



UNITED NATIONS  
MAURITIUS



## 2020 UN Country Results Report

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## Foreword by the Resident Coordinator

On behalf of the United Nations Family in Mauritius, I am pleased to present the Annual Results Report for 2020. The report highlights progress on implementing the national contingency health plan, COVID-19 response, and the UN-Government of Mauritius Strategic Partnership Framework (SPF) 2019-2023. The SERP and SPF are aligned to national priorities, the SAMOA pathway, Africa Agenda 2063, and the SDGs.

During 2020, Mauritius experienced two major emergencies, COVID-19 and the MV Wakashio oil spill. Subsequently, the UN helped to elaborate the national COVID-19 health response plan and the COVID-19 Socio-Economic Response Plan (SERP). The UN also finalized the proposal for green recovery under the Partnership for Action on Green Economy (PAGE) and the capacity for disaster risk management initiative (CADRI) report and policy briefs were validated. All these plans and key documents were designed to align with the SPF and provide agencies with flexibility to reprogramme resources or mobilize more funds for effective response.

Despite a challenging year, there has been clear progress in some of the key results areas. The annual report highlights the progress made by the 21 agencies, funds and programmes that comprise the UN family in Mauritius, and gives an overview of the UN's collective effort to support national development efforts. The lessons learned will be useful as we begin the 2020-2030 Decade of Action towards attaining the SDGs.

The UN75 youth dialogues on The Future We Want and The UN We Need, spearheaded by the Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Education, led to inspiring messages and promises for the future. During the national ceremonies to mark the 75th anniversary of the UN, the Honourable Prime Minister, and Guest of Honour, reiterated the points he made at the UN General Assembly and thanked the UN for timely advice and support in tackling key development challenges. The UN partnered with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to celebrate UN Day and the UN's 75th anniversary, bringing together all government departments, development partners, the private sector, CSOs, academia, and the general public, especially youth.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Government of Mauritius for its good collaboration. The UN appreciates the support of partners, including bilateral and multilateral development actors, regional cooperation bodies, international financial institutions, the private sector, civil society organizations, and academia.

I believe that continued partnership will be crucial to support the country's long-term visions to achieve the SDGs while ensuring a resilient, greener and inclusive economy.



H.E Christine N. Umutoni  
United Nations Resident Coordinator



# Acronyms

<b>AfCFTA</b>	African Continental Free Trade Area
<b>AIDS</b>	Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
<b>BOS</b>	Business Operation Strategy
<b>CADRI</b>	Capacity Assessment for Disaster Risk
<b>COVID-19</b>	Coronavirus Disease 2019
<b>CSO</b>	Civil society organization
<b>DPG</b>	Development Partners Group
<b>GBV</b>	Gender-based violence
<b>IOC</b>	Indian Ocean Commission
<b>NRIS</b>	Natural Resource Information System
<b>PAGE</b>	Partnership for Action on Green Economy
<b>PCB</b>	Polychlorinated biphenyl
<b>RRA</b>	Rodrigues Regional Assembly
<b>SADC</b>	Southern Africa Development Community
<b>SAMOA</b>	SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action
<b>SERP</b>	Socio-Economic Response Plan
<b>SIDS</b>	Small Island Developing State
<b>SPF</b>	Strategic Partnership Framework
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNCT</b>	United Nations Country Team



# The UN family in Mauritius

## The UN family comprises the following resident and non-resident agencies, funds, and programmes:

- International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)
- International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)
- International Labour Organization (ILO)
- International Organization for Migration (IOM)
- Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)
- Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)
- Small Grants Programme under the Global Environment Facility and UNDP
- UN Environment Programme (UNEP)
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
- United Nations Entity dedicated to Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women)
- United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
- United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)
- United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)
- United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) \*Only available during emergencies
- United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)
- United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
- United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR)
- United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)
- World Health Organization (WHO)



\*United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) supports Mauritius but is not yet a signatory to the SPF.





# Key development partners of the UN system in Mauritius

The Development Partners Group (DPG) for Mauritius was established in 2019. It is chaired by the UN Resident Coordinator. The information exchange and coordination it performs with bilateral and multilateral partners have helped improve the effectiveness and impact of the UN's work in Mauritius in 2020.

The UN received funding for projects mainly from its own core resources and support from the African Development Bank, Agence Française de Développement, the Australian High Commission, the British High Commission, the Capacity for Disaster Reduction Initiative (CADRI), the European Union, the Global Environment Fund (GEF), the Green Climate Fund, the Indian Ocean Commission, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the Partnership for Action on Green Economy (PAGE), and the World Bank.

### Evidence Based Policy-Making

Partnership and pooling between the UN, the AfDB and the World Bank in provide expert advice to the Government on key strategic issues through research symposiums, discussion papers or technical studies.

### COVID-19 Recovery Strategy

Collaboration with the Agence Française de Développement (AFD), the African Development Bank (AfDB), the European Union and the World Bank in view to support the Government in addressing the socio-economic impact of the pandemic and building back better.

### Climate Change and Environmental Protection

Collaborative approach with the AFD, the French Embassy, the British High Commission in view to complement each other's activity in advocating for a low carbon and climate resilient economy, supporting the development of national climate change and environmental strategies and mobilizing financing from the Green Climate Fund and the Global Environment Facility.



### Response to the MV Wakashio Oil Spill

Coordinated approach between the UN, the Embassy of Japan in Mauritius/ JICA, the French Embassy, the Indian High Commission, the British High Commission, the Australian High Commission and the U.S Embassy in supporting the Government in its response to the oil spill following the wreckage of the MV Wakashio.

