

**20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on  
Women  
and the Adoption of the  
Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995)**

**National Review of the  
Implementation of the Beijing  
Declaration and Platform for  
Action (2009-2014)**

**Mauritius**

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## **A. INTRODUCTION**

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA) of 1995 aimed at accelerating the **Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies** for the advancement of women and promotion of women's public participation through a full and equal share in economic, social, cultural and political decision making. This landmark Declaration adopted by consensus in Beijing in September 1995 by 189 Governments, including the Republic of Mauritius, paved the way towards ensuring a proactive agenda for women development, ascertaining that gender perspectives are reflected in policies and programmes at all levels.

The endorsement of BPfA by Mauritius is a testimony to the continued commitment of the Government to protect and promote women's rights as an integral part of all fundamental human rights and freedoms, to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women, and ensure equitable participation of women in all spheres of existence, including participation in decision making process and access to power.

BPfA set time-bound targets for countries to take concrete strategic actions on twelve critical areas of concern. These 12 areas of concern of BPfA are:

- 1. Women and Poverty**
- 2. Education and Training of Women**
- 3. Women and Health**
- 4. Violence against Women**
- 5. Women and Armed Conflict**
- 6. Women and the Economy**
- 7. Women in Power and Decision Making**
- 8. Institutional Mechanism for Advancement of Women**
- 9. Human Rights of Women**
- 10. Women and the Media**
- 11. Women and the Environment**
- 12. The Girl Child**

Notwithstanding its ongoing and continued commitment on the action areas of the BPfA, the Government of Mauritius committed specifically in Beijing in 1995 to undertake actions to ensure that:

- i. Gender be mainstreamed in all policies and programmes
- ii. Stereotypes in education are eliminated and that girls be encouraged to study science subjects, traditionally meant for boys
- iii. Legislations be enacted to protect women against violence
- iv. Women's economic empowerment be promoted; and
- v. The Girl Child be protected

In commemoration of the 20th Anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the Adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995), and on recommendation of the **United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women**, Mauritius has been called upon to undertake a comprehensive national level review of the progress made and challenges encountered in the implementation of the BPfA.

Accordingly, this Report highlights the progress made by Mauritius in the implementation of the BPfA, the challenges encountered during the past years and the opportunities for future actions in the context of the desired outcomes of the BPfA.

In preparation of this report, consultative meetings were held with all stakeholders comprising different ministries and civil society organizations. They were briefed individually and at the Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee meetings on the guidance note provided by United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women for the writing of the report. Contributions were received from all Ministries and their stakeholders. These inputs were analyzed, following which working sessions were held with Heads of Units at the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare (MGECDWF) to elicit views and obtain clarifications on the implementation of BPfA.

Section 1 of this report highlights the main achievements and challenges in the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment since the adoption of the BPfA in 1995.

Section 2 provides detailed information on the progress made in each of the specified 12 critical areas of concern.

Section 3 provides information on the status of data collection and compilation, and indicators of progress in the establishment of gender equality and women's empowerment.

Section 4 highlights the key priorities and recommendations for further action in the implementation of BPfA and for the post 2015 development agenda.

## **B. SECTION ONE**

### **OVERVIEW OF ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES IN PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT**

The achievement of Mauritius in the implementation of the BPfA has been remarkable with respect to all its critical areas of concern except that concerning Women and Armed Conflict- an issue outlandish to Mauritius. On the specific five commitments taken in 1995, Mauritius made impressive strides and achieved desired targets and outcomes. The Government has adopted a holistic, right based and inclusive approach to development that recognizes and values freedom, diversity in background and competence, and places women at the centre of development.

A detailed analysis of the achievements Mauritius made in each of the areas of concern of the BPfA and on the specific commitments taken in 1995 is presented in Section 2.

#### **B.1 INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK AND MECHANISM FOR PROMOTING WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT AND GENDER EQUALITY**

In order to respond coherently and effectively to the challenges posed by the BPfA, the Government first and foremost underscored the importance of strengthening the institutional framework and mechanism for an enabling environment for the promotion of a coherent, inclusive and coordinated programme package for women development.

In acknowledgement of the pivotal significance of promoting gender equality and women's empowerment as a development agenda and ensuring that women and children obtain due considerations in the overall development initiatives aiming at enhancing family and societal welfare, in 2010, the Government renamed the Ministry of Women's Rights, Child Development and Family Welfare into the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare.

An appropriate legislative framework was set up to ensure that women are empowered, protected and their interests are safeguarded. Policies were revisited and formulated to ensure that international commitments are translated into concrete actions at the national level. An effective monitoring and coordinating mechanism was put in place to ensure that programme activities meet desired output and outcomes.

- **Legislative Framework**

Equal opportunity is an essential feature of a functioning democracy and good governance. It reinforces the fundamental rights of the individual and promotes equality and freedom. In order

to provide equal opportunity to men and women, the **Equal Opportunity Act** was enacted in 2008. The Act was amended in 2011 to enable the setting up of an **Equal Opportunity Commission** to safeguard and protect the rights of all citizens, including girls and women.

The **Protection from Domestic Violence Act of 1997** was reviewed in 2004, 2007 and 2011 to ensure that all women victims of domestic violence are provided with adequate support and assistance. Applications made under the Protection from Domestic Violence Act are now governed by the Protection from Domestic Violence (Hearing of Applications for Protection, Occupation and Tenancy Orders) Rules.

The **Criminal Code Act of 1838** was amended in 2012 to legalise Termination of Pregnancy in very specific circumstances, namely where:

- I. the continued pregnancy will endanger the pregnant person's life;
- II. the termination is necessary to prevent grave permanent injury to the physical or mental health of the pregnant person;
- III. there is a substantial risk that the continued pregnancy will result in a severe malformation, or severe physical or mental abnormality, of the foetus which will affect its viability and compatibility with life; or
- IV. the pregnancy has not exceeded its fourteenth week and results from a case of rape, sexual intercourse with a female under the age of 16 or sexual intercourse with a specified person which has been reported to the police.

This groundbreaking amendment in 2012 to the **Criminal Code Act** was a bold step taken by Government, despite opposition from parts of the civil society and some religious leaders.

The **Employment Rights Act** was amended in 2013 to ensure that men and women enjoy the same rights as workers and that there is no discrimination whatsoever based on gender.

In 2009, the **Combating of Trafficking in Persons Act** was enacted to counter trafficking of persons, protect and safeguard the interest and safety of persons including children and women victims of trafficking.

In order to ensure more representation of women in Local Government, the **Local Government Act** was voted in 2011 and stipulates that "*Any group presenting more than 2 candidates at a Village Council election shall ensure that not more than two-thirds of the group's candidates are of the same sex*". The gender quota came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2012 and accordingly, all political parties were compelled to field more women to contest in local elections in 2012.

The Government, through its **White Paper on Electoral Reform** released in March 2014 further proposes one third representation of women in forthcoming National Assembly General

Elections and this constitutes another major step forward in the establishment of gender parity in decision-making.

Following a public debate that flared up in Mauritius in 2007 on a proposed marriage of a Mauritian with a foreigner who happened to be HIV positive, the Government took the decision in 2008 to amend three laws that discriminated against foreigners living with HIV, and Mauritians who wanted to marry them. The amendments to the **Civil Status Act**, the **Immigration Act** and the **HIV and AIDS Act** mean that it is now possible for a wedding between a Mauritian and an HIV positive foreigner to happen. These also ensure that there is no discrimination and stigmatization against women living with HIV/AIDS.

In addition, the **Employment Rights Act 2008**, adopted in August 2008 and proclaimed on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2009, provides that:

- i. An employer shall not require a female worker to perform work in excess of a normal day's work or work during night shift, two months before her confinement;
- ii. Subject to medical recommendation, a female worker who is pregnant shall not be required to perform duties requiring continuous standing or that may be detrimental to her health or that of her baby; and
- iii. An employer shall not give to a female worker, who is on maternity leave, notice for termination of employment during such leave or that would expire during such leave for any reasons, unless the grounds relate to the economic, technological, structural or similar nature affecting the employer's activities.

- **Policy Development**

The national development goal in 2005 aimed at transforming the economy into a diversified, high-tech and high-income services, and ensuring that the concerns of women, men and children are prioritized as per their differentiated needs. Accordingly, the Government developed in 2005 a National Gender Policy which was further reinforced in 2008 with a more comprehensive and forward looking **National Gender Policy Framework** (NGPF), which articulated the BPfA together with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and other international commitments that Mauritius made. This provided the necessary operational strategies and institutional mechanism to promote gender equality and women's empowerment and integrate a gender perspective in all policies and programmes.

The goals, targets and indicators of success of the NGPF embody an outcome-based and holistic approach to development. It further reinforced an institutionalized culture of gender responsiveness whereby each Ministry/Institution including the private sector and the media are

required to develop their sector-specific gender policy statements. The NGPF stands guided by principles of human rights, human-centred development, partnership and accountability.

In order to ensure that gender is effectively mainstreamed in all Government institutions, departments, and their respective stakeholders, the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare facilitated the development of specific gender mainstreaming strategies for all Ministries and their stakeholders.

The process of gender mainstreaming started in 2009 and by 2014, all Ministries should have had their respective gender policies. These sectoral gender policies consider the institutional, structural, organizational, political and programme specificities of each Ministry and its stakeholders and set strategic directions to address its specific gender gaps and challenges in promoting women's empowerment and gender mainstreaming.

- **Monitoring and Coordinating Mechanism**

A **National Steering Committee** on Gender Mainstreaming has been set up and is chaired by the Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare to oversee, monitor and coordinate all activities at national level, undertaken by all Ministries and relevant stakeholders for the promotion of women's empowerment and gender equality. In order to ensure that gender is effectively mainstreamed in all Government institutions, departments and their respective stakeholders and collaborators, Gender Cells have been set up in all Ministries. Members of the Gender Cells are cadres in decision making positions and are expected to influence policy decisions from a gender perspective.

An **Equal Opportunity Commission** (EOC) has been set up in 2013 with object to eliminate discrimination and promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different status. Any person, aggrieved by discriminatory practices, sexual harassment, and/or denial of human rights, can lodge a complaint at the EOC which is mandated to investigate and seek reconciliation with parties. The EOC may refer cases to the Equal Opportunity Tribunal which has jurisdiction to issue interim orders, and directives and punish.

## **B.2 ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN**

Economic development in Mauritius has been marked by a very active participation of women, especially in the manufacturing sector. The involvement of women in the process of economic development which started in 1980s gained momentum in the 1990s and was further reinforced in the last ten years with impressive results on women's emancipation and empowerment. Contrary to normal practice, at early stages when the structure of the economy shifted to manufacturing and a formal sector based economy emerged, female participation in the labour

market increased continuously instead of decreasing. Government provided facilities to enable women to balance effectively their professional and family responsibilities. While women continue to enjoy paid maternity leave for a period of 12 weeks, they are also provided with additional facilities at work during pregnancy. Women are also encouraged to run their own businesses and accordingly, Government provides incentives and facilities to women through the **Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA)**, **National Women Entrepreneur Council (NWECC)**, and the **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)** Initiative. The number of women registered at the National Women Entrepreneur Council increased by 153%, from 1,900 in 2005 to 4,815 in 2013. The number of women entrepreneurs in the textile sector has more than doubled, with its share rising from 21% to 27%. The agro industry and the services sector attracted more women over the years, representing 28% and 21% respectively of registered women entrepreneurs in 2011 against 26% and 18% in 2005.

The creation of the **National Empowerment Foundation (NEF)** in 2008 and the creation of the Ministry of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment in 2010 by the Government have galvanized policy decisions for the economic empowerment of poor women and children through provision of supportive packages and assistance for women's education, training, self-development and growth. The NEF runs a Child and Family Development Programme and provides free services for poor children and vulnerable women.

### **B.3 EDUCATION FOR GIRLS AND WOMEN**

Since its inception, primary education in Mauritius has been provided on a free basis. Secondary education became free in 1977 while tertiary education was declared free in 1988. The literacy rate in 2013 was 89.9%. Girls have benefitted tremendously from free education and, accordingly, gained increasing exposures to various fields due to increased educational level.

In 2011, 116,068<sup>1</sup> students attended primary school, of whom 49% were girls. The Gross Enrolment Ratio in 2011 was 100% for both boys and girls, indicating no disparity. The proportion of students progressing from primary cycle to secondary cycle in 2011 was 80.7% for boys and 86.5% for girls. In tertiary education, girls surpass boys in terms of enrolment. The enrolment rate for girls in the primary, secondary and tertiary sectors were 49%, 52%, and 52.4%<sup>1</sup> respectively.

In terms of performance, the pass rate among female students is higher than boys in primary, secondary and tertiary institutions. The pass rate at the final year of primary schooling in 2013 was 85.8% for girls against 76.1% for boys. At the secondary level, the pass rates for girls were 78.9% and 80.8% against 70.3% and 73.9% for boys at the School Certificate and Higher School Certificate Examinations respectively. The pass rate at tertiary level is also higher among

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<sup>1</sup>Source: Ministry of Education and Human Resources

females at 74% against 46% among males. The **National Curriculum Framework** (Primary), which was elaborated after a National Debate on Curriculum Reform in December 2005, aimed at empowering children to realize their full potential, to optimize their innate aptitudes and develop a keen sense of active citizenship. All textbooks have been revised to eliminate all stereotypes based on gender discrimination.

In line with measures announced in its strategic document entitled “**Moving the Nation Forward: Government Programme 2012-2015**”, the Prime Minister’s Office has established the **National Institute for Civic Education** (NICE) in 2012 with the aim to nurture proud and responsible citizens. The initiative is to strengthen education of skills and values related to social and moral responsibilities of a citizen.

The Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare through the Gender Unit, the National Women’s Council and the National Women Entrepreneur Council has intensified its campaigns to sensitize the public at large on gender issues and run Adult Literacy Programme for prospective women entrepreneurs and others at grassroot levels. Sexist advertisements on billboards, posters, newspapers and on the air are not allowed.

#### **B.4 WOMEN IN DECISION MAKING POSITIONS**

Women’s positions in decision making have increased over the years. The proportion of women in the most senior positions increased from 23% to 37% over the last ten years. In 2011, there were around two men for every woman working in the Government services. 64% of the women were found in the higher occupational groups, namely Legislators, Senior Officials & Managers, Professional, Technicians & Associate Professional compared to 30% men. In 2012, working women were more qualified than their male counterparts, with 22% holding a tertiary qualification against 17% for men. In the Judiciary, women make up 39% of the personnel. Among 43 officers in the civil service at the rank of Permanent Secretary and above, 30.2% are women, and among officers in the grade of Deputy Permanent Secretary, 35.7% are women.

The participation of females in voting at the general election in 2010 was higher than that of males by 4%. Percentage of female candidates standing for the general election rose from 4.5% in 1991 to 11% in 2010, and the proportion of female holding seats in the National Assembly rose from 3% in 1991 to 18.8 % in 2010. Following amendments to the Local Government Act (2012) which imposed a gender quota, women’s participation in local government election improved tremendously. Women comprised 37% of elected members of the Municipal Council Elections in 2012 compared to 12.7% in 2005. With respect to the National Assembly, the **White Paper on Electoral Reform**, released by the Prime Minister on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2014, proposes that women have at least one third of the candidates in each electoral zone in Mauritius for general election.

