

Mauritius Voluntary National Review (VNR) Main Message

Mauritius celebrated its 50 years of independence last year.

It has been fifty years of nation building premised on the core values of good governance, rule of law, and also upholding human rights, and territorial integrity.

This first VNR report of Mauritius allows us to take stock of the journey travelled, where the country is currently poised and how we propose to map our future.

The implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is key to our future development. The SDG mapping exercise we conducted in 2016 identified 222 indicators which have already been integrated in our national policies. We are now working in the direction of a permanent national structure to monitor continual progress for SDGs.

Our VNR Report has some good stories to tell but also speaks of challenges arising.

Mauritius moved from being a low income to an upper middle income economy with the ambition of evolving into a high income country despite its inherent vulnerabilities as a Small Island Developing State devoid of natural resources, subjected to the tyranny of distance, natural disasters and the effects of climate change and highly vulnerable to external shocks and global trends. It has simultaneously invested in its welfare system spanning free education, health care, universal old age pension and other measures aimed at providing a minimum social protection to our people.

It is against this background that the SDGs are being implemented.

SDG1 aimed at Ending Poverty in all its forms derives its actions from a Marshall Plan comprising measures such as the Minimum Wage, Negative Income Tax, income support and social housing to provide relief to the weakest, especially Women.

We have overhauled the education system (SDG4) to make it more inclusive and less elitist. The focus is on quality education for all aligned with the new job market requirements to address youth unemployment and skills mismatch (SDG8). In this endeavor, we are using technology and innovation to prepare our nation for its next cycle of development (SDG9).

We are diligently protecting our marine and terrestrial ecosystems in the face of climate change (SDGs 13 and 14). While encouraging measures such as community-based coral planting, Government is at the same time pursuing a programme underpinned by sound Marine Spatial Planning. We wish to bequeath sound blue and green legacies to future generations and to rely on the continued sustainability of our Oceans to scale up development.

Over the past fifty years, Mauritius has pitched its development around the building of Partnerships. The collaboration between Civil Society, the Public and Private sectors and academia in Mauritius is exceptional and has allowed the pursuit of a people focused development and has consolidated social cohesion. Our VNR, which involved a close consultative process with different stakeholders, shows this national partnership is working.

We have built similar partnerships at bilateral and regional levels. Mauritius and Seychelles were the first to make a joint submission on the sharing of maritime space whilst at regional level, we host yearly a Conference with the Indian Ocean Commission to build Partnerships around a maritime agenda.

Global partnerships have a catalytic role to play for Mauritius to successfully advance its SDGs as part of its broader national agenda that encompasses the African Union's Agenda 2063, the Samoa Pathway or the African Peer Review Mechanism.

Mauritius is aware of its vulnerabilities and challenges in implementing the SDGs. A one-size-fits-all approach discriminates against SIDS, like Mauritius, which require special, differential and indeed a tailor made approach and accompanying measures to progress to their next stage of development and not run the risk of regressing towards poverty and indebtedness.

The need for more resilient infrastructure in face of climate change effects such as flashfloods, the sustenance of a welfare system in the face of an ageing population or the need for more funds to build capacity, all speak to the challenge of being a middle income country without easy access to grants or concessional loans.

We seek global Partnerships to attain the SDG's and to pursue our unique journey as a multi-cultural, multi religious and multi ethnic nation in a spirit of Unity in Diversity – ***'lame dan lame(hand in hand)'***.