### Maritime Security

Partnership with the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) and the European Union in promoting maritime governance and limiting maritime crime through technical support and capacity building.

### Gender Equality and Women Empowerment

Collaboration and pooling of resources between the UN and the Australian High Commission to support initiatives encouraging women empowerment and addressing the issue of gender-based violence.

### Disaster Risk Reduction

Synergy between the work of the UN, the CADRI Partnership team, the AFD and JICA in supporting the National Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy and in building capacity to better prepare and respond to natural disasters in the country.



## Key development partners of the UN system in Mauritius

In 2020, the UN worked closely with the Government to implement SERP and the Strategic Partnership Framework 2019-2023 through various departments. The mapping below indicates programme interventions and corresponding SDGs.

# DECADE OF >>>> ACTION



> **Ministry of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity**  
Social Protection and the impacts of COVID-19



> **Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security**  
Sustainable Agriculture and Food security



> **Prime Minister's Office**  
> **Ministry of Health and Wellness**  
Health Response to the COVID-19 pandemic and strengthening of health systems and services



> **Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology**  
E-Learning and Youth Engagement & Empowerment



> **Ministry of Gender Equality and Family Welfare**  
> **National Assembly**  
> **Rodrigues Regional Assembly**  
Women Empowerment and Gender-based violence & Gender Mainstreaming



> **Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities**  
Deployment of Renewable Energy



> **Ministry of Labour, Human Resource Development and Training**  
> **Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development**  
> **Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security**  
COVID-19 Socio-Economic Impacts, Employment and Decent work conditions and Green Recovery in the Agricultural sector



> **Ministry of Industrial Development, SMEs and Cooperatives**  
Industrial Development and Re-engineering of the manufacturing sector



> **Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade (Human Rights Division)**  
Protection and promotion of human rights



> **Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change**  
> **Ministry of Tourism**  
Sustainable Agricultural practices and Green Tourism principles



> **Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change**  
> **Ministry of Health and Wellness**  
> **Ministry of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management**  
Coastal protection, Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation, Environmental Monitoring



> **Ministry of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping**  
> **Prime Minister's Office**  
Coral Restoration and protection of marine biodiversity & Marine Spatial Planning



> **Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade**  
> **Rodrigues Regional Assembly**  
Promotion and Mainstreaming of the SDGs & UN75/Decade of Action Advocacy





# Key developments in Mauritius and the regional context

Mauritius is a small island state with a high human development index. As a multi-party parliamentary democracy, the country has enjoyed political and social stability since its independence in 1968. It has relatively strong public institutions based on the rule of law. Mauritius has embarked in recent years on reforms to improve public sector transparency and accountability, and in 2020 ranked first in the Mo Ibrahim Index for African Governance for the tenth year in a row. Mauritius ranks first in Africa in the Global Competitiveness index and 13th in the World Bank's global Ease of Doing Business Report 2020. In 2020, the World Bank classified Mauritius as a high-income country for the first time, based on 2019 figures.

Mauritius confirmed its first two cases of COVID-19 in March 2020 and immediately announced a lockdown. An effective public health response helped to keep the number of cases to a minimum, as the quarantine imposed on returning Mauritians and residents, as well as the limiting of tourists, enabled the isolation and treatment of patients in dedicated facilities and prevented community transmission. By the end of 2020, Mauritius was COVID-19 safe with 513 registered cases and 10 deaths.

The pandemic had a negative impact on the tourism sector that spilt over into other sectors. The Mauritian economy contracted by 15.2% in 2020 compared to growth of 3.2% in 2019; the tourism and manufacturing industries were particularly affected. With 310,000 tourists in 2020 compared to 1,380,000 in 2019, the

accommodation and food services sectors contracted by 67.4%, while the manufacturing sector lost 20.1% of its production. Job losses have been particularly severe in the informal sector, with an estimated 21,000 jobs terminated by July.<sup>i</sup>

Another crisis hit Mauritius in 2020. On 25 July the bulk carrier vessel MV Wakashio ran aground, leading to an oil spill on the south-east coast. The Government declared a state of emergency. A massive clean-up operation was launched and the closure of economic activity reduced income from tourism, further affecting jobs.

These challenges exposed critical vulnerabilities that Mauritius faces, some of which will continue to require external assistance. First, although the country has tried to diversify its economic base, it still relies heavily on performance of sectors like tourism. Mauritius also remains highly reliant on food imports and is trying hard to improve food security. For most small island states including Mauritius, responding to a major external crisis burdens the economy due to high expenditure and constrains the fiscal space needed to fund recovery, which forces nations into a heavier debt service. COVID-19 has affected incomes, which means inequalities will further widen unless the Government affords to develop more efficient safety nets to lift people out of poverty effectively. With minimum development aid, it is important to find other ways of financing economic transformation that will lead to a resilient, greener and inclusive society.