## **B.5 CHALLENGES AHEAD**

Government's efforts to reinforce the institutional mechanism to promote the socio-economic empowerment of women, to ensure that young girls and women get equal opportunity in education, at work and in the society, and that they participate effectively in decision-making, have had impressive results.

However, enhanced access to higher education by women has not always been translated into enhanced career opportunities. Women still face significant shortfalls and discrimination in the labour market and end up in jobs where they do not use any of their skills. Girls continue to face limited options and choices in terms of education, training, information, technology, involvement in research. Their level of participation in tertiary education in the fields of science and technology is still low. Of all students enrolled in 2011 in public funded tertiary institutions in Information Technology and Engineering, only 35% and 19% respectively were females. 63% of all researches are conducted by males.

The challenge is to provide opportunities for girls and women for quality education and training that match market demand for labour, to enroll more girls and women in the fields of science, research, technology and engineering, and to enhance their opportunities for employment in fields traditionally meant for men.

The engagement of women at the highest level of decision making in the private sector is dramatically low. Out of the 100 top companies of Mauritius, only one is chaired by a woman. There are only 6 women CEOs out of a total of 91. Likewise, out of 19 banks, there are only one female chairperson and 2 female CEOs. In some para-governmental bodies like the Central Water Authority (CWA), the Central Electricity Board (CEB), the University of Mauritius and the University of Technology of Mauritius, their governing bodies constitute of mostly men. Concerned Ministries are strengthening efforts to ensure that the composition of members of governing bodies become more gender balanced.

At the institutional level, there is need to review old legislations, tune them into gender sensitive language, and ensure that gender considerations permeate at all levels. Gender Focal Points and Gender Cells have proven their effectiveness in overseeing activities through gender lenses in various Ministries. The Government endeavors to make these structures more resourceful, in terms of human, technical and financial capacity for effective gender mainstreaming at various levels.

The monitoring and evaluation mechanism should ensure that gender considerations are taken into account, that data are collected and analyzed using gender lenses in all programmes. The challenge is to evaluate the impact of the programme, especially on poor women. Figures are not

always gender disaggregated and, hence, their impact on poverty alleviation of women is not known.

Another challenge is to ensure that decision makers, programme managers and stakeholders in the public sector and private sector, comprehend the operational practicality of promoting gender mainstreaming, and the intrinsic linkage that exists between women development, gender equality and sustainable development.

## **B.6. PROGRAMME IMPACT**

- The setting up of a Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare to spearhead programme for women's development and gender equality has helped to promote systemic changes in policy orientation in the public sector.
- The National Gender Policy Framework and Action Plan has promoted remodeling of strategies and programmes at national level for gender mainstreaming and for integrating gender as a cross cutting issue in all activities of the public sector.
- Legislative reforms have provided adequate framework ensuring equal opportunity to women and protection of women in distress.
- The transition of women from home to the world of work has been smoothed, thus enabling women to effectively reconcile work imperatives with other obligations and also engage in entrepreneurship.
- Women have been empowered to make informed reproductive choice especially as regard to termination of pregnancy.
- There has been a spectacular improvement in education for girls and women, not only in terms of enrolment in schools and universities, but also in terms of performance compared to boys and men.
- An effective institutional mechanism has been set up to ensure follow up on children's rights and prevent violation of legislations.

## **C.SECTION 2**

### **PROGRESS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 12 CRITICAL AREAS OF CONCERN OF THE PLATFORM FOR ACTION SINCE 2009**

#### **C.A. WOMEN AND POVERTY**

##### **C.A.1.Review, adopt and maintain macroeconomic policies and development strategies that address the needs and efforts of women in poverty**

According to the Absolute Poverty line set by the World Bank at US \$1.25 for least developing countries and at US \$2.0 for developing countries, the number of persons living in absolute poverty in Mauritius accounts for less than 1% of the population.

In 2010, Government created a Ministry of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment, whose vision is the creation of an inclusive and more equitable society free from extreme and chronic poverty. The mission of the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reforms Institutions is to support and empower vulnerable groups with a view to mainstream them in society and improving their quality of life in a sustainable manner through the provision of an effective and efficient service delivery, imbued in equity, fairness and impartiality.

To achieve its strategic goals and objectives, a three-pronged strategy, namely Child Welfare and Family Empowerment, Social Housing and Community Development and Placement and Training is adopted by the National Empowerment Foundation, the implementing arm of the Ministry.

The NEF aims to provide the most vulnerable people the ability to improve their living conditions. Its priority mission is to fight against absolute poverty and reduce unemployment among women. It also focuses on other issues of public interest, such as preserving and developing employment, supporting and assisting micro-entrepreneurs, with a special emphasis on those in socio-economic difficulties.

In 2012, the poverty threshold of the monthly income of vulnerable households was reviewed by Government and is presently set at Rs.6,200 (US \$207), excluding social benefits. The proportion of households below the relative poverty line as defined by Mauritius, namely set at half the median monthly household income per adult equivalent, has increased from 7.9% in 2006 to 9.4% in 2012.

There is a tendency for the feminization of poverty. In 2012, the proportion of females heading poor households was twice (16.9%) to that of males (7.3%) heading poor households.

To address the feminization of poverty, the NEF offers a series of measures specifically targeted for the economic empowerment of vulnerable women through the provision of adult life skills and literacy/ numeracy courses, training opportunities in the fields of housekeeping, domestic operations, child care, pastry, beauty care, hair design and facial massage, creative textile and entrepreneurship, implementation of projects such as backyard gardening, egg production and small scale farming activities. Support is also provided to vulnerable women to send their children to day care centres and schools to enable them to enter into productive employment.

The Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare set up a National Women Entrepreneur Council in 1999 to promote women entrepreneurship and encourage them to enter into business. Assistance is provided to women in poor conditions to enable them to send their children to schools and day care centres and also to facilitate their entrance into productive employment. In order to involve the private sector in addressing the problem of poverty, and enable them to balance their own economic growth with the sustainable social and environmental development, the Government established, in 2012, the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Initiative, mandating companies to pay 2% of their book profits towards programmes that contribute to the social and environmental development of the country. This has also contributed to alleviate feminization of poverty.

The Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare is implementing the **Special Collaborative Programme(SCP) for Support to Women and Children in Distress** to provide financial assistance to Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and Non State agencies working for the welfare of women and children in distress. From 2009 to 2014, 129 projects were approved to the tune of Rs. 111.43M (US \$ 3,714M).

With the assistance of UNDP/GEF Small Grants Programme and technical support of the Food and Agricultural Research Extension Institute of the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security, women in pockets of poverty are encouraged to engage in the production of local brands of different medicinal and herbal teas.

Single mothers are encouraged by the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions to take up remunerative employment. A special cash allowance is paid to single mothers with children between the age of 3 months and 7 years. This allowance is paid to enable single mothers to hire the service of care providers so as to facilitate their engagement into productive employment. However, the total income of the person must not exceed Rs.7,500 (US \$250) a month.

Since February 2009, the Transition Unemployment Relief Scheme has been introduced by the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions. Every worker who loses his/her job is entitled to a Transition Employment Relief (a varied percentage of the salary earned) for a maximum period of 12 months.

Since January 2013, a new Child Allowance Scheme has been introduced under the Social Registry of Mauritius. An allowance of Rs. 750(US \$25) monthly is payable for each child of a family with income not exceeding Rs. 6,200(US\$207), (applicable for a maximum of 3 children), under the condition that the child's school attendance is at least 90%<sup>2</sup>.

Under the Social Registry of Mauritius, the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions has since January 2014 introduced a new Income Support Scheme for these families (with income not exceeding Rs. 6,200-US \$207) which would bind the family into a social contract that would ensure development and growth of all members of the family. This Scheme is envisaged to facilitate empowerment of these vulnerable families.

These have galvanized policy decisions for economic empowerment of poor women and children and enabled the provision of increased supportive packages and assistance for women's education, shelter, training, self-development and growth. Government is now moving towards strengthening the economy and transforming Mauritius into seafood, knowledge, health sector hubs, thereby, opening greater opportunities for the economic empowerment of women.

#### **C.A.2. Revise laws and administrative practices to ensure women's equal rights and access to economic resources**

The Equal Opportunity Act of 2008 ensures that every person has an equal opportunity to attain his/her objectives in various spheres of activities and that no person is placed or finds himself/herself at a disadvantage, by reason of his status, namely his/her age, caste, colour, creed, ethnic origin, impairment, marital status, place of origin, political opinion, race, sex or sexual orientation. The Act has been amended in 2011 and an Equal Opportunity Commission and an Equal Opportunity Tribunal were set up to ensure that the rights of all citizens are respected. Any person can have resort to these institutions to complain on any infringement against his/her right.

The **Social Housing Policy** of the Government aims at providing decent housing especially to the poor, including women in vulnerable situations. The **State Lands Act** has been amended by the Economic and Financial Measures (Miscellaneous Provision) Act 2013 to allow sale of state lands on which stands a residential unit to the owner at a nominal price. In addition, the Government launched, in 2014, the **National Home Ownership Programme** to ensure that all citizens, irrespective of gender, have a house that provides decent living conditions. These are intended to promote house ownership among women.

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<sup>2</sup> Source: Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions

### **C.A.3. Provide women with access to savings and credit mechanisms and institutions**

Access to savings and credit is open to all, irrespective of gender. The only condition for obtaining credit is the guarantee for repayment. The Development Bank of Mauritius provides micro credit facilities especially for women entrepreneurs. The only impediment for women to obtain credit is cultural. There is still a section of the male population, especially those living in villages that are still reluctant to mortgage property for female entrepreneurship.

The Government of Mauritius also offers, amongst others, the following facilities to poor families:

- Provision of Housing Grant up to Rs. 65,000 (US \$ 2, 167) to families whose income do not exceed Rs.6,200 (US \$207)
- Provision of one off grant of Rs. 200,000 (US \$6,667) to poor families for child day caring

These facilities have also been beneficial to women in distress.

### **C.A.4. Develop gender-based methodologies and conduct research to address the feminization of poverty**

There have been some appreciative initiatives in collecting gender disaggregated data by Statistics Mauritius, the official organization responsible for collection, compilation, analysis and dissemination of the official statistical data relating to the economic and social activities of Mauritius. Since 2009, **Statistics Mauritius** releases a yearly “Gender Statistics” on the demographic, health, family, educational and labour force status and profile characteristics of Mauritius. These are based on latest available sex disaggregated data from administrative sources and household surveys.

### **C.A.5. Challenges on Women and Poverty**

The financial crisis of 2008 coupled with the dismantling of the Multi-Fibre Agreement has had most serious impact on the textile industry and also the tourist sector, where women are heavily employed. Many women suffered consequent layoffs. Female unemployment rate increased by 0.8 % to 12.7% whilst male unemployment rate decreased by 0.4 % to 5.0% in 2012. A reduction in individual income of women has crippled their quest to contribute effectively to the household economy and their economic empowerment.

In addition, women who run businesses are traditionally into small scale farming, handicraft, and confectionaries with limited possibilities for expansion.

The figures from Statistics Mauritius are not indicative of impact of Government's effort at addressing poverty among women. Economic incentives and facilities extended to women have not been assessed in terms of impact on women's welfare and empowerment, as data collection are not sex disaggregated at all instances and departments, especially not in the private sector. The impact of the private sector involvement in alleviating poverty is not known.

With the assistance of UNDP, a **Social Register of Mauritius (SRM)** and **Proxy Mean Test (PMT)** are being developed and accordingly the impact of some of these poverty alleviation programmes on women could be assessed.

## **C.B. EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF WOMEN**

### **C. B.1. Ensure equal access to education**

In Mauritius, girls have equal access to education at all levels. Education is compulsory up to the age of 16 since 2005. Enrolment rates for girls have reached 98% at pre-primary level, 100 % at primary level and the transition rate from Primary to Secondary level has reached 86.5 % for girls in 2011<sup>3</sup>.

Free access to education since 1977 caused enrolment at secondary level to increase considerably, with most striking progress being the remarkable increase in girls' enrolment, thereby, narrowing the gender gap at that level to reach near parity. Free education has removed discrimination against girls on economic grounds. Girls have continued their studies beyond the secondary level, thus closing the gap at the tertiary level.

The Government has adopted a policy of inclusive education to reach all children, and to cater specially for the vulnerable groups. In order to overcome fundamental educational challenges for girls in vulnerable communities and those with disabilities, the "**Zones d'Education Prioritaires**" (ZEP) **Schools** and the "**Special Education Needs Unit**" (SENU) have been instituted. Daily hot meals are provided to children of the ZEP Schools to ensure their full attendance at school. The SENU aims at the setting up of all necessary facilities and environment for children with special needs, including the supply of specifically trained teachers. The Government has set up an **Early Childhood Care and Education Authority (ECCEA)**, a parastatal body operating under the aegis of the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, to promote and provide pre-school education and service in Mauritius. In order to promote inclusive education, Government provides grant and social support scholarships to families with low income groups and ensures that boys and girls get equal opportunities for education.

Besides enrollment, girls' performance in the primary, secondary and tertiary sectors are better than boys. There are more boys among repeaters and in vocational classes.

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<sup>3</sup> Source: Ministry of Education and Human Resources

### C.B.2. Eradicate illiteracy among women

While total literacy rate has improved from 80.2% in 1990 to 89.8% in 2011, female literacy rate has increased to 87.3% in 2011. Female illiteracy rate has fallen from 23.9% in 1990 to 12.7% in 2011. Special educational classes are conducted at Women Centers by the National Women's Council around the country to promote continuing learning among women in the community, and this has helped women become economically active and to open small businesses.

The **Adult Literacy Programme**, launched by the National Women's Council, falling under the aegis of the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare in 1989, has reached out to some 8,000 women by providing them with basic literacy and numeracy skills. A new module entitled "**Adult Literacy for Entrepreneurship Development**" was introduced in September 2008 and aimed at providing potential women entrepreneurs with relevant skills to be applied in their daily activities. Leadership and self-assertiveness courses are innovative activities implemented since 2006.

### C.B.3. Improve women's access to vocational training, science, technology, and continuing education

Girls' enrolment in prevocational schools has increased from 1,351 in 2000 to 3,759 in 2013<sup>4</sup>. The acquisition of work-based experience, social and life skills, life-long learning skills and development of trade skills is opened to both boys and girls. However, 'Glasswalls' still exist and girls are found to be more inclined towards Humanities and boys towards Science/Technology subjects in colleges and universities.

In 2012, 71% of students enrolled in tertiary education programmes were females. As at September 2012, the University of Mauritius had a student population of 11,336 of which about 59% were females. The enrolment statistics as shown in Table 1 indicates a positive progression as regard the enrolment of female students.

