaptation Policy Framework** is for sectors such as fisheries, coastal zones and infrastructure. Same is **presently** being updated for addressing the above mentioned threats.
- The promulgation of the **National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act** (2016); the Land Drainage Authority Act (2017), amendment to the Local Government Act (2018) and the Mauritius Meteorological Services Act (2019).
- The setting up of the **Land Drainage Authority** (2018) to manage more effectively flood management issues across the island.
- In its Nationally Determined Contributions 2015(NDC), Mauritius pledged to promote adaptation measures across key sectors and to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 30% by 2030, relative to the business as usual scenario and subject to provision of financial and technical support and capacity building from the international community.
- A “*Low Carbon Development Strategy and Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions*” (NAMA) for 2017-2021 is under preparation. The strategy aims to ensure a low carbon development pathway through establishment of the national capacity to formulate and prioritize mitigation actions for implementing the Mauritius NDC.
- The project “*Accelerating Transformational Shift to a Low Carbon Economy (Phase I: 2017-2020, Phase II: 2020-2025)*” is being developed. The project aims to mitigate GHG emissions through interventions which include the installation of battery energy storage system to absorb up to 185 MW of RE, a smart grid and a total of 25 MW rooftop solar PV for households and public buildings and the preparation of a National Grid Code.

- Under the budgetary Measures 2020/2021, the Central Electricity Board (CEB) will introduce a “**Medium-Scale Distributed Generation (MSDG) Scheme**”, for a maximum of 10 MW, to enable beneficiaries to produce electricity for their own consumption and sell the excess to CEB and install of 25 MW of rooftop solar PV to cater for public and residential buildings to encourage the use of renewable energy.
- According the Public Environment Expenditure Report (2018), it has been estimated that close to 2.15% of our GDP is being invested every year on environment and climate change issues. To further strengthen our resilience and emission reduction efforts Government has set up a financial portfolio of USD 50 million (Rs 2.1 billion) under the **National Environment Fund (NEF)** to tackle flood management, coastal rehabilitation and protection, disaster risk reduction and management, solid wastes management and landslides concerns as hereunder:
  - rehabilitation, protection and management of beaches, lagoons and coral reefs flood management and cleaning, rehabilitation and upgrading of drains, bridges and rivers
  - solid waste management
  - landslide management
  - disaster risk reduction
  - cleaning and embellishment works and
  - Green Economy
- Under the *Adapt’Action* programme which is supported by the *Agence Francaise de Developpement*, Mauritius is developing an adaptation programme in the following sectors: land drainage, coastal protection, and monitoring of climate parameters.
- Furthermore, the country has initiated the preparation of its National Adaptation Plan in sectors such as coastal zone infrastructure and fisheries. The *Mauritius Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis* programme with the SADC is also being developed to build capacity in the food security and disaster risk reduction sectors.
- Mauritius has been chosen for the implementation of specific activities under the initiative ‘*Supporting Sustainable Agriculture for Improved Food security and safety in the Republic of Mauritius*’, under the “*Development Smart Innovation through Research in Agriculture (DeSIRA)*” programme. Mauritius has benefitted from an envelope of about EUR 3 million from the EU to foster innovation in agriculture to raise national food security and safety and also promote sustainable management of land, water and other resources.
- In line with the Paris Agreement obligations, Mauritius has already initiated actions to review its NDC. Multi-stakeholder consultations are presently ongoing.
- The assenting /gazetting of the **Climate Change Act** in November 2020. The Climate Change Act will provide for a reinforced legal and institutional framework to optimise climate change management and coordination at sectoral level. Mauritius has been chosen for the implementation of specific activities under the initiative ‘*Supporting Sustainable Agriculture for Improved Food security and safety in the Republic of Mauritius*’. In this respect, the FAREI has been awarded a grant of Rs 100 M with the aim of fostering innovation in agriculture through the consolidation of the institute’s research and development capacity to address climate challenges and development of climate smart practices for sustainable production.

The Ministry also undertakes:



- the setting up of recreational areas, green spaces and health tracks for leisure and the promotion of the general wellbeing of our citizens in rural and urban areas;
- Landscaping projects and rehabilitation works along degraded sites.
- Cleaning and de siltation of rivers.
- Implementation of beach management plan/infrastructural works.
- Coastal protection and rehabilitation works to address beach erosion.