<sup>i</sup> Marco Ranzani and Li Fa Cheung Kai Suet, "The welfare of Mauritian households during the COVID-19 pandemic: Evidence from three rounds of high-frequency surveys", World Bank, 19 November 2020, at <https://blogs.worldbank.org/africacan/welfare-mauritian-households-during-covid-19-pandemic-evidence-three-rounds-high>





## 2

# UN support to Mauritius' national development priorities

## Overview of Strategic Partnership Framework results

The SPF between the United Nations and the Government of Mauritius for 2019-2023 covers the following six priorities:

-  **1. Transformed businesses**
-  **2. Ageing society, health, and labour market reforms**
-  **3. Ocean economy and tourism**
-  **4. Inclusive, quality education, and skilling**
-  **5. Social protection and gender equality**
-  **6. Resilience to climate change**

Following the COVID-19 outbreak, the UN developed a Socio-Economic Response Plan (SERP) in close consultation with the government. The SERP is based on the five pillars of the UN Global COVID-19 SERP, and its **three main outcomes** are aligned with the SPF:

- **Outcome 1.** Support to the Government of Mauritius to implement a public health response to prevent, contain, and treat COVID-19 cases through health system strengthening (linked to SPF outcome 2)
- **Outcome 2.** Support the implementation of social protection initiatives for vulnerable groups (linked to SPF outcome 5)
- **Outcome 3.** Support for socio-economic impact assessments and recovery planning (linked to SPF outcomes 1, 3, 4, and 6)

In 2020, the Capacity Assessment for Disaster Risk (CADRI) and related policy notes were validated, and a programme was initiated on green recovery under the Partnership for Green Economy (PAGE); all of these are aligned to the SPF and the SERP.



## 2020 results under the Strategic Partnership Framework

In 2020, the UN continued to support Mauritius' progress towards its development objectives following the SPF, while putting extra efforts into delivering results under the SERP and other vital programmes. The main results are presented below by SPF outcome.



### OUTCOME 1.



#### TRANSFORMED BUSINESSES

**By 2023, a stronger policy and regulatory environment promotes innovation and increased productivity in targeted traditional and new sectors.**

In line with *Mauritius Vision 2030*, the country is revamping its industrial sector by identifying new drivers of growth and transforming traditional sectors through improved competitiveness and innovation. In 2020, the UN supported Mauritius to lay the foundation of this industrial ambition by creating an enabling environment and mobilizing the private sector. By exploring current areas of engagement and opportunities, the UN and partners identified strategic opportunities for Mauritius to re-engineer its textile and apparel industry and make it dynamic, resilient, and competitive. The UN helped develop the National Industrial Policy and Strategic Plan for Mauritius (2020-2025).

The UN in Mauritius supported a culture policy review and finalization of national legislation concerning the status of the artist in Mauritius to support the creative economy. Mauritius also contributed to a regional review of the World Heritage Convention and an analysis of the contribution of its World Heritage sites to sustainable development.

With African nations expected to open their markets in January 2021 under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) agreement, the UN partnered with the Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and Industry to establish a Business Intelligence Platform to identify opportunities and develop strategies to boost intra-African trade. The UN supported the establishment of a regional chapter of the UN Global Compact Network (GC) based in Mauritius. GC enlists the private sector's willingness and capacities to actively contribute to sustainable development in Mauritius, Seychelles, Comoros, and Madagascar.

UN support enhanced the capacity of the National Productivity and Competitiveness Council (NPCC) to implement the Sustaining Competitive and Responsible Enterprises (SCORE), a programme that improves productivity and working conditions in small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

To advance sustainable and environment-friendly practices that promote farming resilience to the impacts of climate change and advance food security and safety, Mauritius drafted national legislation for organic farming and implementing regulations. Over 50 government officers and 100 farmers received training on techniques to develop agroforestry and helped carry out baseline studies on the

agricultural and forestry sectors. A market analysis determined the potential of the agroforestry enterprises and products, and guided adopters to profitable options. The UN provided support through the IOC to implement the strategy for regional food and nutrition security to boost domestic production.

High-level technical and legal expertise helped prepare seven regulations needed to implement the *2013 Seeds Act* and develop Mauritius' seed industry, including for the import and potential export of seeds. Two bodies have been formed under the seed law and regulations: (i) the National Plant Variety and Seeds Office, which implements the regulations; and (ii) the National Seeds Laboratory, which is responsible for testing seed lots. Finally, the *National Seed Policy* was elaborated to serve as a roadmap for the coordinated development of the seed sector.

The UN supported Rodrigues towards developing effective import substitution in agricultural value chains by helping the Rodrigues Regional Assembly (RRA) strengthen its rural development planning capacities to allocate land use according to its suitability for specific crops and forestry activities. The assistance produced land suitability maps using satellite imagery complemented by field surveys, alongside upgrading information technology equipment and capacities and establishing the Rodrigues Land and Water Information System, a centralized database accessible electronically to all RRA departments. The newly established Natural Resource Information System (NRIS) team, with staff from the departments in charge of agricultural research, cadastre, public infrastructure, water resources, forestry, and environment reviews, analyses and updating relevant data on the NRIS.



Following the impacts of COVID-19, the UN supported studies to ensure recovery strategies that are evidence-based. This included an early assessment of the impacts of the crisis on Mauritius to direct its immediate response, and a Socio-Economic Impact Assessment of COVID-19 to inform decision-makers on key areas of intervention during the recovery period to build back better. A Business Pulse survey conducted with Business Mauritius and Statistics Mauritius analysed the impacts of COVID-19 on businesses. Other thematic assessments on the impact of COVID-19 were conducted on various sectors including food security, migration, labour, education, and culture (analysis of COVID-19's impact on world heritage, intangible cultural heritage, and the cultural and creative industries). This will inform the wider programme for green recovery.





## OUTCOME 2.



### AGEING SOCIETY, HEALTH AND LABOUR MARKET REFORMS

**By 2023, there is a comprehensive approach to address challenges posed by population ageing including its effects on population health, the labour market, and economic growth.**

As part of strengthening Mauritius' health system to deal with COVID-19, the UN partnered with the Government to elaborate and implement a [National COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan](#) to prevent, contain and treat COVID-19 cases. It contributed to a review of legislation on public health and quarantine and supported the Government to draft and review guidelines and protocols on prevention, contact tracing and treatment for the coronavirus. The UN further helped to strengthen the national health infrastructure and system. It assisted the Government to implement a Laboratory Information Management System and increase its virus detection capabilities, thereby enabling efficient tracking and reporting of COVID-19 cases. With the Government and the private sector, the UN contributed to the construction

and establishment of Flu/Fever Clinics and COVID-19 testing centres, which proved effective at preventing transmission from suspected cases to health personnel and other patients. The UN also provided personal protective equipment to frontline health workers for the prevention and control of infection.