**Table 1: Enrolment Statistics<sup>5</sup>**

INSTITUTIONS	2009/2010		2010/2011		2011/2012		2012/2013		2013/2014	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
UOM	4313	5453	4562	6002	4686	6578	4678	6658	5480	7025
UTM	1666	1318	2205	1627	2339	2025	2322	2156	2194	2001
MIE	1989	3250	1736	5727	896	2974	867	2925	1170	3767
OU	225	467	258	620	289	601	226	565	732	1119
UDM	313	379	326	410	308	396	479	346	744	457

<sup>4</sup>Source: Ministry of Education and Human Resources

<sup>5</sup> Source: Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology

MGI	610	1226	771	1563	792	1508	788	1498	818	1455
MIH	23	23	50	31	80	96	78	144	191	206
TOTAL	9139	12116	9908	15980	9390	14178	9438	14292	11329	16030

Key:

UOM: University of Mauritius

UTM: University of Technology, Mauritius

MIE: Mauritius Institute of Education

OP: Open University

UDM: Université des Mascareignes

MGI: Mahatma Gandhi Institute

MIH: Mauritius Institute of Health

**Table 2: Enrolment by Gender in Tertiary Institutions (2007-2013)<sup>6</sup>**

	Male	Female
2007/08	15561	19462
2008/09	16945	21678
2009/10	18732	22752
2010/11	19685	24649
2011/12	19637	26332
2012/13	21302	28323

Surveys undertaken by the Mauritius Research Council and the Tertiary Education Commission show that there is however, a relatively lower number of girls enrolling for science and engineering subjects at tertiary level. Out of 2,232 and 2,009 students enrolled in Information Technology and Engineering respectively in public funded tertiary institutions in 2011, 35% and 19% respectively were female. Enrolment rate in combined Science and Technology related fields in these institutions were 40% in 2011. Researches undertaken by academic staff in public funded tertiary institutions were only 8 in 2011, 63% of which were conducted by males.

The **National Curriculum Framework** for Secondary Schools has been reviewed and “Technology” has become a compulsory learning domain in secondary schools for both boys and girls, thus removing all sorts of gender bias. General Science has been introduced at secondary schooling and made compulsory to those students not opting for pure science subjects (Chemistry, Biology and Physics) at upper secondary level. Conversely, those taking pure science have to take either one Literature or one social science subject. The objective is to

<sup>6</sup>Source: Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology

remove barriers that create mismatch between qualifications and job requirements for boys and girls.

#### **C.B.4. Develop non-discriminatory education and training**

The National Curriculum Framework for Pre-Primary, Primary and Secondary Schools has been reviewed to eliminate all gender stereotypes in teaching and learning materials and promote positive social and moral values based on equality and equity. Teachers have been trained by the Mauritius Institute of Education accordingly. All male and female teachers have same opportunities for training, same salary, benefits and conditions of work.

#### **C.B.5. Allocate sufficient resources for and monitor the implementation of educational reform**

Government expenditures on education for girls and women have continuously increased. From 2012 to 2013, total expenditures on education for girls and women have increased from Rs. 9,244,733,151(US \$ 308,157,771) to Rs. 11,409,250,668 (US \$380,308,355) and are expected to reach Rs.12, 532,341,000(US \$417,744,700) in 2014. The education sector is expected to be further reformed to do away with intense competition at the primary level and for the introduction of the Nine Year Schooling programme, scheduled for 2015.

#### **C.B.6. Promote lifelong education and training for girls and women**

The Government places a high premium on broadening access to quality education and promoting lifelong learning for both girls and boys. Today, the principles of equity, inclusiveness and quality are central to the education strategy. While leaving either primary or secondary schools, boys or girls have equal opportunity to join vocational and prevocational classes, training and orientation courses geared towards career orientations. Women at work do not face any barriers to upgrade knowledge and skills. All training courses run/supervised by **Mauritius Institute of Training and Development (MITD)**, **Human Resource Development Council (HRDC)**, the **Mauritius Institute of Education (MIE)**, the **Mauritius Institute of Directors (MIoD)**, the **Tertiary Education Commission (TEC)**, the **Mauritius Institute of Health (MIH)** and the “**National Committee on Corporate Governance (NCCG)** are gender sensitive.

### **C.B.7. Challenges on Education and Training of Women**

Male literacy rate was higher (92.3%) than female literacy rate (87.3 %) in 2011. The level of educational attainment is higher among the male population. However, in terms of educational achievement and performance, girls are better.

The challenge is to determine whether this is an indication of gender disparity or a systemic disparity caused by a very competitive education process during early formative school years where girls are known to have higher cognitive ability. The Government is in the process of conducting a field research on boys' academic under-achievement in order to come up with policies and interventions to address this issue.

Despite measures taken by the Government to attract more women in non-traditional fields of study, usually dominated by males, the enrolment of girls in the fields of science, research and technology is still low. However, the challenge remains to encourage women and girls to invest in areas of **Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)**. The problem is rather interlinked with choice and past practices.

Enhanced access to higher education by women has not always been translated into enhanced career opportunities. Women still face significant shortfalls and discrimination in the labour market and end up in jobs where they do not use any of their skills and academic qualifications.

A key theme in current policy initiatives is the ideas that if people, especially the youth, become disconnected from schooling and further education, and hence, the labour market, they are more likely to pose significant problems for welfare systems and society as a whole.

A study conducted in 2012 by two NGOs, namely Service d'Accompagnement de Formation, d'Insertion et de Réhabilitation de l'Enfant (**SAFIRE**) and the Mauritius Family Planning and Welfare Association (**MFPWA**) and supported by the Global Fund to Fight HIV/AIDS in Mauritius estimated that 6,780 children aged between 11-16 are currently on the streets. These children are often victims of abuse, sexual exploitation, drugs and are exposed to numerous dangers. According to the study, 30.2% of these children are using drugs, and 74.2% of young people consider drugs to be readily available in Mauritius. Young girls are involved into prostitution at a very early age.

In order to address the problem of social exclusion which affects the health and development of a lot of women and children, there is need to revamp informal education.

The challenge is also to open up greater scope for girls and women for quality education and training that match with market demand for labour, to enroll more girls and women in the field of science, research, technology and engineering, enlarging their opportunities for employment in diverse fields, traditionally meant for men.

## **C.C. WOMEN AND HEALTH**

### **C.C.1. Increase women's access throughout the life cycle to appropriate, affordable, and quality health care, information, and related services**

Health care is free in Mauritius with health facilities being well-distributed over the country to provide adequate access to primary and secondary health care services. Advanced specialized care is provided in specialized hospitals designated for the same. The healthcare services in Mauritius covers 100% of the population through a network of 5 regional hospitals, 4 Specialized Hospitals, 2 District Hospitals, 4 Mediclinics (MC), 21 Area Health Centres (AHCs) and 117 Community Health Centres (CHCs), and 2 Community Hospitals. Government continuously screens all pharmaceutical products to ensure that these conform to international standards. Government also provides comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services to its population, free of user cost. Contraceptive Prevalence Rate is 75% and Population Growth Rate has fallen to 0.37% and Total Fertility Rate to 1.41% in 2012<sup>7</sup>. The family planning programme has shifted its focus from achieving demographic targets to improving the reproductive health of the population, which is in line with the recommendations of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Plan of Action.

### **C.C.2. Strengthen preventive programs that promote women's health**

With a view to preventing diseases that affect mostly women, the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life is undertaking, through the "Screening and Counselling Services at your Doorstep" programme, health promotion activities on Non Communicable Diseases such as breast and cervical cancers, menopause as well as on sexual and reproductive health. In this respect, a screening programme focussing on early detection of breast and cervical cancer is being implemented. Furthermore, the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life also supports sensitisation programme for women on preventive measures with regard to epidemic prone communicable diseases.

### **C.C.3. Undertake gender-sensitive initiatives that address sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS, and sexual and reproductive health issues**

The **HIV and AIDS Act** was adopted in December 2006 to fight against stigma and discrimination against People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) and ensure that they enjoy all benefits of human rights. It also ensures an effective legal framework to implement the Needle Exchange Programme, voluntary counseling and testing and the confidentiality of test.

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<sup>7</sup> Demographic Year Book, 2013, Ministry of Health and Quality of Life

The **Civil Status Act**, the **Immigration Act** and the **HIV and AIDS Act** have been amended to make provisions for marriage to take place between local citizens and infected expatriates with HIV/AIDS. HIV/AIDS Health care services have been decentralised as from 2009. Transport allowances are refunded to all HIV/AIDS patients as incentive to attend and to adhere to treatment. Hardship cases among patients who are on Anti-Retroviral (ARV) are also benefitting from social aids.

A **Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission (PMTCT)** Protocol has been established and all pregnant women are offered HIV test and if found positive the prevention of **Mother to Child Transmission** Protocol is offered which includes ARV treatment, elective caesarean section and artificial milk supply. All services are free of user cost.

A **Post Exposure Prophylaxis** Protocol is available to prevent HIV transmission through occupational exposure among Health Care personnel, police and prison officers. The protocol is also offered to women victims of sexual assaults. The prevalence of HIV infection among pregnant women aged 15 to 49 years was 0.72% in 2012. The percentage of HIV positive women who are adhering to the PMTCT programme was 96% in 2013<sup>8</sup>.

#### **C.C.4. Promote research and disseminate information on women's health**

Government has set up a molecular biology cell within the virology department of the Central Health Laboratory and this constitutes an important milestone in the development of new diagnostic tools for HIV/AIDS.

Two respondent-driven surveys among Men having Sex with Men (MSM) and Female Sex Workers have been further conducted in July and August 2010 in collaboration with the National AIDS Secretariat. The reports have been finalized and disseminated in September 2011. The **Mauritius Institute of Health (MIH)** is an agency of the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life. It serves as the training and research arm of the Ministry.

#### **C.C.5. Increase resources and monitor follow-up for women's health**

General government expenditure on health in Mauritius accounts for 8.10% of the Total Government Expenditure. The Government is planning to set up an Institute for Women's Health. Besides, the development of a National Digital Mammography Screening Programme and a National Systematic Cervical Screening Programme are underway.

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<sup>8</sup> Source: Ministry of Health and Quality of Life

## **C.C.6. Challenges on Women and Health**

Mauritius has improved tremendously the health sector, making health services accessible to all population across the country. Almost all diseases are under control. The estimated prevalence of HIV/AIDS among the population aged 15+ was 1.02% in 2013.

Having achieved its demographic target and having a population growth rate below replacement level, the sexual and reproductive health strategy of Mauritius needs to be reviewed, especially with increasing challenges posed by an ageing population, adolescent sexual health, and violence against women.

The other challenge relates to the economic dependency ratio. An ageing population will add pressure on the sustainability of public economy, especially as the pension and care costs will continuously increase. Women live longer than men and among 113 centenarians living in 2013, only 14 were men. Women's specific health needs relate to the access and availability of services for women's infertility, the treatment of osteoporosis and related bone diseases, breast cancer and mental health problems. Taking into consideration the changing structure of the population and longevity of women, services for ageing women will be in great demand in the future.

Currently, a feasibility study is being carried out for the setting up of a Women' Health Institute for specialized care.

## **C.D. VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

### **C.D.1. Take integrated measures to prevent and eliminate violence against women**

- **Protection**

Prior to 1997, there was no law providing for protection orders for women who were victims of domestic violence. Legal action was possible under Section 230 of the **Criminal Code** for the offence of assault, and the perpetrator, if found guilty was liable to a fine of Rs. 1000(US \$33) and imprisonment not exceeding 12 months.

In 1997, the **Protection from Domestic Violence Act** (PDVA) was introduced to protect spouses from domestic violence by applying for protection orders, occupation orders and tenancy orders. The PDVA was consequently amended in 2004, 2007 and 2011, so as to better assist,

provide more protection to victims of domestic violence and strengthen the enforcement mechanism of the Act.

Perpetrators of domestic violence can be prosecuted for a number of offences under the Criminal code, including assault, aggravated assault, wounds and blows, manslaughter and murder. Under the PDVA, a breach of any order amounts to a criminal offence. Penalties for failure to comply with Court Orders have increased over the years, especially for recurring cases.

The Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare operates **six Family Support Bureaux** (FSBx) around the island and provide amongst others counselling, legal advice, court assistance, placement and referral to victims of domestic violence. These are supported by the **Police Family Protection Unit** (PFPU) in 9 regions of Mauritius and the **“Brigade Pour la Protection des Mineurs”** (BPM). The PFPU aims at providing specific services to juveniles and other vulnerable members of the society. The BPM has been set up after the promulgation of the **Ombudsperson for Children Act** of 2003 to focus on the protection of the child and to act as a watchdog against child abuse.

There are two shelters, namely ‘SOS Femmes’ and the ‘Shelter for Women and Children in Distress Trust’ which provide temporary accommodation to women victims of domestic violence. Both shelters are supported financially by the Government.

- **Prevention**

In order to prevent gender-based violence and encourage victims to come forward, the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare developed specific and tailor-made information, education and advocacy projects targeting young couples, community leaders, religious groups, grassroots men and women in pockets of poverty. Some of these programmes such as the **Marriage Enrichment Programme, Pre-Marital Counselling Programme, Shared Faith Belief Programme, Inter-Generation Relationship Programme and the Strengthening Values for Family Life Programme** are spearheaded by the Family Welfare and Protection Unit of the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare. The FSBx attend, assist and support women victims of domestic violence, network with NGOs, Community Groups and the Civil Society to conduct sensitisation and awareness campaigns in the community. Special programme like the **“Building Partnership with Men and Boys for the Promotion of Gender Equality”** and **“Men as Partners”** that are also spearheaded by the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare and implemented in collaboration with NGOs, Community Development Associations and other grassroots organisations aim essentially to enlist the support of men and boys in promoting gender equality and utilise men’s friendly **“Entertain to Educate”** initiatives. An evaluation of these specific programmes reveals impressive gain in knowledge on Gender among grassroots men and

women, increased understanding of couple relationship, and most importantly, a positive change in mind-set among the targeted population on gender stereotype issues.

Government through its Women Centres, Community Centres, Citizen Advice Bureaux, Social Welfare Centres, National Women's Council and the National Women Entrepreneur Council undertakes on-going information and educational sessions and reaches people of all walks of life all around the country. Sensitization campaigns on radio, television and the written press are on-going. The clips on the incidences of domestic violence that were released on television in 2011 on the occasion of the Commemoration of the International Day Against Violence Against Women proved very fruitful as reflected by the resulting increase in number of cases of domestic violence reported and addressed at the Family Welfare and Protection Unit of the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare. The **Victim Empowerment and Abuser Rehabilitation Policy** which was launched in November 2013, has galvanised efforts to denounce gender based violence, sexual abuse and harassment at worksite. A **Protocol of Assistance to Victims of Sexual Assault** has been operational since March 2006. The purpose of the Protocol is to ensure prompt and timely assistance to victims of sexual assault.

