CHEMICALS

1.1 Assessment of chemical risks, including:

1.1 Mechanisms for systematic evaluation, classification, and labeling of chemicals, including initiatives towards a harmonized system of classification and labeling of chemicals & 1.1.2 Initiatives for assessment of toxic chemicals, hazard and risk assessment, and participation in various international and regional initiatives

Mauritius has the Dangerous Chemicals Control Act 2004 (DCCA) which is the legal framework for the control of dangerous chemicals in order to prevent damage to health and to the environment by chemical substances and to provide for better protection of workers, members of the public and the environment.

The DCCA, under the Ministry of Health & Quality of Life, is in line with the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labeling of Chemicals. There is established for the purpose of the implementations of the provisions of the DCCA, a Dangerous Chemicals Control Board (DCCB) whose functions are the following:

- To classify dangerous chemicals according to the appropriate schedules.
- To ensure co-ordination and co-operation amongst the law enforcement agencies, government departments and other institutions for the effective control of dangerous chemicals.
- To consider applications for the grant of licenses, permits and authorization for marketing and use of dangerous chemicals under the Act.
- To register dangerous chemicals.
- To develop policies and administrative measures to ensure effective consultation on matters relating to dangerous chemicals.

High risks workers in certain hazardous trades such as chemical storage facilities or pesticides sprayer men are required to undergo periodic medical examination.(for both public and private sector).

The Government Analyst Division of the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life is responsible for the toxicological assessment for heavy metals such Mercury, Nickel and Lead.

1.1.3 Strategies for exposure assessment and environmental monitoring and improvement in procedures for using toxicological and epidemiological data to predict and estimate the effects of chemicals on human health and the environment

None

1.1.4 Information exchange and cooperation, data-quality assurance, application of assessment criteria, and linkages to risk management activities

Undertaken under the aegis of the DCCB, as elaborated at 1.1.1 and 1.1.2 above.

1.2 Sound management of toxic chemicals

1.2.1 Progress within the larger framework of Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM)

The Ministry of Health and Quality of Life is the focal point for SAICM and is represented by the Occupational Health Unit.

While the SAICM is not a treaty and is not legally binding, it represents a public commitment, a global policy strategy, and a plan of action to guide authorities, industry and civil society for safely managing chemicals.

The project aims firstly to assist Mauritius to develop a comprehensive assessment of the national infrastructure, relating to the legal, intuitional, administrative and technical aspects of chemicals management. The project also aims to assist Mauritius to build upon the National Profile development process

Mauritius is also party to the Rotterdam Convention (1997) for the prior Informed Consent (PIC) procedure for Banned or Restricted Chemicals in International Trade. The designated National Authority for Mauritius is the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life. Mauritius ratified the Convention on 03 August 2005 and the Convention came into force in Mauritius in November 2005. Implementation of the articles of the Convention is on-going.

Government actively participates in the implementation of the Basel Convention on the transboundary movement of hazardous wastes. The Hazardous Wastes Regulations govern the domestic management and export of hazardous wastes. Import of hazardous wastes is banned.

Mauritius has, so far, not embarked on a dedicated program of Sound Management of Chemicals. The preparation of a National Profile to assess the National Infrastructure for Management of Chemicals, relating to their institutional, administrative and technical aspects, would be an important step in the strengthening of the legislation. However, actions have been initiated to secure funds from SAICM QSP to undertake a comprehensive national chemicals management profile.

1.2.2 Initiatives and innovations for risk reduction, particularly taking in to account the life cycle of the chemicals

Mauritius has procedures in place to ensure that any hazardous material put into circulation is accompanied, at a minimum, by appropriate and reliable safety information,

such as material safety data sheets and labels. However, the mechanism is yet to be put in place for the collection and disposal of hazardous wastes and obsolete chemicals.

1.2.3 Precautionary measures derived from broad-based life cycle analysis & 1.2.4 Policy measures to phase out chemicals that pose unreasonable and unmanageable risk to human health and human environment, such as, for example, ozone-depleting substances

On and above the national approach explicated at 1.1.1 and 1.1.2 above, parallel mechanisms have also been established for specific categories of chemicals such as the POPs and ODS.

Mauritius signed the Stockholm Convention on POPs in May 2001 and ratified it in 2004 and is committed to comply with its provisions. Most of the POPs have been banned. The Health and Environmental issues associated with POPs are covered mostly under the two main legal frameworks, namely the Dangerous Chemical Control Act 2004 and the Environment Protection (Amendment) Act 2008.

Mauritius has already prepared its National Implementation Plan (NIP) for the management of POPs. In the context of the implementation of the Stockholm Convention, a project partly funded by the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) has been launched this year. The objective of this 4-year project is the implementation of the first 2 priorities from the Mauritius National Implementation Plan (NIP) namely: (i) Disposal of obsolete POPs chemicals and decontamination of POPs-related infested areas; and (ii) Development of alternative strategies for malaria vector management with reduced, or no, reliance on DDT.

Mauritius is a signatory to the Vienna Convention on the Protection of the Ozone Layer (1985) and the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer (1987). For complying with these requirements, the Consumer Protection Act prohibits the import of CFC's.

1.2.5 Policies and frameworks for prevention of accidents, preparedness and response

Mauritius does not have any mechanism in place for prevention, preparedness and response for chemical accidents.

1.2.6 Policies aimed at reducing the risks posed by lead, mercury and cadmium and other harmful heavy metals, including through a review of relevant studies, such as, for example, the United Nations Environment Programme global assessment of mercury and its compounds

Mauritius is participating in the UNEP Programme regarding the monitoring of release of mercury and its compounds into the environment and their impacts on human health. To this effect, 12 national partnerships have been developed. The 12 partnerships, implemented by different organizations, mainly deal with monitoring of mercury in the environment, awareness raising, substitution and phasing out of mercury-containing reagents and equipment. The projects are ongoing but some organizations are behind the scheduled time due to shortage of funds.

1.2.7 Initiatives to reduce overdependence on the use of agricultural chemicals

In the non-sugar sector, there are already introduced strategies for optimum utilization and management of resources for soil conservation and fertility management, nutrient and water management, agricultural waste recycling, use of organic manure, development of bio-fertilizer and compost activators, biodiversity conservation, and integrated pest management (IPM). As a prerequisite to promote export of horticultural products (e.g. litchi, pineapple, anthurium), farmers are sensitized on the importance of adopting Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) within a framework of agricultural production to ensure food safety, environment production, workers safety and welfare, and long-term sustainability. Several training programmes have already been carried out by the Government to discourage bad agricultural practices and promote good practices. Training of agricultural workers on safe use of pesticides are carried out by to planters.

The training includes, amongst others :

- Storage and safe use of agrochemicals
- Correct application of agrochemicals
- Maintenance of protective clothing
- Disposal of containers and pesticide waste
- Storage and transport of pesticides
- Emergency measures in event of failure or breakdown of an equipment or accident or spillage.