The partnership resulted in an effective national response to the health crisis that demonstrated (i) improved coordination within government, (ii) active risk communication and community engagement, (iii) a strengthened capacity of the health system and its frontline workers, (iv) efficient health screening, disease surveillance and risk assessment, (v) effective procurement, storage and distribution of critical health supplies, (vi) the availability of adequate critical care treatment and medicines for patients with COVID-19 and for essential health care services, (vii) increased laboratory testing capacities, and (viii) the ability of the health system to continue providing essential and routine health care services.

Beyond the COVID-19 pandemic, the UN supported the Government to improve the policy framework to enhance the national health system and address the social determinants of health. It helped develop the [Health Sector Strategic Plan \(HSSP\) 2020-2024](#) that charts out a roadmap for health development and outlines actions to address health challenges across the lifespan of the population.

The UN supported the elaboration of a *National Population Policy* to address the multifaceted and interconnected issues arising from the changing demographic landscape in the country, including in relation to education, health care, climate change, and environmental sustainability. In addition, it helped the Government to prepare a *National Service Framework for Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs)* and a *National Integrated NCD Action Plan*. Furthermore, the UN supported efforts



to reach out to the most vulnerable, including the elderly, through a cohesive health delivery system, immunizing them with influenza vaccines at home using a mobile door-to-door service.

To maximize the positive effects of migration on the country's socio-economic development and to continue improving the conditions of the migrant population, the UN supported the development of an evidence-based approach to migration policies. It collaborated with Statistics Mauritius to ensure the collection of reliable data on migrants in Mauritius that will be used domestically and will feed studies for the UN to help create an improved policy environment for labour migration across the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) region, as well as improved access to legal and efficient means of labour mobility for labour migrants. The UN also assisted the Government to produce *Guidance for Employers and Businesses on the Protection of Migrant Workers During the COVID-19 Crisis* and shared

multi-lingual COVID-19 information posters to ensure the accessibility of health information to migrants, and to support Mauritius in assisting stranded migrants.

To better understand the needs and potentials of the diaspora to contribute to Mauritius' development, the UN worked with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to map and profile the Mauritian diaspora in three pilot countries. As part of this exercise, it developed communication tools to target the diaspora communities, enhance their advocacy, and bring a more sensitive approach to the mapping initiative. It facilitated a series of dialogues with the Mauritian diaspora on virtual platforms and social media, the results of which will inform the preparation of a diaspora strategy. The UN has supported the Indian Ocean Commission to establish a migration dialogue for IOC countries. Implementation of the Global Compact on Migration is under way and work on migration data and maritime security continues.





### OUTCOME 3.



#### OCEAN ECONOMY AND TOURISM

**By 2023, the marine sector has an integrated policy and regulatory environment that promotes sustainable resource management and private sector-led diversification and job creation.**

The UN progressed in helping shape the debate on the contents and application of the concept of a 'blue economy'. With the Indian Ocean Commission, it produced a regional action plan on the blue economy for collaboration between Comoros, Reunion, Madagascar, Mauritius and Seychelles that has informed the preparation of blue economy national action plans across the region. In Mauritius, the UN facilitated national consultations on marine spatial planning and produced analysis of [operationalizing the Blue Economy in the South West Indian Ocean](#) that focused on Mauritius.

To develop sustainable tourism, the UN held a Forum on African Youth for Sustainable Tourism Solutions, refocused on understanding the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis on tourism and what directions tourist destinations could take to put sustainable tourism at the core of their recovery. The UN then presented an offer of assistance to the Government to integrate sustainable tourism as a pillar of Mauritius' recovery plan. This was structured around

- (i) economic recovery, with help measuring the quantitative and qualitative impacts of COVID-19 on the tourism sector and preparing recommendations for economic recovery and support to tourism-related businesses;
- (ii) marketing and promotion to help the Government review its marketing and promotion strategies, identify and target markets that can help accelerate recovery, address product diversification, and develop pricing and packaging; and
- (iii) institutional strengthening and resilience to assist the Government and tourism businesses to adapt their services to meet post-COVID-19 working conditions (in terms of health, safety, and restoration of consumer confidence) and promote public-private partnerships in tourism recovery.

By year end, while the Government was still preparing its request for support, the UN had already been providing feedback on procedures to re-open tourism.



To strengthen a regional approach to maritime security and migration, the UN partnered with the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC), the Regional Centre for the Fusion of Maritime Information (RCFMI) in Madagascar, and the Regional Maritime Operational Coordination Centre (RCOC) in Seychelles; these centres spread in the region helped to build the capacities of governments in the Western Indian Ocean to analyse and address the risks and threats posed by migration-related transnational organized maritime crime.

The UN assisted the Government of Mauritius to assess the feasibility of setting up a secure dedicated network and database for migration-related information and intelligence sharing on maritime security. It organized virtual training

for prosecutors from across the Indian Ocean region in which Mauritius participated to learn from case studies on how to prosecute specific maritime crimes. It held other online events to inform prosecutors on the work of the regional information sharing and coordination centres, the RCOC and RCFMI, and on mechanisms for Mutual Legal Assistance (MLA).