- **Capacity Building**

Acknowledging the importance of promoting capacity building among personnel to effectively deal with problems related to gender based domestic violence, the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare, with the support from the UNODC facilitated in 2011 a Training of Trainers Programme on the “**Development of Effective Police Responses to Violence Against Women**”. Police Officers and Family Welfare and Protection Officers (FWPOs) and representatives of other law enforcement agencies were trained on effective law enforcement responses to violence against women in Mauritius. Between 2012 and 2013, Health Personnel followed a Capacity Building Programme organised to end gender-based violence. In 2014, the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare with the support of US Embassy and in collaboration with the US Department of Justice and the Institute for Judicial and Legal Studies implemented a sharing of experience programme on **Intra-Family Violence: Children and Other Vulnerable Victims in the Criminal Justice System**. Besides strengthening knowledge on different approaches in addressing domestic violence, the programme also provided opportunity for members of the judiciary, police force and local government to learn from experiences in US in handling problems of domestic violence.

## **C.D.2 Study the causes and consequences of violence against women and the effectiveness of preventive measures**

A study commissioned by UNDP on “**The Extent, Nature, and Costs of Domestic Violence to the Mauritian Economy**” was conducted between 2008 and 2009 by the Mauritius Research Council. The study was released in 2010 and its key objectives were to determine the extent and nature of domestic violence in the country as well as to attempt to put a cost to this social problem. While the study filled the gap on evidence on the magnitude of domestic violence on a national level, it also provided information for policy evaluation and policy making purposes. The study revealed that the burden of domestic violence in the Republic of Mauritius costed the economy some Rs. 1.4 billion (US \$46,666,667) between 2008 and 2009. The Government subsequently developed the **Victim Empowerment and Abuser Rehabilitation Policy**, which aimed at empowering the human resource personnel of both the public and private sectors, through capacity building programmes, to detect cases of Gender Based Violence (GBV) and refer both victims and perpetrators to the Family Support Bureaux. The Government also launched in 2011 the **National Platform to end Gender-Based Violence** and a related **Costed National Action Plan**, which act as a roadmap to enhance coordination and encourage a multi-sectoral approach in integrating and mainstreaming actions to combat GBV.

In 2012, Gender Links, an NGO released a **GBV Indicators Report**, in the context of a regional research (Gender-Based Violence Indicators Project) focusing on testing tools to measure and monitor the extent, effect, cost of and efforts to end violence against women. The Report which was conceptualised by the Mauritius Research Council, reveals that around 24% of women have experienced some form of (GBV) and 23% of men have admitted to being perpetrators of GBV in Mauritius.

Acknowledging the importance of indicators to monitor the extent of GBV, a **Domestic Violence Information System** (DOVIS) is being set up at the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare. The DOVIS is a web-based computer system for registration of reported cases of domestic violence and will allow for data harmonisation, easier record keeping and faster retrieval of information on domestic violence issues. It will be used as a tool to monitor and assess record, as well as generate specific reports on such cases. This complements the existing Gender Statistics periodically released by Statistics Mauritius, the official organisation responsible for collection, compilation, analysis and dissemination of the official statistical data relating to the economic and social activities of Mauritius.

In 2014, the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare has set up an **Advisory Committee on the Reinforcement of Framework for the Protection of Domestic Violence**. The main tasks of the Committee include, inter alia, the review of the Protection from Domestic Act to make it more responsive to the protection and rehabilitation of victims, as well

as the prosecution of perpetrators; the development of new policy orientations and the delineation of the effective roles of major stakeholders involved in combating domestic violence.

### **C.D.3. Eliminate trafficking in women and assist victims of violence due to prostitution and trafficking**

In 2003, Mauritius acceded to the **United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children**. The country signed the **Convention on the Rights of the Child** in 1990, and acceded to the **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)** in 1984. The Government ratified the **International Labour Organization’s Convention No.182** on the Worst Forms of Child Labour in June 2000 and **Convention No.138 on Minimum Age** in 1990<sup>9</sup>.

Mauritius has sustained its efforts to identify, investigate, and prosecute incidences of trafficking. The **“Brigade des Mineures” of the Mauritius Police Force**, the **Police Family Protection Unit**, the Ministry of Tourism, Leisure, and External Communications and the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare are constantly on the alert and have strengthened their anti-trafficking intervention programs, including training for police officers, awareness and prevention campaign in schools, hotels and the community.

The **“Combating of Trafficking in Persons Act of 2009”** prohibits all forms of trafficking for adults and children and prescribes penalties of up to 15 years’ imprisonment for convicted offenders. In addition, the **Child Protection Act** of 2005 prohibits all forms of child trafficking and prescribes punishment of up to 15 years’ imprisonment for convicted offenders; the **Judicial Provisions Act** of 2008 increased the maximum prescribed punishment for child trafficking offenses to 30 years’ imprisonment. The **Child Protection (Amendment) Act** of 2008 established a child mentoring scheme to provide support and rehabilitation to children in distress, including children engaged in prostitution. The Government has sustained its protection of child trafficking victims, and provides funding to NGOs running victim shelters on a reimbursable basis –US \$6 per day for the protection of each child, including victims of trafficking. The Child Development Unit (CDU) of the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare refers abused and exploited children to these organizations for shelter and other assistance.

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<sup>9</sup>Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment

#### **C.D.4. Challenges on Women against Violence**

Evaluating initiatives to prevent or respond to violence against women is complex and involves numerous methodological challenges. Mauritius has undertaken impressive initiatives to respond to violence against women, and yet the impact of each initiative could not be concretely assessed, as even in high income countries. Some issues of violence such as sexual harassment suffer from limited visibility, reporting and prosecution, accentuated by a paucity of related research and data.

In addition, the issue of domestic violence is very often regarded as a personal concern by the society and, at times, even by law enforcement officers. The challenge is to expose the criminal nature of domestic violence into public eye and change mind-set of people on the “privacy” of the issue.

Domestic violence programmes have positive impact when law enforcement agencies, NGOs and the civil society concert together. This entails not only a wide sensitisation, advocacy campaign but also adequate human, financial and technical resources, which are unfortunately lacking.

Promoting legal literacy, strengthening research, increased community mobilisation and participation, building effective partnership with the private sector and civil society and creating comfortable shelter and rehabilitation environment for victims remain the key challenges in addressing violence against women.

#### **C.E WOMEN AND ARMED CONFLICT**

Mauritius does not have women living in situations of armed and other conflicts or under foreign occupation or refugee women, other displaced women in need of international protection and internally displaced women. Mauritius is not directly involved in any armed conflict.

## **C.F. WOMEN AND THE ECONOMY**

### **C.F.1. Promote women's economic rights and independence, including access to employment and appropriate working conditions and control over economic resources**

Women's role and contribution to the economic development of Mauritius, especially in the agricultural and manufacturing sector, is remarkable. Government provided facilities to enable women to balance effectively their professional and family responsibilities. Committed to support women's empowerment, promote women's rights and independence, ensure that women perform their work in all equity and fairness, the Government of Mauritius provided significant resources to the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare during the past 10 years. In 2005, the budget for the Ministry was Rs.88.4 M(US \$2,946,667) and reached Rs.250.4 M(US \$8,346,667) in 2013 and the estimate for 2014 is Rs.294.8 M(US \$9,826,667), showing an increase of 235% over the years. The Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, under the Special Collaborative Programme for support to Women and Children in Distress, has allocated in addition Rs.17 million( US \$566,667) to the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare in 2014.

The **Equal Opportunity Act** of 2008 was amended in 2011 and an **Equal Opportunity Commission** was set up to ensure appropriate institutional mechanism be put in place to safeguard and protect the rights of each citizen, including girls and women. The Employment Rights Act of 2008, which was amended in 2013, ensures that young children are not employed and that there is no discriminatory treatment at work against women and also sets working conditions applicable to all employees. Laws and legislation promotes economic rights and independence of women equal access to and control of resources by women. The Government set up in 1999 the National Women Entrepreneur Council, essentially to promote women access to economic resources and facilitate training, education and identification of markets and partnership for women entrepreneurs. Women's contribution to agricultural economic activities is significant in terms of labour force associated with specialized operations such as sowing/transplanting, weeding, harvesting, post-harvest care and agro-processing.

### **C.F.2. Facilitate women's access to resources, employment, markets, and trade**

The Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, in partnership with the Joint Economic Council, has established a joint public-private initiative called the **Skills Working Group(SWG)**, which aims at assisting unemployed young men and women acquire skills and

expertise, with possibility of permanent employment, thereafter, on condition of satisfactory performance. An amount of Rs. 990 M (US \$33M) has been earmarked for the project for the period 2013-2015. As at July 2013, among 1190 youth placed in companies, 49.8 % were women. Some women leave their jobs in the middle of their career because of family responsibilities. In addition, in order to facilitate their re-entrance into paid employment and also address gender gap in female unemployment, the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment has developed in 2014 the '**Women Back to Work Programme**' for women who wish to rejoin the labour force.

In 2013, Government earmarked Rs. 20 million (US \$66666) for the one-off grant scheme project of up to Rs. 200,000(US \$6667) each to all unregistered Child Day Care Centres (CDCCs) located in disadvantaged regions. The objective is to provide additional child care facilities, enabling mothers to enter the world of work and have access to business services, training, market and technologies. Women earning less than Rs. 6,200 per month (US \$207) were granted Rs 1500 monthly(US \$50) for every child of up to 3 years old to enable them keep their children in day care centres.

### **C.F.3. Provide business services, training, and access to markets, information, and technology, particularly to low-income women**

The National Empowerment Fund (NEF), the Small and Medium Enterprise Development Authority (SMEDA), National Women Entrepreneur Council (NWECC) and the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Initiative run specific programmes to facilitate women's access to resources, skills and employment. The Government facilitates the organization of trade fairs and exhibitions, training and refresher courses for women at low income level to enable them acquire knowledge and information on markets and new technologies.

### **C.F.4. Strengthen women's economic capacity and commercial networks**

Economic empowerment of women has been further improved between 2005 and 2010 with non-collateral based access to finance for entrepreneurship and, consequently, a larger number of women entrepreneurs are now in business with suitable income. The National Women Entrepreneur Council (NWECC), the Small and Medium Enterprise Development Authority (SMEDA) and the National Empowerment Fund (NEF) have a special role, among others, to strengthen women's capacity on business enterprise, through provision of fund, training and facilities to market products.

### **C.F.5. Eliminate occupational segregation and all forms of employment discrimination**

The **Sex Discrimination Act** (2002), which came into force on 08 March 2003 and provided for the elimination of gender discrimination and sexual harassment in certain areas of public activity has been repealed and incorporated into the **Equal Opportunities Act** (2008). The Equal Opportunities Act provides for equal access to opportunities as it incorporates all the different grounds of discrimination covered under section 3 and 16 of the Constitution as well as age, pregnancy, mental and physical disability and sexual orientation in areas dealing with employment, education, the provision of accommodation, goods, services and other facilities, sports, the disposal of immovable property, admission to private clubs and premises open to the public. However, gender division of labour in many sectors still persists.

### **C.F.6. Promote harmonization of work and family responsibilities for women and men**

The Government amended the **Criminal Code Act** of 1838 to legalise Termination of Pregnancy on four conditions. Government has taken appropriate measures to ensure that women balance effectively their professional and family responsibilities and are protected during pregnancy. While women continue to enjoy paid maternity leave for a period of 12 weeks, they are allowed to leave the Government office half an hour earlier in the afternoon in their ninth month of pregnancy. Protection is also provided to female workers in the sugar industry who have reached an advanced stage of pregnancy (i.e. seventh month), by providing them with light field work. Other limitations on assignment of work involving physical effort are also provided for in the Sugar Industry (Agricultural workers) (Remuneration Order) Regulations 1983 as amended. During the intercrop season, in the case of a female worker who is employed other than on task work, the length of a normal day's work, excluding any time allowed for meal break is six hours on every day other than a Saturday or a public holiday after she has entered the seventh month of pregnancy. Furthermore, female workers in the salt manufacturing industry are not compelled to do any work involving the carrying of a load of more than 18 kgs.

In addition, the **Employment Rights Act**, adopted in August 2008 and proclaimed on 2 February 2009, provides that:

- (i) An employer shall not require a female worker to perform work in excess of a normal day's work or work during night shift, two months before her confinement;
- (ii) Subject to medical recommendation, a female worker who is pregnant shall not be required to perform duties requiring continuous standing or that may be detrimental to her health or that of her baby;

(iii) An employer shall not give to a female worker, who is on maternity leave, notice for termination of employment during such leave or that would expire during such leave for any reasons, unless the grounds relate to the economic, technological, structural or similar nature affecting the employer's activities.

### **C.F.7. Challenges on Women and the Economy**

The challenge forward is to address the increasing unemployment among women. Between 2008 and 2012, the unemployment rate was 5.3% for males and 12.7% for females. The better performance among girls in education has not contributed in increased employment among them.

Gender disparity in the wage employment in the non-agricultural sector still prevails. Indeed the share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector was low at 36% in 2012. Working women tend to concentrate in a small number of industrial sectors. In 2009, employment by the industrial sector data reveals that the majority of women were in the "manufacturing sector", followed by "education, health and social work", "wholesale and retail trade" and "hotel and restaurants".

There is a dearth of empirical data and information pertaining to women's contributions to economic development and the reasons why despite effective law enforcement at work and women being educated, there are still more employment among them.

It is possible because the fields of study of predilection for girls do not match labour demand, or because of preference for males, especially in the private sector, or because of perceived high labour-days lost among women due to maternity and family related issues. It is also possible that socio-cultural factors continue to perpetuate gender division of labour and force women into the "pink ghetto" cycle and stereotyped jobs. These should be documented.

## **C.G. WOMEN IN POWER AND DECISION-MAKING**

### **C.G.1. Take measures to ensure women's equal access to and full participation in power structures and decision-making**

Despite the non-existence of some form of electoral quotas for women in Parliament, their representation in Parliament has increased from 3% in 1991 to 5.7% in 2000 to 17.1% in 2001 and 18.8 % in 2010, a figure close to worldwide figure (19.1%). The percentage of female candidates standing for the general election rose from 4.5% in 1991 to 11% in 2010. For the first time, in 2010, a woman was nominated Vice President of the Republic of Mauritius. For the first time, the Government appointed a woman Deputy Commissioner of Prison in 2014. An ex lady-Judge was appointed Ombudsperson for Children in 2011. 4 women in 2010 have been assigned higher responsibilities in different posts at the level of Parliament, namely:

One woman as Deputy Government Chief Whip;

Two women as Private Parliamentary Secretaries; and

One woman as President of the Commission for the Democratization of the Economy.

The amendment to the **Local Government Act 2012** that “any group presenting more than 2 candidates in an electoral ward shall ensure that the candidates are not all of the same sex” has been an important step ahead. In terms of women's participation in election at the Municipal level, there has been an increase from 12.5% in 2005 to 28.2% in 2012. At the Village Council level, the increase has been from 5% in 2005 to 30.3% in 2012. In terms of women's representation at local government, Mauritius made a big leap from 6.4% to 26% between 2005 and 2012.