These activities not only enhance the country's degrading landscapes but also provide green open spaces to communities and increase the country's resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters through increased soil stability and protection from erosion, run offs, floodings and landslides. Soft measures with the use of ground covers, creepers (batatran), shrubs and trees amongst others on beaches offer protection form erosive forces of storms surges and waves.

**(b) (ii) Challenges and areas requiring urgent attention in relation to the SDGs towards achievement of the SDGs under the purview of the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change**

As a SIDs, Mauritius faces inherent environmental vulnerabilities: limited natural resources, small land area, sensitive ecosystems, geographical isolation from markets, exposure and proneness to natural calamities and disasters. Climate change has amplified our vulnerabilities (fresh water shortage, food security, droughts and heat stress). Our exposure to natural risks and disasters such as sea level rise, beach erosion, rainfall variability, torrential rains, flash floods, storm surges, swells, landslides with associated damage and destruction to infrastructure, cultivated and coastal lands have intensified.

Economic development involves tourism, industrial and agricultural expansion, infrastructural improvement and emergence of new growth engines, which are all heavy consumers of water and energy as well as generators of waste. The increasing demand in energy results in the use of more fossil fuels for energy production, thereby releasing noxious gases into the atmosphere. Rapid technological improvement is leading to an increasing amount of electronic waste, which contains hazardous substances. Industrial development gives rise to environmental pressures through the release of harmful gases including greenhouse gases (GHG) and wastewater.

Moreover, despite of all the above mentioned policy measures, laws and regulations, a clean and green environment continues to be a major concern for authorities even after all these years of combat. Local environmental challenges that persist are rapid change in land-use, increase in built-up areas, land clearance, encroachment on environmentally sensitive areas (sandy beaches, wetlands, river reserves, mountain slopes), loss of environmentally sensitive areas and their ecosystem services, reduction in green cover, increase in solid waste generation, e-waste management, pesticide residue, coastal degradation, littering and dumping, as well as unsustainable consumption and production patterns.

A number of barriers that hinder proper environmental management in Mauritius relate amongst others to inadequate legal and institutional frameworks; enforcement and monitoring, lack of strategic planning and institutions working in silos including:

- Lack of environmental responsibility, poor civic and throw away attitude of the population;
- Inadequate enforcement of legislations, implementation of policies, awareness and lack of synergies among and within sectors.

Also, the current structure and culture of the Mauritian society often prevents people from behaving in a sustainable manner, even when they would like to do so. This is illustrated by the shortage of recycling facilities. With economic growth, changing consumption patterns, trends in packaging and innovations in retailing, the volume and composition of solid waste has changed. However, only about 10% of the wastes generated are composted, recycled. Mauritius is lagging behind in waste reduction, reuse and recycling due to the absence of legal and institutional frameworks, inadequate infrastructural and logistical set up for waste sorting and segregation at source.

To date there is minimal facility, information, infrastructure and logistics for their sound storage, disposal and recycling of e-wastes. Even a system for the collection and management of same from households is absent such that e-wastes tend to end up in common garbage with risks to human and environmental health. Attempts to change behavior must therefore be supported by the provision of appropriate opportunities and infrastructure. An Extended Producer Responsibility Framework is being developed in line with the circular economy principle, wherein Importers of selected E-goods have to take responsibility for the collection and disposal of e-wastes, the successful implementation of the scheme is yet uncertain.

Gaps still exist as regards the collection and interpretation of data. There is need to strengthen the capacity of Mauritius in the collection of data and in their use for tracking progress of SCP projects. Moreover, support is also required to facilitate access to new and innovative technologies which can assist us in data collection. Another challenge is the proper monitoring and evaluation of SCP projects to gauge the success of same as well as to assess whether the set objectives of the project have been met. To-date, Mauritius does not have the necessary monitoring tool to assess progress made in integrating SCP patterns in our development process.

Government is implementing a number of plans and projects which are facing a number of challenges such as poor monitoring and evaluation of environmental performance, adoption of a piecemeal and sectoral approach towards addressing environmental issues. Environmental sustainability not being a priority for certain Ministries/institutions, same is not captured in their strategic orientation and direction. All these hinder incorporation of sustainability principles in all sectors of the economy.

The country having suffered a major oil spill from a shipwreck in August 2020, various loopholes were identified in the National Oil Spill Contingency Plan which requires updating.