The UN further established a programme for port security and container control in Mauritius as part of expanding safer trade in the Indian Ocean. This started in the last quarter of 2020 with virtual consultations to prepare a baseline understanding of maritime law enforcement capabilities in Mauritius that will help tailor targeted deliverables and effective implementation modalities.





#### OUTCOME 4.



#### INCLUSIVE, QUALITY EDUCATION AND SKILLING

**By 2023, the education and training system offers higher quality, inclusive services and equips all learners with knowledge and skills for enhanced employability.**

In response to the COVID-19 crisis, the UN provided the Government with detailed guidance to prevent and control COVID-19 in schools (from preschool to upper secondary) for school administrators, teachers and staff, parents, caregivers, community members, and students and children. For post-secondary and Technical and Vocational Education and Training institutions, the UN supported the development and strengthening of distance learning programmes. It helped improve access to online learning materials, digitize curricula, and develop online resources for teachers and students. It further ran a series of virtual meetings with the Government to share experiences, tools, and resources made available by global partners.

To help strengthen the quality of communication and information practices, the UN organized a webinar on the safety of journalists covering the COVID-19 pandemic, on reflections on the media sector's response, and on how to counter disinformation about the pandemic in Mauritius. It further organized a webinar on deconstructing misinformation, hate speech and racism to promote cultural diversity, peace building and sustainable development.

In its support to protect and promote culture, the UN organized a regional webinar on *Opportunities, challenges and best practices in the development of distance education resources for museums in Eastern Africa*. It supported Mauritius in reporting on the 2005 *Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions* with a review of its culture policies and measures to inform and assess the development of the cultural and creative industries sector. As a result, the Government of Mauritius prepared its quadrennial periodic report on the 2005 Convention that will be presented to the February 2021 session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions and will inform the next UN Global Report *Reshaping Cultural Policies*, which provides examples of innovative policies to promote the diversity of cultural expression.

The UN continued to support enhancing employment opportunities and protecting workers' rights. To support labour market reforms, it provided online training to government officials on employment policies focused on "a job-rich and inclusive recovery from the COVID-19 crisis". Ten enterprises participating in the Sustaining Competitive and Responsible Enterprises (SCORE) programme benefited from Occupational Safety and Health COVID-19 training-of-trainers so they could adopt new safety and sanitation protocols arising from the COVID-19 crisis.

The UN provided life skills training, in partnership with the private sector and the Ministry of Education, including training on the UNPLUGGED package, which is an effective tool for preventing drug use in schools that has been adapted to the Mauritian context (known as 'Get Connected') and incorporated in the secondary school curriculum.

The UN supported the Government to develop distance education programmes at museums and has shared experience on the aforementioned 'Opportunities, challenges and best practices in the development of distance education resources for museums in Eastern Africa.' The UN promoted the launch of a new Intercontinental Slavery Museum in Port-Louis and an exhibition titled "Breaking the Silence".



#### LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND FOR COVID-19 RESPONSE

**In 2020, Mauritius was hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, which increased the risk of being left behind for the most vulnerable population, including migrant workers, women and children, and the elderly, as well as prisoners and persons with disabilities. In this context the UN continued policy dialogue and advocacy to ensure that all services were accessible as much as possible to the most vulnerable in Mauritian society. Efforts included:**

- **Advocating and working closely with the authorities and service providers to ensure that migrant workers and asylum seekers in Mauritius had the same kind of support as the rest of the population during the pandemic: this includes social protection, access to health care and access to social services.**
- **Special services to the elderly, including mobile clinics, door-to-door delivery of services, special shopping days for the elderly.**

- **Helping to ensure that key population groups at risk of HIV continued as much as possible to receive services during the pandemic.**
- **UN system contributed to the COVID-19 solidarity funds and improved social protection in Rodrigues (cash for work).**
- **Improving the availability of data about vulnerable groups in the population: the UN system commissioned various studies and at the same time, along with the Government, the World Bank, the private sector and academia, developed a research exchange platform to conduct a variety of studies on the impact of COVID-19 on various elements of society, including the vulnerable, to better inform protection and response.**
- **Support to the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process and treaty body reporting.**





## OUTCOME 5.



## SOCIAL PROTECTION AND GENDER EQUALITY

**By 2023, social protection policies and programmes are strengthened and rationalized to reach the most vulnerable, eliminate GBV, and enhance the socio-economic and political empowerment of women.**

The UN supported the Government to develop the National Strategy and Action Plan to eliminate Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in Mauritius (2020 -2024) and to create a mobile application (Lespwar) for immediate protection response in cases of GBV. The UN further supported the police mobile response team to sensitize 3,000 people on GBV and trained 20 facilitators as part of the *Domestic Violence Perpetrator Rehabilitation Programme*. The UN established a Gender Information System, designed an e-learning course on gender mainstreaming, and deployed an expert to support gender mainstreaming at the legislative and executive levels, including training members of the Parliamentary Gender Caucus to ensure that bills and policies use gender-sensitive language.

The UN has further been supporting GBV interventions by (i) drafting the *Conceptual Framework of the Integrated Model Shelter in Mauritius and Rodrigues*, and (ii) strengthening the Police Family Protection Unit and the Family Welfare Protection Unit Community Response Mobile Unit on domestic violence and perpetrator rehabilitation in Mauritius and Rodrigues.

Following extensive advocacy and technical assistance from the UN, Mauritius took a step forward in protecting and promoting the rights of children when it adopted three major pieces of legislation in December: the Children's Act, the Children's Court Act, and the Child Sex Offender Register Act. These laws established an adequate, more comprehensive, and modern framework to better protect children and to give better effect to the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* and the *African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child*. They provide for better care, protection and assistance to children and their families, respect and promotion of the rights and best interests of children, and the establishment of structures, services and means to promote and monitor the physical, psychological, intellectual, emotional and social development of children.