Noticeable progress has been made in the Public Sector and the Judiciary, where there has been an increasing number of women participating in higher level decision-making.

Table 3 below illustrates women occupying high level positions in decision making positions in 2014.

**Table 3: Women in Decision Making Positions<sup>10</sup>**

<b>GRADE</b>	<b>NUMBER</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
Ministers	2 out of 24	8
Members of Parliament	13 out of 70	18.5
Ambassadors	2 out of 13	14
Senior Chief Executives	2 out of 4	50
Permanent Secretaries	11 out of 34	32.4
Deputy Permanent Secretaries	27 out of 70	38.6
Assistant Permanent Secretaries	60 out of 101	59.4
Judges	8 out of 21	38.1
Magistrates	31 out of 48	64.6

The figures above translate the political will and commitment at the highest decision making level towards achieving gender parity in decision making. The only impediment is the representation of women in Parliament. The Government is committed to address the issue. The **White Paper on Electoral Reform** released by the Government in March 2014 recommends the following that at least 1/3 of the total number of candidates from the First Past the Post constituencies be of either gender; on the party list that neither gender represents less than 33% of the candidates; at least one person of a different gender out of every 3 sequential candidates on the Proportionate Representation list; and in case, the second alternative is adopted, at least 1/3 of the PR lists chosen by the Party leaders should be of either gender.

It is also noted that women's participation in decision-making in the other sectors does not match the public sector. Out of the 100 top private companies of Mauritius, only one is chaired by a woman. There are only 6 women Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) out of a total of 91. Likewise, out of 19 banks, there are only one female chairperson and 2 female CEOs. In some para-statal bodies like the Central Water Authority (CWA), the Central Electricity Board (CEB), the University of Mauritius and the University of Technology of Mauritius, their governing bodies do not reflect gender parity.

### **C.G.2. Increase women's capacity to participate in decision-making and leadership**

In 2008, the National Women Entrepreneur Council in collaboration with Women in Networking (WIN) and Soroptimist International with the support of UNDP and the Australian High Commission launched a capacity building project with the objective of developing 30 women leaders per year to influence decision making in all spheres, thereby creating a pool of 300 talented and competent women leaders over a period of ten years. As at December 2012, 215 women have graduated from the course.

<sup>10</sup> Source: Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare

The Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare together with stakeholders organised in 2011 and 2013 a series of training sessions for the political empowerment of women and which focussed on Leadership, Governance and Communication Skills for prospective women politicians and business managers. Sharing of experiences and best practices on women in politics are organized to enable women at the local level interact with politicians at the national level and also with specialists from abroad. In 2012, the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare, in collaboration with the U.S. Embassy organized information sharing and political training sessions on **Women in Politics** for women candidates for local government elections scheduled in the same year. This programme will be sustained by the Gender Unit of the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare. The Gender Unit implements various policies, programme and projects to ensure that gender considerations are high on the agenda at all instances. It provides assistance to other Ministries in formulating their gender policies and also in ensuring that women participate in decision making at all levels and that the Gender Cells facilitate gender mainstreaming in all Ministries.

This measure has, undoubtedly, provided opportunities for women to take cognizance of their potential to stand as candidates for election; enable them to become more confident ; have provided them more insights of the political system, procedures and processes and understanding on the linkage of gender promotion programme with the attainment of democracy.

### **C.G.3. Challenges on Women in Power and Decision-Making**

The challenge of promoting a fair representation of women in Parliament as proposed by the White Paper on Electoral Reform (2014) should not be an end in itself. The quotas may have a downside if it results in women seen as having less legitimacy and competence over their male counterparts. The quota system should be reinforced with supportive mechanism to enable women become effective representatives in Parliament.

It has further been demonstrated that the murky nature of the political terrain, often tainted by cut-throat and fierce and very often personal attacks on political figures, tend to stifle women's effective participation. Politics is also an expensive process requiring substantial financial outlays, which women tend not to have. Usually, they have less time than men to devote to the networking required to build a political career, due to their family and care responsibilities.

Another challenge is the participation of women in strategic decision making in the private sector. Targeted capacity building that enables up-the-ladder movement for women, together with improved gender sensitive mechanism for data collection, analysis and dissemination in the private sector should be encouraged through advocacy and policy decisions.

## **C.H. INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN**

### **C.H.1. Create or strengthen national machineries and other governmental bodies**

Based on lessons learnt in the implementation of the National Policy on the Family of 2006, the Government developed a National Action Plan on the Family (2009–2015). In 2008 the Government developed the **National Gender Policy Framework (NGPF)**, together with an Action Plan. The NGPF provides the broad operational strategies and institutional arrangements for achieving gender equality in Mauritius. Given the cross cutting nature of family and gender issues, and in order to undertake a concerted effort to address them, the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare set up a National Steering Committee on Gender Mainstreaming comprising of representatives of all Ministries and stakeholders to oversee the implementation of Action Plans to address women, gender and family issues in Mauritius. The Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare is also structured into the **Gender Unit (GU)**, **Family Welfare and Protection Unit (FWPU)**, **Child Development Unit (CDU)** and the **Planning and Research Unit (PRU)** and work in concert to address all issues and concerns for which the Ministry is mandated.

In an attempt to promote the economic empowerment of women and encourage women to engage in entrepreneurship development, the National Women Entrepreneur Council (NWECC) was set up under the aegis of the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare. From 2005 to 2013, memberships to the NWECC have increased from 1,950 to 3,900. Members include both individuals and associations operating in various fields like handicraft, textile, agriculture and services. In order to enhance women entrepreneurship and improve competitiveness of women-owned businesses, **Women Entrepreneur Development Programmes** have been organized for a large section of female population around the country.

The National Children's Council was set up in 1990 by the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare. It operates now under the National Children's Council Act of 2003 and is the key consultative and coordinating national body on all activities and issues related to children.

The National Women's Council complements the projects/programmes/activities of the Gender Unit of the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare, particularly, through its outreach programmes for the benefit of members of some 1,200 women's associations. The focus of the intervention of the NWC is to sensitize women especially at the grassroots level on gender issues, inform women of Government's policies, services and facilities which they can avail of. The field officers of NWC act as motivators vis-à-vis the women's associations to ensure that members are kept abreast of updated information and engage in gender sensitive projects and actions at home and in the community.

The Government has also created a National Child Protection Committee (NCPC, also known as the Working Together Committee) that includes key stakeholders related to the coordination and implementation of child protection policies. The NCPC coordinates the roles and responsibilities of the relevant ministries and ensures there is effective collaboration on effective intervention on cases involving children.

The Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions has set up a forum of women with disabilities to promote the rights of women with disabilities, in line with Article 6 of the United Nations Convention on the Right of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), which Mauritius ratified in 2010.

## **C.H.2. Integrate gender perspectives in legislation, public policies, programs, and projects**

The National Gender Policy Framework (NGPF) further reinforces an institutionalized culture of gender responsiveness whereby each Ministry/Institution including the private sector and the media are required to develop their sector-specific gender policy statements. The NGPF focuses on outcomes and impacts relating to the livelihoods of human beings as holders of rights.

This process started in 2009 and by 2014, all Ministries would be implementing their own gender policies. All Ministries have set up **Gender Cells** to ensure that the gender dimensions integrate all decision making process and that all activities conducted are gender sensitive.

### **C.H.3. Generate and disseminate gender-disaggregated data for planning and evaluation**

Since 2005, with a view to assessing the status of equality between men and women, the Statistics Mauritius in collaboration with the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare produces an annual report entitled “**Statistics in Mauritius: A Gender Approach**”. Sex-disaggregated data on the age groups, health issues, education, employment, disability, children, and social benefits are available. These statistics are shared with all stakeholders and utilized to advocate for proper identification of gender gaps, and for appropriate review and development of policies.

### **C.H.4. Challenges on Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women**

Despite the existence of policies and institutional mechanism to monitor gender mainstreaming activities in all Government departments and stakeholders, the momentum has not really taken off due to lack of resources, both technical and financial. Gender Responsive Budgeting is yet to be a reality in all sectors.

Inadequate gender disaggregated data collection in the public sector continues to inhibit monitoring and evaluation of gender mainstreaming programmes. One the most important challenges is addressing the issue of women employment, work mobility, and gender equality in the private sector.

## **C.I. HUMAN RIGHTS OF WOMEN**

### **C.I.1. Promote and protect the human rights of women, by implementing human rights instruments, especially the Women’s Treaty**

The Government of the Republic of Mauritius prescribed itself to a series of international and regional human rights instruments and is fully committed to uphold the principles of human rights.

Mauritius ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in 1973, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in 1973. In addition, Mauritius committed itself to the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The Convention on the Rights of the Child which Mauritius ratified

in 1990 includes protection of children from early and forced marriage, recognition of adulthood as 18 years, rights to education, especially to girls and young women there were also articulated together with Women's Rights and Empowerment in 1994 at the **International Conference on Population and Development** (ICPD) in Cairo and at the 4th International Women Conference in 1995.

Mauritius ratified the Convention Against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment in 1992, and the Convention on the Rights of Person with Disabilities in 2010. Mauritius has not signed the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Protocol on Gender and Development on technical reasons, but has signed in 1997 the SADC Declaration committing Mauritius to eliminate gender inequality and marginalization of women.

Mauritius also committed itself at Millennium Summit (2000) to promote Gender Equality and Women Empowerment (Goal 3 of the United Nations Millennium Declaration). Further Mauritius reaffirmed its commitment at the 2005 World Summit, the 2008 Accra Agenda for Action and Doha Declaration, and the ILO Conventions on working women's rights. Mauritius has also signed the United Nations (UN) Resolution on Human Rights, Sexual Orientation and Gender Equality.

The Government of the Republic of Mauritius has enacted a series of legislations to protect human and women's rights. It has put in place various mechanisms to ensure that all the international commitments are effectively translated into policy decisions at the national and local levels.

### **C.I.2. Ensure equality and non-discrimination under the law and in practice**

The Constitution of Mauritius protects the **Fundamental Rights and Freedoms** of individual and ensures that no person is treated in any discriminatory manner. According to the Protection of the Human Rights Act (1998), any person who feels that any of the human rights enshrined in the Constitution has been violated or is likely to be violated by a public officer can complain to the **National Human Rights Commission** and seek redress. Cases of alleged maladministration with respect to gender bias in the public sector can also be referred to the Ombudsperson.

### **C.I.3. Achieve legal literacy**

The Legal Literacy Programme is part of a wider legal literacy campaign launched by the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare and the National Women's Council. The campaign aims at encouraging women to become more aware of their rights and civil liberties under the existing national legislations. In 2011 the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare, in collaboration with the **National Productivity & Competitiveness Council** (NPCC) and the "**Commonwealth of Learning**" (COL), an inter-governmental organisation, launched the "**Lifelong Learning for Women's Empowerment**" in Mauritius. In this context, specific modules that highlighted the various laws relating to family, marriage and divorce were also developed and widely disseminated to women's centres and also through DVDs and text messages. The Equal Opportunities Commission also organizes Legal Literacy programmes on the rules and statutes under the Equal Opportunities Act that ensure the rights of women and their protection against all forms of discrimination.

The Prime Minister's Office, in collaboration with the National Human Rights Commission, the Equal Opportunities Commission, Attorney General's Office, Ombudsperson's for Children Office and the Citizen's Advice Bureau is engaged in a nationwide training programme on Human Rights. The objective is to empower community leaders, social activists and representatives of NGOs and the civil society with knowledge and information on the constitutional rights of individuals, the existing institutions that safeguard human rights and the procedures for registering complaints on human rights violations.

### **C.I.4. Challenges on Human Rights of Women**

The challenge ahead is to translate legal provisions into simplified language for the common man and provide a conducive institutional set up that can enable people to act effectively to safeguard their rights. Legislations are very often above the average understanding of the common man, who very often perceives the legal environment as alien, authoritative and fearful.

While among a certain class of people gender equality is accepted, there are still persisting negative attitudes and perceptions of some people towards gender equality and women's empowerment. Some cultural and religious beliefs do still prevail among certain sections of the population which do not consider women fit to do certain types of jobs, traditionally meant for men. Gender sensitization campaign needs to be extended additionally to reach more men and women at the grassroot level.

## **C.J. WOMEN AND THE MEDIA**

### **C.J.1. Increase women’s participation in and access to expression and decision-making in and through the media and new communication technologies**

Government has adopted an **e-Government Strategy** (2013-2017) to “adopt a more citizen and business centric approach to e-Government”, taking into consideration women and gender related issues. The e-Government Strategy aims at increased participation of citizens, including women in decision making, increased transparency and accountability. The strategy, while promoting legal literacy, information and education on women issues and concerns, also enables the reporting of cases of alleged Gender Based Domestic Violence electronically. The Central Information Bureau (CIB) is also networking with the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare to set up the **Domestic Violence Information System**.

### **C.J.2. Promote a balanced and non-stereotyped portrayal of women in media**

One of the pillars of the **Costed National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence (GBV)** (2012-2015) launched in 2011 is Media Education and Advocacy. Government promotes capacity-building on responsible reporting on GBV and ensures that all news coverage have gender sensitive language and do not perpetuate stereotypes. Media professionals and aspiring journalists are continuously trained by the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare on “**Ethical Reporting on Gender Based Violence**”. The University of Mauritius released in 2013 two documents on ‘**Ethical Journalism and Gender-Sensitive Reporting**’ and ‘**A Gender Code of Ethics for the Media**’ to promote greater responsibility and accountability among the media on gender sensitive journalism.

**Media Watch Organization (MWO)** and **Gender links (GL)** are two Non- Governmental Organizations that conduct research and oversee gender sensitive news coverage in the media and ensure that portrayal of women in the media is not prejudiced.

Gender Links (GL) is currently working with three private print media houses and the country's only public broadcaster (Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation) to develop **Centres of Excellence** in gender mainstreaming in the media. On-the-job training, support and assistance are provided to media personnel and ensuring that gender concerns are integrated all news events and media coverages.

The 2003 **Gender and Media Baseline Study** (GMBS) conducted by GL, Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) and Media Watch Organization (MWO) identified gender disparities in the media in the region, including Mauritius. Accordingly GL and MWO, with support from the Friederich Ebert Foundation implemented a pilot project ensuring institutional changes at the (MBC) that runs major Radio and TV channels in Mauritius. The impact has been impressive. MBC has developed a full-fledged Gender Policy and has become the first media organization in the region to do so. From 2003 to 2010, the MBC has doubled its women sources. Gender considerations now form an integral part of all news reporting at the MBC. The MBC's commitment to gender equality in Mauritius was duly recognized at the 4th Gender and Media (GEM) Summit and Awards when it scooped the Gender in the Media Best Institutional Practice Award in 2010.

### **C.J.3. Challenges on Women and the Media**

The negative and degrading projection of women in media via electronic, print, visual and audio has diminished but still persists. Many advertisements in the media are sexually explicit and portray women in traditional jobs like handicrafts, farming or vendors. Most media in Mauritius do the role of information giver and very little as educator. The role of the media to change attitude of people vis-à-vis women and to inculcate values that respect the role of women and to promote gender equality is limited.