All these challenge the very ability of government to meet its objectives to have sustainable communities including its ability and potential to deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals of the UN Development Agenda 2030.

#### **(d) Cooperation, measures and commitments at all levels in promoting sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.**

Mauritius implemented amongst others early mandatory preventive social isolation measures to prevent the spread of COVID19. Such measures mitigated the consequences of the disease and the collapse of the health system and alleviated the negative economic and social consequences.

Our economic and social model has shown its vulnerability and limitations. As a SIDS, with limited natural resources, we are isolated from major markets and therefore depend heavily on imports of our basic necessities like flour, rice, milk, meat, grains and cereals. Closure of international frontiers led to a shortage of certain products with a drastic increase in price of commodities. The current global context is unprecedented with COVID-19 having far reaching impacts across borders.

In the post-pandemic world, Mauritius must strengthen its productive apparatus and continue eliminating inherited and aggravated social inequalities by COVID-19. Putting Mauritius back on its feet requires restoring priorities so that, starting with the last ones, it reaches everyone. Achieving the objectives set by the 2030 Agenda remains a challenge and a horizon for our country.

The Mauritian's commitment to a long term sustainable development trajectory that is economically socially and environmentally sustainable requires scientific, technological and innovation capabilities, supported by strategic public investments and strategic partnerships. The strategy will call for an interdependency approach across sectors and action on sustainability to key areas of human development, ecological protection and economic growth. In order to be competitive in the future economic landscape, new ways of doing business will be required. Furthermore, international technical and financial support would be required for the implementation of the policy recommendations in the different areas.

The 10-Year Framework of programmes on SCP represents an ideal platform through which our efforts on implementing SCP can be enhanced. However, there is need for special consideration for SIDS countries in view of their inherent vulnerable characteristics and constrained means to achieve

progress on their own. Hence, a dedicated platform for SIDS with concrete projects which respond to their specific needs and facilities for technology transfer and capacity building is a pre-requisite for them to achieve their sustainable development goals.

Mauritius is currently implementing the SWITCH Africa Green project through which sound policies and recommendations on 'new' and innovative business avenues have been made to green the economy. To fully implement the policy recommendations, we need more of these meaningful partnership initiatives which can provide us with the necessary capacity and technical expertise and learn from demonstration projects and best practices. Regional partnerships are also beneficial as they offer ideal opportunities for establishing networking through which knowledge sharing, learning from best practices and project replication can be effected.

Addressing the impacts of the pandemic requires enormous efforts from Governments, Businesses, and civil society organisations including technical and financial support from international partners. Government, businesses and the civil society should all work together and do things differently to achieve a well-balanced socio-economic development and environment sustainability in the wake of the COVID 19 pandemic.

As Mauritius prepares itself to build back better and smarter, it is fundamental that it re-thinks' and re-invents' itself through sustainable practices. There is a need to boost the emergence of green enterprises through the adoption of innovative and resource efficient techniques that take into consideration the use of clean energy, minimisation of pollution risks, protection of the environment, and generation of waste.

Through Public Private Partnerships (PPP), businesses and enterprises are being encouraged to develop and mainstream circular economy principles in their production chain, encourage the use of 'waste' as a resource, and promote water conservation and energy efficiency within or amongst industries. Also, to promote the sustainability of businesses, appropriate framework and mechanism which include sustainable procurement, awareness of sustainable products and development of standards and labeling frameworks, appropriate financial and economic incentives so as to drive the supply chain for sustainable products need continuous development.

Effective and concrete technical and financial assistance is required from our development partners like EU, UNEP, AFD and through South-South Cooperation with countries like India, China and Japan to create a 'new normal' in our day-to-day activities and to support programmes/ projects as hereunder:

- support vulnerable communities in promoting subsistence farming including backyard gardening, rooftop gardening, composting, smart agriculture and so on;
- promote/dissemination/ propagation of local fruit trees as part of greening of villages and towns and as part of food security endeavor.
- promotion of agro-forestry region with a view to enhance food security in line with SDG 2 – End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture;
- enhancement of preparedness programmes by setting up or upgrading early warning systems;
- enhancement of sink capacity by increasing forest cover and blue carbon sink;
- in line with SDG 11, to promote action for the development of sustainable cities, including greening;
- assessment of ecosystem services and natural capital accounting to address climate change impacts such as flooding, coastal inundation, drought and land degradation;