In Rodrigues, the UN supported the training of 87 young women on entrepreneurship and on sexual and reproductive health and rights. It also facilitated the training of more than 80 women entrepreneurs on the installation, operation, and maintenance of solar photovoltaic systems.

The UN presented to the Government its *African Girls Can CODE Initiative (AGGCCl)*, which aims to train and empower young women aged 17 to 20 to become computer programmers, creators and designers, placing them on track to take up studies and careers in the information, communication, and technology sector. Together, they prepared for a first group of learners to attend "boot camps" in coding planned for 2021.



The UN supported the mainstreaming of human rights principles in national activities and programmes, including through training government officials and civil society organizations on the legislative framework and the institutional set-up to promote and protect human rights. It helped to strengthen the Mauritius National Mechanism for Reporting and Follow-up to coordinate the process of reporting on human rights mechanisms and implementation of recommendations.

During the pandemic, the UN supported the implementation of social protection initiatives for vulnerable groups by mobilizing resources for the COVID-19 Solidarity Fund and advocating to ensure that basic services were accessible to the most vulnerable. It worked with Mauritian authorities and service providers to ensure that migrant workers and asylum seekers received the same support as the rest of the population, including in terms of social protection and health care.

The UN helped to ensure that key populations at risk of HIV continued to receive services. On World AIDS Day, the UN handed over 1,100 hygiene packs to two Mauritian NGOs working with persons living with HIV so they could redistribute them to key populations. In Rodrigues, the UN provided support on testing to ensure that over 19,000 persons would know their HIV status. During the pandemic response, the UN also supported national authorities to protect the rights of persons deprived of their liberty, of persons with disabilities, and of urban families being evicted.

The UN provided Mauritian citizens returning from abroad with social and economic assistance as well as business development services to start income generating activities after their return. Small enterprises have successfully been set up in sewing, fishing, fast food and small retail. They created employment and generated income for the returning migrants.





### OUTCOME 6.



#### RESILIENCE TO CLIMATE CHANGE

**By 2023, integrated policy frameworks and enhanced community action promote climate and disaster resilience and biodiversity protection, and create incentives for the transition to renewable energy.**

In 2020, the UN helped to strengthen the policy framework for climate and disaster resilience and environmental protection in Mauritius. Through the Capacity for Disaster Reduction Initiative (CADRI), it helped the Government to identify Mauritius' capacity needs to manage disaster risk and to draw recommendations for action on disaster risk reduction. This will inform the formulation and implementation of a national disaster risk reduction policy, strategy and action plan in 2021.

The UN also supported a review of the *Environment Protection Act 2002*, the formulation of the *National Environment Policy* and the preparation of a *Masterplan for the Environment* for the next ten years. It is also helping the

Government to formulate its *Nationally Determined Contribution* (NDC), which will highlight its ambition and targets for climate change mitigation and adaptation.

The UN provided technical assistance to improve the framework for sustainable management of wetlands and fragile ecosystems for Mauritius to meet its commitments under the Ramsar and Biological Diversity conventions. It also supported the rehabilitation of 400 metres of coastal zone and their protection against erosion due to climate change, and supported Mauritius to increase the capacity of the national power grid to accommodate renewable energy up to 185 megawatts.

The UN supported the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change to promote environmental sustainability, climate change mitigation and resilience through (i) locally implementing the programmes *Western Indian Ocean Large Marine Ecosystems Strategic Action Programme*, *Policy Harmonization and Institutional Reforms and Strategic Action Programme for the Protection of the Western Indian Ocean from Land-based Sources and Activities*; (ii) supporting Mauritius to report on the *UN Convention to Combat Desertification*; (iii) strengthening its capacities on ozone action and on the disposal of polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) oils contained in transformers, and the disposal of capacitors containing PCB; and (iv) strengthening its capacity to monitor persistent organic pollutants under the *Stockholm Convention in the Africa Region*.

In collaboration with the Ministry of Agro Industry and Food Security, the UN developed a project that will be implemented in 2021 to promote innovative approaches for a green recovery following the COVID-19 crisis. Building on the work done over the last five years through the Partnership for Action on Green Economy (PAGE), the project will assist the COVID-19 economic recovery through a focus



on promoting sustainable food systems that will have positive impacts on the development of agricultural value chains, livelihoods, food security, nutrition, and sustainable tourism.

The UN helped the Government respond to the MV Wakashio oil spill by enabling a more coordinated response among national and international actors. It offered expert technical advice in the immediate response and helped stakeholders assess the socio-economic impact of the oil spill and develop a joint programme to monitor the recovery of the environment. As part of strengthening national capacities to respond to future oil spill crises, the UN provided the Albion Fisheries Research Centre with equipment to conduct advanced analyses of oil composition.

Combining technical assistance in agronomy and nuclear science, a long relationship between the UN and the national Food and Agricultural Research and Extension Institute

(FAREI) resulted in the production of heat-resistant tomatoes that are more resilient to climate change and contribute to local food production and food security.

At the request of the Government, following the Tenth World Urban Forum, the UN developed an offer of technical assistance to support Mauritius in sustainable and climate-resilient urbanization. The offer includes support to produce a strategic spatial planning framework linked to the *National Urban Policy* in complement to preparing a housing policy, supporting urban resilience in the face of climate change, and launching a third phase of assistance to address urban poverty. The offer would develop close cooperation with the private sector. The COVID-19 crisis delayed some decisions from the Government on taking forward the offer, but elements of a draft agreement have been refined.