The challenge forward is to promote capacity building among media personnel, including cartoonists, graphic designers, ensure that all media channels follow a code of ethics and a gender sensitive deontology all the time.

## **C.K. WOMEN AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

### **C.K.1. Involve women actively in environmental decision-making at all levels**

Women's involvement and participation as environmental decision makers fall short compared to men. Government, concerned about the prevailing situation specifically stated in its **Green Paper** in 2011 that "the gender dimension is important, and both women and men must be empowered through the implementation of programmes, so they can fully enjoy their human rights and are equal partners in decision making to shape economic, environmental and social and cultural development and reap the benefits thereof". Women are taking the lead in

Agricultural Clubs, and are increasingly involved as Marine Scientists, Marine Development Managers and are important stakeholders in the environment sector.

### **C.K.2. Integrate gender concerns and perspectives in policies and programs for sustainable development**

The **National Environment Policy** of 2007 has one among its principal objectives to “ensure equitable access to environmental resources and quality for all sections of society, and in particular for poor communities, taking into consideration gender equity”. The Government issued a Green Paper in 2011, entitled “**Towards a National Policy for a Sustainable Development**” with one of the core themes “Poverty, Social Cohesion, Gender, the Elderly and Disabled”. The paper translates Government’s commitment to address gender issues and increase involvement of women on environment development as a pathway for the attainment of sustainable development. Women are a major target of the Climate Change Information, Education and Communication Strategy and Action Plan of the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development.

The Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development and with financial assistance from the Government of Japan under the **African Adaptation Programme (AAP)** on Adaptation to Climatic Change conducted a series of awareness campaigns on climatic change and its gendered implications in 2012. User- friendly printed materials on “Women and Climatic Change”(in French and English version) have been produced and are being used as a tool to disseminate the information on Climate Change to the public.

The Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare in collaboration with the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security is empowering small women farmers and providing them with the necessary support and facilities to adopt environmentally sound agricultural practices and technologies through a number of incentives. For instance, various **Women Agricultural Clubs** in Mauritius to empower women who are in small farming and also provide them with facilities to develop kitchen gardening, roof/container gardening, compost making, mushroom production, roof & container gardening, seedling production and transplanting, pests & diseases control, plant propagation, flower production, strawberry and other fruit production. Women are also initiated to simple household techniques of processing local fruits and vegetables. They are sensitised on opportunities in agro-processing as a business.

Women Agriculturists are provided Government Grants to adopt environmentally sound technologies through a number of incentives, like the *Rain Water Harvesting Scheme* (to collect, store and supply of rainwater for small farming ), the *Household Compost Subsidy Scheme* ( to

shift from use of chemical input to organic ones in order to promote sustainable agriculture) and the *Family farming Micro-Project Scheme* (families/household to develop and sustain production of vegetables, fruits and other horticultural products with minimal processing). With assistance from UNDP GEF Small Grants Programme, women in pockets of poverty are encouraged to cultivate, dehydrate, pack, and market a Mauritian brand of different medicinal and herbal teas. This project was also co-financed by the British High Commission, and received technical support from the **Agricultural Research and Extension Unit** of the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security.

The Ministry of Fisheries, through the **Fisheries Training and Extension Centre** (FITEC) provides incentives and training to women to enable them improve their expertise at fish handling, preservation and marketing. The **Fisheries Protection Services Scheme** has been amended in 2013 to enable recruitment of women in the field.

In response to the global energy crisis in 2007, Government became fully conscious of the importance of promoting renewable energy and sustainable development for the wellbeing of its citizens. In 2008, Mauritius launched the **Maurice Ile Durable (MID)** project, with a new long term vision to making Mauritius a sustainable island. The project adopts a holistic approach to environmental issues and ensures that gender considerations permeate all projects and that women benefit specially in the promotion organic farming, forestation and pollution reduction and energy saving programme.

The Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development developed an innovative project linking promotion of women empowerment with environment protection. The project was initiated in the small village of Grand Sable and aimed at empowering women to produce cloth bags as alternative to plastic bags and also to sensitise the community and school children in the village on the need to preserve the environment and promote sustainable development. Sewing Machines were purchased to enable the production and sales of cloth bags and generate income for sustainability of the project. This project reached more than 3000 women and children and is expected to be extended to other villages of the island.

The project was spearheaded by the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development in association with the Grand Sable Women Planters Entrepreneurs Association of Mauritius. The latter received the **Island Bright Spot Award** as part of the 2013 Solution Search by the Global Island Partnership (GLISPA) to showcase islands actions in advance of the United Nations International Year of Small Island Developing States in 2014.

A representative of Grand Sable Women Planters Farmers Entrepreneurs Association will participate in GLISPA events at the Third International Conference on Small Island Development States (UNSIDS 2014) to be held in Apia, Samoa between 28 August and 4

September 2014. GLISPA will also showcase this project to encourage investment in scaling and replicating this initiative<sup>11</sup>.

### **C.K.3. Strengthen or establish mechanisms at all levels to assess the impact of development and environmental policies on women**

Under the **Climate Change Information Centre (CCIC)**, the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, in association with Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare, is in the process of developing climate change indicators including those related to gender issues. This will enable assessing and mitigating the impact of climate change on men and women distinctively.

### **C.K.4. Challenges on Women and the Environment**

Women are not very connected with decision making on environmental issues as their skills and expertise as natural resource managers-use planners, agriculturalists, foresters, marine scientists and environmental lawyers are limited. This is because women often choose to study subject close to social sciences or humanities, as indicated by the enrolment of girls at the tertiary level in Mauritius. Initiating women to simple household techniques of processing local fruits and vegetables very often reinforces women in traditional jobs and limits their opportunity to embrace other more lucrative jobs.

The challenge is to improve access of women to large scale production, develop a new breed of agro-business women, build capacity of women in environmental preservation and protection programme and advocate for a better understanding of the linkage between women development and environmental issues.

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<sup>11</sup> Source: Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development

## **C.L. THE GIRL CHILD**

### **C.L.1. Eliminate all forms of discrimination against the girl child**

Mauritius is committed to eliminate all forms of discrimination against the girl child. Mauritius has ratified the Convention on the Rights of Child (CRC) in 1990 and the ILO Convention on the Worst Forms of Labour. In 1993, the Government signed the Hague Convention on Civil aspects of Child Abduction. The **Optional Protocol to the CEDAW**, the **Optional Protocol on the CRC on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflicts** were signed in 2001. The **Optional Protocol on the CRC on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography** was ratified in June 2011. Mauritius signed the **SADC Declaration on Gender and Development** in 1997 and in September 1998, it signed the **Addendum to the Declaration on the Prevention and Eradication of Violence Against Women and Children**.

The Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare has refocused its activities in both prevention and protection programmes for children. Its Child Development Unit is active on the field on a 24 hour basis to ensure that no child in Mauritius is left unattended at any time. The **Special Collaborative Programme (SCP)** of the Ministry provides financial assistance to NGOs and Civil Society's Organisations for the reintegration of women and children into the mainstream development.

### **C.L.2. Eliminate negative cultural attitudes and practices against girls**

Following a study commissioned on provision of early childcare in 1996, an **Early Childhood Development (ECD) Policy** was developed and implemented in 1999 to improve children's overall development through the introduction and adoption of integrated approach to ECD.

The **National Children's Council (NCC)** in association with stakeholders organise Slam Activities in Children's Clubs where girls are motivated to participate and express their opinions and counter negative cultural and attitudes and practices. In Primary, Secondary and Pre-Vocational schools and through the **Child Protection Clubs** around the country, girls are sensitized on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Commercial Sexual Exploitation, teenage pregnancy, violence, abuse, harassment inclusive of bullying. Child Creativity is also developed and children not only show their talent but also voice against abuse and exploitation. This has been a very useful instrument for children to express their own concerns at home, in the community and at school. In 2013, following a series of Artwork Painting Workshops for

children, and to commemorate the International Day of the African Child, the NCC organized a “Street Exhibition” of some 400 Artworks by children on the cultural attitudes towards girls and condemning abuse against children.

### **C.L.3. Promote and protect the rights of the girl child and increase awareness of her needs and potential**

A **Child Protection Act** was enacted in 1994 with the main objective of giving protection to children victims of abuse and neglect. The Act was amended in 1998 to make it an obligation for person exercising any medical or paramedical profession or a member of the staff of a school to report suspected cases of child abuse and to include sexual harm in the definition of abuse

The Criminal Code has been amended in 1998 to increase penalties for offences against children including sexual abuse and sexual harassment.

The **Dangerous Drugs Act** was amended to provide for increased penalties for those who provide drugs to children.

The **Divorce and Judicial Separation Act** was amended to make it mandatory for courts to seek the views of child above the age of 10 and capable of discernment in any case in which he or she has an interest.

The **National Adoption Council Act** is currently being amended to incorporate the provisions of the Hague Convention on Inter-country Adoption.

The **Child Protection Act** was again amended in 2005 and makes provision for all cases of child trafficking, abandonment and abduction to be dealt with by the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare. Tougher penalties are provided in case of contravention of the provisions of the law. Government intends to enact a Children’s Bill with the objective of enhancing the existing framework for the protection of children and domesticating the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Following the **Ombudsperson for Children Act**, an Ombudsperson for Children’s Office was set up in December 2003. The main objectives of the Office are to ensure that the rights, needs, interests of the children are given full consideration by public bodies, private authorities, individuals and associations for individuals; promote the rights and best interest of children; and promote compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and more particularly, to create an effective mechanism for the investigation of complaints regarding violation of children’s rights.

An **Observatory for Child's Rights** has been set up and is fully operational at the University of Mauritius with support from UNICEF and the Indian Ocean Commission. It serves to ensure follow-ups of children's rights, creates a regional database on social development of the child and derives statistical analysis in five countries of the Indian Ocean.

#### **C.L.4. Eliminate discrimination against girls in education, skills, and development training**

The **Education Act** was amended in 2004 to provide that education be compulsory for every child up to the end of the academic year in the course of which the child attains the age of 16. All girls are provided equal opportunity for education and training. The National Children's Council and the Child Development Unit of the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare in association with NGOs and the civil society are constantly engaged in prevention programmes in schools and in the community on Children's Rights, Child Protection Act and existing procedures for child complaint to ensure that all forms of abused against the child are addressed immediately. More than 20 NGOs are supporting young people and children victims of violence in Mauritius via different programmes including provision of residential care, day care, education and vocational training.

#### **C.L.5. Eliminate discrimination against girls in health and nutrition**

Health education now forms part of the primary school curriculum. There is an on-going program of health education in all primary and secondary schools by the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life. Topics vary according to the age of the pupils and include hygiene, healthy eating habits, physical exercise, smoking and substance abuse, reproductive health issues.

There are no disparities in accessibility to health services. Mauritius has an extensive network of regional hospitals and health centres which provide equitable health care free of cost. There is a fast track for children who attend the Accident & Emergency departments of regional hospitals for consultation. The Ministry of Health and Quality of Life has a **Speech Therapy and Audiology Unit** (STAU), to which children are referred by doctors and teachers. Children form 70% of the patients to the Unit. A provision regarding the prohibition of young persons (aged 16 to 18 years) to be employed on certain types of work which, by their nature or the circumstances in which they are carried out are likely to jeopardize the health, safety and morals of the young persons, has already been included in the **Occupational Safety & Health Act**. The Act regulates specific work activities, which include work with heavy metals and work in the forestry or

construction sectors. It is illegal to employ young persons aged 16 to 18 to work in any industrial undertaking between 10 p.m. and 5 a.m.

Under the Employment Rights Act, employers are required to maintain records of all employees aged 16 to 18. At the hospitals, girls who are victims of sexual violence, including rape are provided with special care respecting specific protocol.

#### **C.L.6. Eliminate economic exploitation of child labour and protect young girls at work**

Worst forms of child labour such as slavery, debt bondage, and forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict, do not exist in Mauritius. The **Labour Act 1975** was amended on 21 November 2006 to raise the minimum age for employment from 15 to 16, in line with the **Education Act** No. 44 of 2004, which makes it compulsory for any child to attend school up to the age of 16. The Employment Rights Act, which has repealed and replaced the Labour Act in February 2009, contains the same provisions regarding minimum age for employment. **Besides, the ILO Minimum Age Convention, 1973** (No. 138), which Mauritius ratified on 30 July 1990, stipulates that the minimum age for employment should not be less than the age of completion of compulsory schooling.

Child labour (involving children aged between 12 and 14 years) as a percentage of the total labour force has decreased from 0.60 per cent in 1995 to 0.30 per cent as at mid-1999 due to measures taken by the Labour Inspectorate of the Ministry of Labour and Industrial Relations. The Ombudsperson for Children also has the authority to investigate any suspected or reported case of child labour. Education and sensitisation of workers and employers are undertaken by the Information, Education & Communication Section of the said Ministry to increase awareness of the illegality of child labour and its pernicious effects on the child's health and development.

#### **C.L.7. Eradicate violence against the girl child**

Children can experience violence in any of the settings in which they spend their childhood: in their homes and families, schools, care and justice systems, workplaces and communities. Exposure to violence in one setting may be compounded by violence in another. Children in such situations as forced or bonded labour, prostitution, pornography and trafficking are especially vulnerable.

Established in 2003, the **Office of the Ombudsperson for Children** in Mauritius, working with parliamentarians, has been a strong advocate for preventing violence against children. The Ombudsperson's annual reports to Parliament have helped create awareness on violence against children and other violations of child rights, allowing parliamentarians to raise these issues through parliamentary questions, motions and debates. The Ombudsperson has advocated for stronger legislation to protect children from commercial sexual exploitation and child trafficking. The Ombudsperson in November 2004 launched a national campaign on preventing violence against children, involving members of the National Assembly and garnering pledges by the Prime Minister, Ministers and the Leader of the Opposition to do their utmost to prevent violence against children.

In line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the **Child Protection Act** in Mauritius was again amended in 2005 and provides for tough penalties for offenders of child trafficking, abandonment, violence, abduction etc. Penalties under the present Child Protection Act for sexual offences and indecent photographs of children provide that offenders are liable to a fine not exceeding 100,000 rupees (US \$ 3333) and penal servitude not exceeding 20 years. As for cases of mentally handicapped victims, offenders will be liable to penal servitude for a term not exceeding 30 years.

The Child Protection Act also prohibits the "taking, distribution, showing, possession with intention to distribute or to show, any indecent photograph" of a child, including electronic images. The **Combating Trafficking in Persons Act** establishes trafficking as a criminal offence, including trafficking of children. The offence of child trafficking is also provided for in the Child Protection Act. The Act also requires Internet service providers to inform the police of any information that suggests or alludes to trafficking on its server. The Government's **Child Safety Online Action Plan** aims to prevent sexual exploitation of children on the Internet by strengthening the legal framework and raising awareness among parents and children. The Police Brigade for **the Protection of Minors**, a unit of the Mauritius Police Force (MPF), patrols areas such as arcades, bus terminals and other areas where young girls are vulnerable to involvement in commercial sexual exploitation.