## Support to Partnerships and UN working together for improved results

### Partnerships developed to achieve the SDGs

To support the Government's efforts to address the socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the UN teamed up with the World Bank and the think-tank International Economics to develop the Mauritius Research Platform on COVID-19. The platform pooled researchers from government, academia, civil society, and development partners to contribute to a growing body of knowledge and research on the impact of COVID-19 in Mauritius and opportunities for building back better. Through a series of three webinars in 2020, participants shared and discussed the key results of their respective COVID-19 assessments and studies, providing evidence-based analysis and policy options for recovery to decision makers.



- Webinar 1**  
Data sources and collection on COVID-19: Measuring impact effectively
- Webinar 2**  
Macroeconomic Implications of COVID-19 on Mauritius
- Webinar 3**  
Sustainable Pathways to COVID-19 Recovery

Mauritius is extremely vulnerable to the effects of climate change and disasters, as it is heavily exposed to cyclones, storm surges, floods and torrential rains. To support the Government in disaster risk preparedness and response, the UN leveraged the expertise of the Capacity for Disaster Reduction Initiative to diagnose Mauritius' current capacities in disaster risk prevention and management and inform the development of the National Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy. The assessment and the

development of recommendations for action were finalized in close collaboration with the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Centre and involved 55 actors from various ministries, municipalities, private sector bodies and civil society.



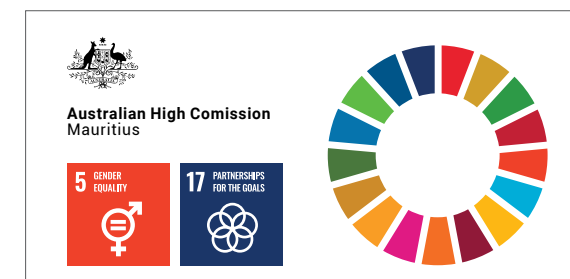
When the bulk carrier vessel MV Wakashio ran aground on the south-east coast of Mauritius causing a major oil spill, the Prime Minister declared an environmental emergency on 7 August and called on the UN and partners to support. UN technical support was deployed from nine agencies. They worked with development partners (France, Japan, India, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Australia), through joint efforts supported by the UN Resident Coordinator. The regional directors provided support and fielded a mission led by a regional director to offer high-level advocacy and initiate a fundraising drive to address the crisis.



#UnitingBusiness



To increase commitment and action from the business community in Mauritius to contribute to the SDGs, the UN has supported the establishment of the UN Global Compact regional chapter in Mauritius and the Indian Ocean to support participating businesses to integrate the SDGs into their business models and strategies.



Technical assistance was extended to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly (RRA) to set up the SDG Committee, a standing committee enshrined in the Standing Orders and Rules and Regulations of the RRA. This innovative mechanism will provide legislative oversight for the implementation of the SDGs.



Young people have a key role to play in shaping the 2030 agenda, with some 20 youth-specific targets spread over six key SDGs: Goal 2 (hunger), Goal 4 (education), Goal 5 (gender equality), Goal 8 (decent work), Goal 10 (inequality) and Goal 13 (climate change). In 2020 the UN facilitated peer-to-peer exchange between youth associations on the Island of Rodrigues and the African Youth and Adolescents Network (AfriYAN) in Madagascar. This provided the youth on both with a unique opportunity to learn from their peers about how to enhance youth development efforts, and their role in implementing the SDGs at all levels.



In collaboration with the Development Bank of South Africa (DBSA), the UN supported the development of grid codes for renewable energy generation, transmission and distribution, the development of funding strategies for renewable energy, and the development of tariff tools and methodologies for the regulator. This work is being carried out through the Mauritius Renewable Energy Agency, and the Utility Regulatory Authority. This partnership addresses the objectives of SDG 6 (climate action), SDG 7 (clean energy), and SDG 17 (partnerships).



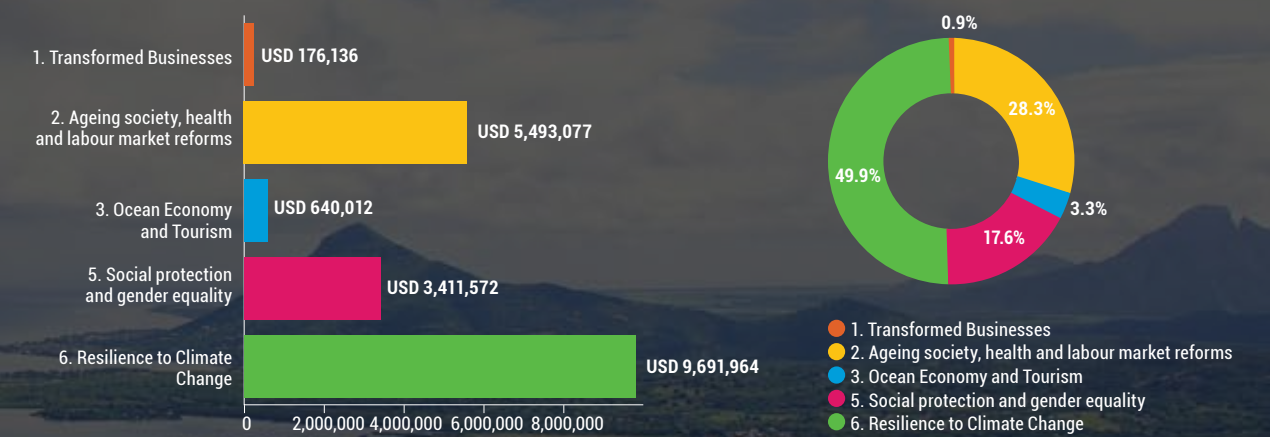
## Financial and Resources overview

### Financial Overview 2020

  
**\$19,412,761**

Total Contribution of UN Country Team  
in Mauritius towards the SPF in 2020

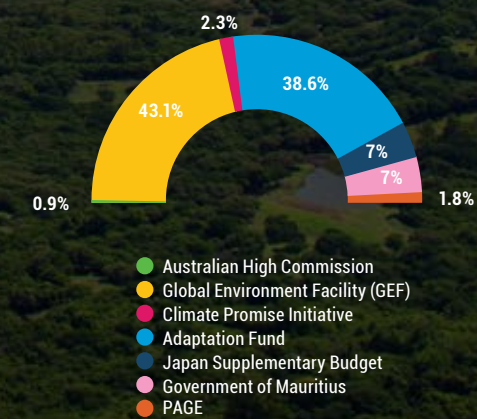
### Contributions in 2020 by Strategic Priority Areas of the Cooperation Framework



### Resource mobilization

In 2020, the UN Country Team in Mauritius mobilized resources from the Government, development partners and multilateral funds to finance activities under the Cooperation Framework.

  
**\$12,937,750**  
 Resources Mobilized







### 3 UNCT key focus for next year

Mauritius' medium-term strategy and its COVID-19 recovery plan set out in the Government Programme 2020-2024 and the National Budget 2020-2021 are focused on a greener, climate-resilient, and inclusive development model.

The UNCT will continue to support Mauritius' development aspiration by implementing the Strategic Partnership Framework and the COVID-19 Socio-Economic Response Plan and other aligned initiatives including the CADRI recommendation on disaster risks preparedness, and the implementation of a multisector joint project on green recovery. The UN will carry out a Common Country Assessment in collaboration with the Government and other stakeholders to assess country needs and adjust accordingly.

The UN will continue to support the Government of Mauritius to leverage innovative finance for implementing the SDGs and incentivizing private sector support to Agenda 2030. Continued advocacy will highlight special vulnerabilities of SIDs in view of searching for appropriate solutions to the challenges.





**Support to COVID-19 Crisis, Coordination and Good Practices see Mauritius through 2020**

The year 2020 will always be remembered as a period during which the country faced the most serious crisis. Coordination of action has been instrumental in managing the pandemic, curbing the spread of the virus, and keeping cases and overall disruption to a minimum. The close collaboration between the Government and the UN Country Team (UNCT) succeeded in establishing good practices that helped Mauritius respond to the current crisis, and position the country to emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic and recover successfully from this and future crises. Coordination has facilitated early assessment, and strengthened preparedness and response capacities, and the early activation of the incident management centre. The UN appreciates the strong engagement of the UNCT in Mauritius' national response, which has helped engage regional platforms and bilateral and multilateral partnerships, as well as the private sector and civil society organizations- all of which together will continue to enhance the country's resilience and recovery.

**Critical Coastal Ecosystem Conservation through a Community Integrated Approach**

This project aimed to protect coastal and marine ecosystems through a network of interlinked Voluntary Conservation Areas (VACs), co-managed by the community and civil society organizations. Two sites were identified in Roches Noires and Anse La Raie, where 166 residents participated in community sensitization sessions on marine and coastal ecosystems. The protected area in Roches Noires now covers 3% of the lagoon, with the conservation zone including coral patches and extensive seagrass beds. The protection of seagrass beds is very important as these habitats provide a multitude of ecosystem services that support coastal stability and livelihoods. They are also known as carbon sinks, as they store organic carbon in their sediments. Notably, in Anse La Raie, 23.3% of live coral area is within the conservation zone.



**Celebrating Culture: The Segha Tambour of Rodrigues Island-Cultural Heritage of Humanity**

As part of the events to mark the 75th anniversary of the United Nations, delegates celebrated a cultural heritage unique to Rodrigues Island in the Republic of Mauritius- the Segha Tambour. This vibrant performance of rhythm, music and dance takes its name from the lead percussion instrument, the tambour, and is performed all over Rodrigues Island, at formal and informal functions, open to all. Recognized as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, the Segha Tambour of Rodrigues Island plays an important role in the life of the Rodriguan community and the diaspora in and out of the country, both acknowledging its history as well as serving its present by facilitating social cohesion and conflict resolution. Carried down over generations, the Segha Tambour of Rodrigues Island brings not only joy and music, but also income and livelihood, as the performance is an attraction for paying tourists. Looking ahead towards recovery, this highlights the role that cultural heritage and museums can play in promoting tourism and advancing the economic recovery.

**UN75 "PROMISES FOR THE FUTURE" Mauritius Showcases Rainbow Nation's Diversity and UN Support on Double Crisis**

UN75 celebrations were also an opportunity to acknowledge the collaboration and partnership between the Government of Seychelles and the United Nations during a difficult year and beyond, as well as showcasing the country's unity in diversity in the spirit of leaving no one behind. Performances included different cultural shows by disadvantaged youth. The event was attended by some 300 youth, showing the full promise for the future of the rainbow nation. The Prime Minister, who attended the events as guest of honor, took the opportunity to express the country's thanks to the entire UN system for its help throughout the COVID-19 crisis and swiftly coming to the country's aid to deal with the Wakashio oil spill. "Today, more than ever before, we need global institutions that are effective with innovative approaches to deliver support to the people they serve especially in times of crisis of such magnitude," the Prime Minister said, adding that "The UN remains the platform to make our voices heard."









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