Although the Government of Mauritius has significantly strengthened its legal framework to fight child labour, the commercial exploitation of minors has not completely disappeared. Reported cases of violence against the girl child in Mauritius are not alarming, and yet complacency is unwarranted. Girls aged ten or even younger have been found in prostitution. Violence and insecurity in and out of schools is on the increase. Cases of indiscipline and violence reported reached 125 in 2012 compared to 88 in 2010. 25% of school children admit having, in one way or another, been exposed to drugs, alcohol and tobacco. 35% are concerned with physical fights, bullying and unintentional injury. Girls and boys are not only exposed to schoolyard fighting but also to threats, verbal abuse, sexual violence, gang violence and assault with weapon by their own peers. New manifestations of violence are also affecting children's lives, notably the phenomenon of "cyber-bullying" via mobile phones, computers, websites and social networking sites.

### **C.L.8. Promote girls' awareness of and participation in social, economic and political life**

There is a **National Children's Council** (NCC) established under the National Children's Council Act which is the key consultative and coordinating national body on all activities related to children and ensures that children participate effectively in all social, economic and political life. The NCC Act of 2003 restructured the NCC in view of setting up a National Children's Committee, comprising boys and girls between the ages of 15 and 18 elected from children's organisations registered with the Council, who may deliberate on matters relating to child welfare and offer its views to the National Children's Board. The Government developed a National Children's Policy and an Action Plan in 2004 to establish linkages with all relevant Government institutions and NGOs, to co-ordinate and monitor children's programmes related to knowledge enhancement and children's participation in social, economic and political life.

### **C.L.9. Strengthen the role of the family in improving the status of the girl child**

According to **the Civil Status (Amendment) Act 1981**, it is the responsibility of the father or mother of a child or any other person appointed by law, to declare the birth within a period of 45 days from the birth at the Civil Status Office of the district where the birth took place or where the parents reside. The Act was further amended in 2004 to strengthen the obligation for either the father or the mother to declare the birth of their child, even if the child is born in an asylum, a prison or other institution, save in specified circumstances. Where a child is born in a prison, asylum or quarantine area or station, orphanage or other institution and the father is unknown or untraceable and the mother has passed away, is insane or otherwise incapable on medical grounds to declare the birth, the person in charge of that place shall declare the birth.

The Civil Service Protection Act and the Statutory Bodies Family Protection Act were amended to extend the pensions payable on the death of those employed by Government and statutory bodies to acknowledge children born out of wedlock.

With a view to ensuring better protection of children, especially those at risk, a **Foster Care System** has been introduced as an alternative care for the children at risk. The aim of the Foster Care System is to provide children with a substitute family environment so as to enhance their physical, emotional and social development.

The **Protection from Domestic Violence Act** was amended in 2004 to broaden the scope of the Protection from Domestic Violence Act, in particular, to cover all cases of domestic violence (physical, sexual, moral, against a spouse or his/her child) committed by persons living under the

same roof, increase time limits and penalties and provide for counselling. Amongst the positive points are: the reference to the child's welfare and need when deciding for a protection order.

#### **C.L.10. Challenges on the Girl Child**

Mauritius has achieved a lot in child protection. The CDU of the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare has been effective in networking with law enforcement agencies to protect the child from abuse. Reported cases of children victim of abuse have unfortunately increased. These may not be indicative of an increase in the incidence of child abuse but of an increase in awareness raising among girls in schools and in the community on abuse reporting and also of a greater vigilance from law enforcement agencies. However, these should be documented. The CDU is currently developing a computerized Child Protection Register to enable better evaluation and monitoring of cases in respect to all forms of violence on children. Alongside, an efficient monitoring mechanism needs to be developed that could provide a systematic and comprehensive compilation of data and indicators on all areas covered by the Convention and in relation to all groups of children especially those who are victims of child abuse, ill-treatment or child labour or the administration of juvenile justice, as well as the girl child, children of single-parent families and those born out of wedlock, abandoned, institutionalised and disabled children, and children who, in order to survive, are living and/or working in the streets. These may be included in the development of a new Children's Policy to capture emerging issues and challenges for child protection and development.

## D. SECTION 3: DATA AND STATISTICS

Statistics Mauritius is under the aegis of the Ministry of Finance & Economic Development and is the official organization responsible for collection, compilation, analysis and dissemination of the official statistical data relating to the economic and social activities of the country. Its mission is to provide coherent, timely, relevant and reliable statistics, consistent with international principles and standards, for effective policy and decision-making, and for monitoring national development processes. All throughout the year it releases, weekly, monthly, quarterly, half yearly and yearly statistical publications related to more than 30 issues. It also conducts censuses and surveys on wide issues. Since 2009, it released its third issue of Economic and Social Indicators (ESI) on “**Gender Statistics**” in 2011. These present a portrait of women and men in the Republic of Mauritius and include their demographic profile, health, family status, educational attainment and labour force characteristics.

The Ministry of Health and Quality of Life releases yearly its **Family Planning and Demographic Year Book** highlighting the demographic and family planning data in the Republic of Mauritius, under the following headings: Population, Vital statistics, Family Planning and Health Services Points. The Mauritius Institute of Health is involved in research on smoking, cancer and other diseases and these are not gender sensitive.

The Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare has access to information and data related to women, child and the family. Data are collected from all units and are compiled by the Statistics section of the Planning and Research Unit (PRU) of the Ministry. The PRU is mandated amongst others to “To initiate and carry out studies /research for the promotion of social/cultural development, and situation analysis on the children, family and women and to disseminate the findings accordingly”. The PRU unfortunately is constrained by human, financial and technical resources which inhibit the effective collection of data, conduct of research and studies.

The Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare is setting up , the **Domestic Violence Information System** (DOVIS), which is a web-based computer system for registration of reported cases of domestic violence and will allow for data harmonization, easier record keeping and faster retrieval of information on domestic violence issues. It will be used as a tool to monitor and assess record, and facilitate utilization of information for policy development.

The **Mauritius Research Council** (MRC) was set up in 1992 as an apex body to promote and coordinate Government investment in research. It conducts research and advises the Government to influence the direction of technological innovation by funding research projects in areas of national priority and encouraging strategic partnerships. The MRC acts as a central body to advise Government on Science and Technology issues and to influence the direction of technological innovation by funding research projects in areas of national priority and encouraging strategic partnerships. The MRC has integrated gender components in its research

works. The consideration of gender elements in the study on sea weeds and wheat production aimed at facilitating women empowerment and specifically the engagement of women in entrepreneurial activities.

Researches grants allocated by the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) to MPhil/PhD female students have increased substantially from 2005 to 2013, as shown in Table 4 below.

**Table 4: Research Grant (in Rupees) by TEC to MPhil/ MSc Students (2005-2013)<sup>12</sup>**

Year	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008/2009	2009/2010	2010	2011	2012	2013
Male	2848803.29	2373478.5	707198.27	2624073.454	2217814.48	302632.76	2488767	2512357.97	2461866.3
Female	1269631.45	914295.86	731655.09	2038578.619	3171858.13	299125.42	4293882.76	3825284.69	3515670.51
Total	4118434.74	3287774.3	1438853.4	4662652.073	5389672.61	601758.18	6782649.76	6337642.66	5977536.81

NGOs have documented on specific issues of interest, for example on teenage pregnancy, street children, prostitution and drug abuse among others. For example, the NGO Gender Links conducted a few studies related to gender and in 2012 released the **Gender Based Violence Indicators Report** which provided valuable information on the extent to which gender gaps prevails in some sectors and the effect, cost of and efforts to end violence against women.

All Ministries are committed to implement the National Gender Policy Framework, and to accordingly ensure that data collection is gender disaggregated. Most Ministries have already started the process and some have gone far in adopting the Gender Responsive Budgeting in their programme planning process.

Data disaggregation by sex is a necessary but not sufficient condition to facilitate gender integration into programme planning process. As highlighted by the Global Gender Statistics Programme of the United Nations Statistical Commission, gender statistics have to adequately reflect problems, issues and questions related to women and men in society. While all Government departments should produce gender statistics, they should also focus on areas where men and women do not enjoy the same opportunities and status, or where gender inequality is likely to be present or more pronounced. Data Collection tools should take into account specific stereotypes and problems specific to each environment or place of work. The **Gender Statistics** of the ESI of Statistics Mauritius need to be more explicit in identifying specific population groups where men and women are affected differently and where gender inequality prevails. This will help to develop more focused gender interventions through Gender Cells in different Ministries.

<sup>12</sup> Source: Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology

In addition, while Statistics Mauritius produces and disseminates statistics disaggregated by sex, these are not adequate to reflect the gender issues in the society, as they cover only the general population profile, health, family status, educational attainment and labour force characteristics. These should be reviewed to address the minimum set of indicators as recommended by the UN Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Inter-agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics (December 2013), namely the economic structures, participation on productive activities and access to resources, education, health and related services, public life and decision-making, and human rights of women and the girl child.

Mauritius has made an important leap in producing gender disaggregated data at the national level. This could undoubtedly be reinforced taking into consideration the minimum set of gender indicators set by the UN. While there is need to reinforce capacity building in gendered data collection, analysis and dissemination, there is also need to develop a meaningful gender sensitive data collection culture at all levels, including the private sector.

## **E. SECTION 4:**

### **E.1 EMERGING PRIORITIES**

The Beijing Platform for Action has been the guiding force for Government's political positioning vis-à-vis women's development and growth for the past 15 years. Women's lives have been reshaped and transformed into more productive assets and these have, indeed, contributed tremendously in reinforcing the economy. The reinforcement of the Export Processing Zone, which started in the 1980s and gathered momentum in the 1990s, has completely revolutionized women's status in Mauritius and has been marked by an active participation of women in the world of work, especially in the Manufacturing Sector. The Beijing Platform for Action enabled the development of appropriate institutional mechanisms and structural frameworks that have promoted the adoption of a holistic and inclusive approach to development, based on respect for human rights.

In 1995 in Beijing, the Government of Mauritius specifically committed to ensure that

- i. Gender is mainstreamed in all policies and programmes
- ii. Stereotypes in education is eliminated and that girls are encouraged to study for science subjects, traditionally meant for boys
- iii. Legislations are enacted to protect women against violence
- iv. Women's economic empowerment is promoted; and
- v. The Girl Child is protected

With the exception of the area on "Women and Armed Conflict", an issue outlandish to Mauritius, impressive advancements have been made on all the critical areas of concern, as delineated by the BPfA, including the specific five areas above. Gender parity has been attained in education, legislations have been passed to empower women, enhance their quality of life and enable them to become effective partners in the development process. The implementation of the National Gender Policy Framework of the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare ushered accelerated institutional and structural changes promoting gender mainstreaming in all policies and programmes. Mauritius was one of the rare countries of the world where abortion was not permitted under any circumstances. The Criminal Law which makes abortion illegal dates 1838 was amended in 2012 to make abortion legal under four conditions. This was, indeed, a giant leap and shows Government's commitment to respect and safeguard women's right to decide freely and without coercion on all matters related to sexual and reproductive life. Legal abortion, however, does not guarantee safe abortion. Medical professionals need to be trained and offered the best conducive environment and technologies to enable them to perform to the best interest of service users.

The challenges in all the critical areas of concern of the BPfA have been highlighted in Section C of this report.

The **Emerging Priorities** will be:

- I. to address women in situations of vulnerability, empower them with necessary tools and techniques, facilities and opportunities that may enable them to escape the vicious circle of poverty;
- II. to develop strategic interventions to protect women and children victims of violence, rape, exploitation and abuse;
- III. to reinforce the institutional mechanism for effective gender mainstreaming in all programmes and activities, including those in the private sector;
- IV. to break the glass ceiling that prevents women from attaining decision making positions, especially in the private sector;
- V. to reframe educational policies to match qualifications of girls with job requirements;
- VI. to promote research on gender, family and children; and
- VII. to promote entrepreneurship skills that would enable women not only to open small business enterprises but also to embark on long term large scale projects like the development of aquaculture and the production of organic food.

## **E.2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- I. Review all legislations to ensure that these are gender sensitive and have gender neutral languages;
- II. Review education and training programmes to ensure that women's qualifications and expertise match with and are relevant to the employment demand in the labour market;
- III. Develop strategies to address the academic under-achievement of boys and promote the entrance of girls into fields of study traditionally meant for boys;
- IV. Develop and implement accessible community based literacy programmes, including legal literacy;
- V. Strengthen economic empowerment programmes for women in distress and in position of vulnerability;

- VI. Develop women friendly health services to cater for the specific needs of women of different ages;
- VII. Empower medical professional and para-medical service providers through training and with update technologies to enable them offer safe and specialized practices to women, including abortion services and care for the elderly;
- VIII. Promote women's employment and facilitate their access to large scale production;
- IX. Ensure at least 30% of women's representation in Parliament;
- X. Ensure increased representation of women in decision making positions at all levels including in the private sector;
- XI. Review the family and children policies to address emerging issues and concerns affecting the child and the family;
- XII. Support research on gender, children and the family, and gender disaggregated data collection and analysis at all levels, including in the private sector;
- XIII. Promote greater partnership and alliances with NGOs, the civil society and all stakeholders and ensure an all-inclusive and integrated human rights based approach for programmes addressing gender and women issues;
- XIV. Improve accountability, monitoring and evaluation through the adoption of Gender Responsive Budgeting in both the public and private sectors;
- XV. Ensure that the media adopts gender sensitive deontology on advertisements, news and events coverage;
- XVI. Ensure that the mechanism for mainstreaming gender in the public and private sector is capacitated in terms of human, financial and technical resources;
- XVII. Strengthen institutional capacities for the systematic and consistent mainstreaming and implementation of gender concerns into policies, laws, programmes, budgets and plans;
- XVIII. Ensure greater understanding of the concept of Gender and its linkage with sustainable development at all levels, including the community; and
- XIX. Ensure that awareness-raising campaigns on women's rights include messages that reverse the culture of silence surrounding violence against women, and the impunity with which it is perpetuated.

## **F. ABBREVIATIONS**

AAP: African Adaptation Programme

ARV: Antiretroviral

BPfA: Beijing Programme for Action

BPM: Brigade pour la Protection des Mineurs

CBO: Community Based Organisation

CCIC: Climate Change Information Centre

CDCC: Child Day Care Centre

CDU: Child Development Unit

CEB: Central Electricity Board

CEDAW: Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women

CIB: Central Information Bureau

COL: Commonwealth of Learning

CRC: Convention on Rights of the Child

CSR: Corporate Social Responsibility

CWA: Central Water Authority

DOVIS: Domestic Violence Information System

ECCEA: Early Childhood Care and Education Authority

ECD: Early Childhood Development

EOC: Equal Opportunity Commission

ESI: Economic and Social Indicators

FITEC: Fisheries Training and Extension Centre

FSBx: Family Support Bureaux

FWPU: Family Welfare and Protection Unit

GBV: Gender Based Violence

GL: Gender Links

GU: Gender Unit

HRDC: Human Resource Development Council

ICPD: International Conference on Population and Development

MBC: Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation

MDGs: Millennium Development Goals

MFPWA: Mauritius Family Planning and Welfare Association

MGECDFW: Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare

MGI: Mahatma Gandhi Institute

MID: Maurice Ile Durable

MIE: Mauritius Institute of Education

MIH: Mauritius Institute of Health

MIoD: Mauritius Institute of Directors

MISA: Media Institute of Southern Africa

MITD: Mauritius Institute of Training and Development

MRC: Mauritius Research Council

MSM: Men having Sex with Men

MWO: Media Watch Organisation

NCC: National Children's Council

NCCG: National Committee on Corporate Governance

NEF: National Empowerment Foundation

NGO: Non-Governmental Organisation

NGPF: National Gender Policy Framework

NICE: National Institute for Civic Education

NPCC: National Productivity and Competitiveness Council

NWEC: National Women Entrepreneur Council

OP: Open University

PDVA: Protection from Domestic Violence Act

PFPU: Police Family Protection Unit

PLWHA: People Living with HIV/AIDS

PMT: Proxy Mean Test

PMTCT: Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission

PRU: Planning and Research Unit

SADC: Southern African Development Community

SAFIRE: Service d'Accompagnement , de Formation, d'Insertion et de la Réhabilitation de l'Enfant

SCP: Special Collaborative Programme

SMBS: Gender Media Baseline Study

SMEDA: Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority

SRM: Social Register Mauritius

STAU: Speed Therapy and Audiology Unit

TEC: Tertiary Education Commission

UDM: Université des Mascareignes

UTM: University of Technology, Mauritius

UNICEF: United Nations Children's Fund

UNCRPD: United Nations Convention on the Right of Persons with Disabilities

UNDP/GEF: United Nations Development Programme/ Global Environment Facility

UNODC: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes

ZEP: Zones d'Education Prioritaires

## G. ANNEXES

### ANNEX 1: [Link to Statistics Mauritius](#)

## Gender Statistics, 2011

### 1. Introduction

This is the third issue of Economic and Social Indicators (ESI) on gender statistics. It presents a portrait of women and men in the Republic of Mauritius and includes their demographic profile, health, family status, educational attainment and labour force characteristics.

The ESI is based on latest available sex disaggregated data from administrative sources and household surveys. Some of the statistics presented therefore refer to years earlier than 2011.

### 2. Highlights

There were 18,600 more women than men in 2011, as women live on average seven years longer than men.

Both men and women are getting married at an older age and more women are marrying men older than them.

Women are more likely than men to be widowed, divorced/separated and unemployed.

Diabetes, heart disease and cancer together accounted for 54% of causes of deaths among women against 46% of men's deaths.

The proportion of students progressing from primary cycle to secondary cycle in 2011 was 79% for boys and 84% for girls.

The difference in boys and girls performance was higher at lower level of education and narrowed down as the level increases.

Women predominate among school teachers and their representativeness is more pronounced at primary level and at Special Education Needs schools.

Women are nowadays more inclined towards entrepreneurship. Some 4,900 women were registered as women entrepreneurs at the National Women Entrepreneur Council as at June 2014.

Employed women work on average six hours less than men. Both men and women worked fewer hours in the agricultural sector than in other sectors of the economy.

Working women were more qualified than their male counterparts, yet they are over represented among the unemployed.

More women are occupying high positions in government services. The proportion of women in the most senior positions was 37%.

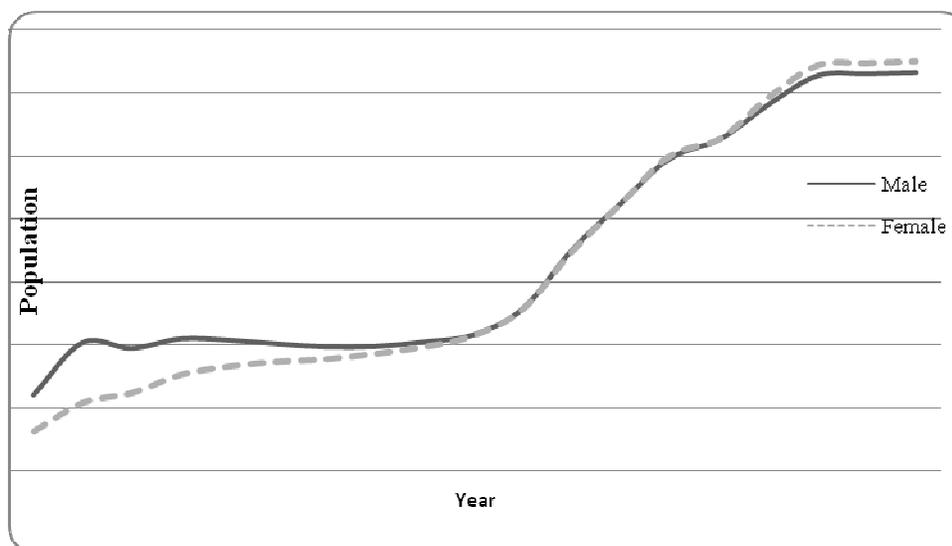
Domestic violence against men is on the increase, though women are more likely to be victims.

In 2011, Mauritius ranked 63<sup>rd</sup> out of 146 countries according to the Gender Inequality Index of the UN. The index reflects inequality in achievements between women and men in reproductive health, empowerment and the labour market.

### 3. Population

Prior to the 1950's women were fewer than men in number. However, the female population has been growing at a faster rate such that in the 50's there were almost equal numbers of men and women. This balance in the population has been maintained for some 40 years. As from 1990, women have been increasingly outnumbering men over the years.

**Chart 1 – Population by sex, Republic of Mauritius, 1851 - 2011**



In 2011, there were 18,600 more women than men. Out of a total population of 1,286,000, there were 652,300 women against 633,700 men, i.e., 97 men for every 100 women.

Though women are more numerous in the total population, this is not the case in all age groups. At the younger ages (under 30 years), men are more numerous mainly due to more

births of baby boys than girls. There were 102.4 male births for every 100 female births in 2011.

At ages 30 years and above, women outnumber men and their proportion increases at higher ages. The male-female ratio which was 98.1 for the ages 30-39 years reached 50.9 among those aged 80 years and over; there were around 2 women for every man in this age group. The main reason for this imbalance is that women live longer than men.

**Table A1 - Population by age and sex, Republic of Mauritius, 1<sup>st</sup> July 2011**

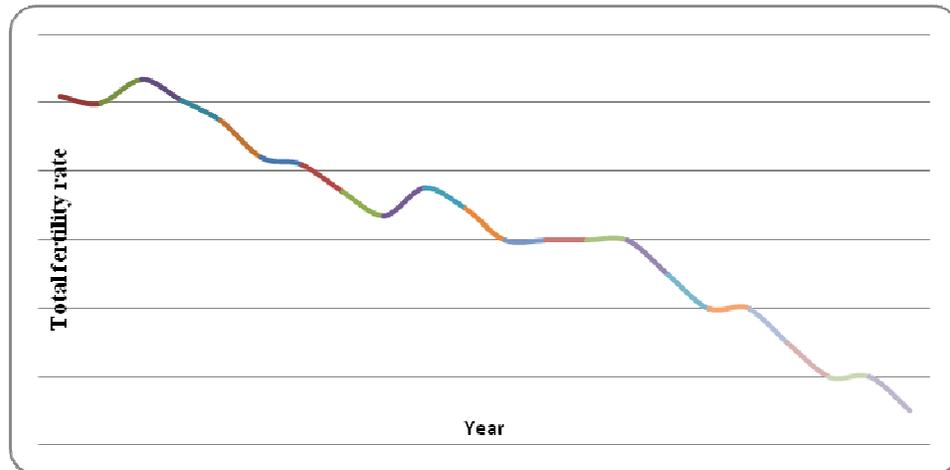
Age group (years)	Male	Female	Both sexes	Sex Ratio (males per 100 females)
under 10	87,700	85,200	172,900	103.0
10-19	103,800	101,100	204,900	102.6
20-29	99,600	97,600	197,200	102.1
30-39	101,800	103,800	205,600	98.1
40-49	96,700	97,900	194,600	98.8
50-59	78,400	81,000	159,400	96.8
60-79	59,500	73,600	133,100	80.9
80+	6,200	12,200	18,400	50.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>633,700</b>	<b>652,300</b>	<b>1,286,100</b>	<b>97.1</b>

In fact, women live 7 years longer than men. In 2011, life expectancy at birth for women was 77 years compared to 70 years for men. Over the past ten years, the gap between life expectancy of man and woman tends to stabilize around 7 years.

#### **4. Fertility and Contraceptive Use**

Women continue to give birth to fewer children than in the past. The total fertility rate, which is an indication of the average number of babies born to a woman during her childbearing period, has maintained a decreasing trend over the last 20 years. During that period, the average number of children born to a woman dropped by nearly one child to reach a total fertility rate of 1.4 in 2011.

**Chart 2 -Total Fertility Rate, Republic of Mauritius, 1990- 2011**



In the 1990's, women in the age bracket 20-24 years had the highest fertility with 147 births per 1,000 women of that age group. The peak fertility moved to the age bracket 25-29 years in 2011, with only 90.1 births per 1,000 women in that age group. This shift is mostly explained by women getting married at an older age.

**Table A2 - Fertility Rates by age of mother, Republic of Mauritius, 1990-2011**

Age Group(Yrs)	1990	2000	2011
15-19	45.2	38.9	29.8
20-24	147.2	121.5	75.3
25-29	138.1	120.4	90.1
30-34	80.4	75.1	60.2
35-39	39.1	34.2	27.0
40-44	11.4	8.1	6.4
45-49	1.8	0.6	0.6
<b>15-49</b>	<b>77.4</b>	<b>60.1</b>	<b>41.5</b>

In 2011, Government Family Planning Clinics, Mauritius Family Planning & Welfare Association and Action Familiale registered a total of some 69,800 current users of contraceptive methods in the Island of Mauritius, a decrease of 28,800 from 98,600 in 2000. However, the number of tubal ligation increased from 9,300 to 14,200 during the same period.

New acceptors of contraceptive methods registered at Government Family Planning Clinics, Mauritius Family Planning & Welfare Association and Action Familiale numbered 6,900 in 2011, of whom, 520 had tubal ligation. A declining trend is observed in the number of new acceptors from 11,200 in 2000.

Among the new acceptors, Pill (26.4%) followed by Sympto-thermal (25.1%) are the preferred method of contraception while for current users Sympto-thermal (42%) method is the preferred method.

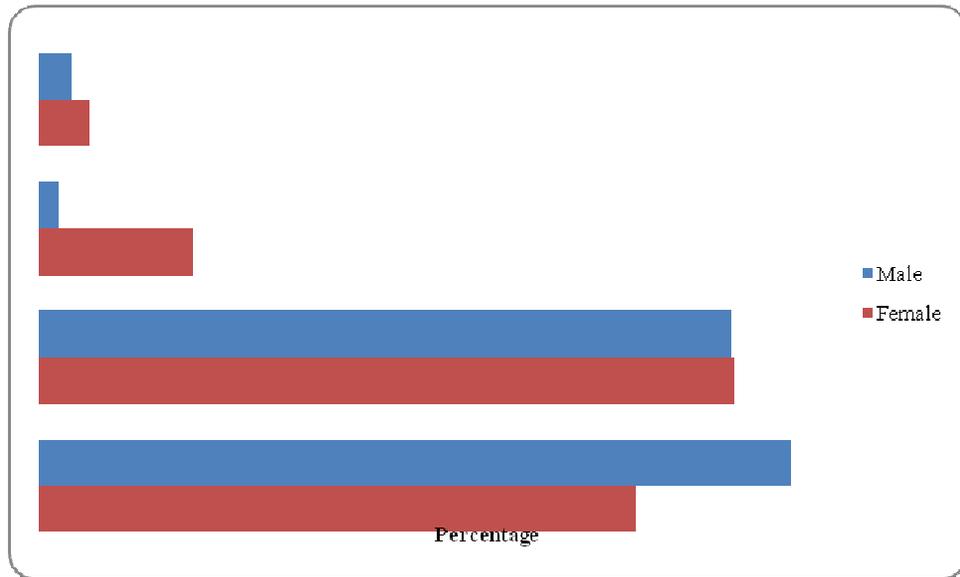
**TableA3 - Method of family planning, 2011**

<b>Methods</b>	<b>New Acceptors (%)</b>	<b>Current Users (%)</b>
Pill	26.4	13.5
Tubal Ligation	7.5	20.3
Sympto-thermal	25.1	42.0
Male Condom	22.6	13.3
3-month injectable	14.1	5.1
Intra-uterine Devices	1.6	3.7
Monthly injectable	1.1	0.5
Implant	1.6	1.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

## 5. Family Status

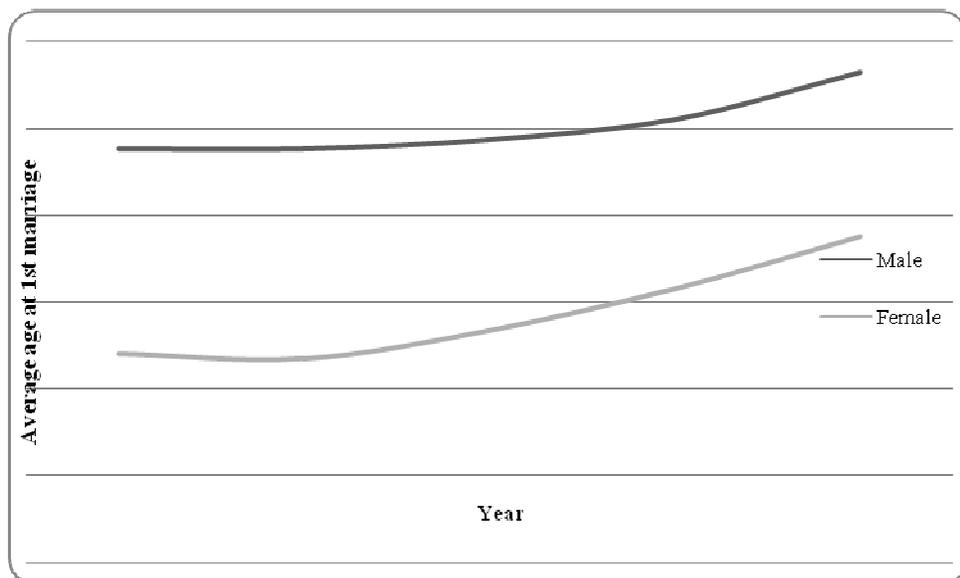
Women make up slightly more than half of the total population but are largely over-represented among the widowed, divorced and separated indicating that women are less likely to re-marry than men.

**Chart 3 - Population by marital status, 2011**



Generally women tend to marry men who are older than them. However, over the past 20 years the age difference between husband and wife narrowed from 4.7 years in 1990 to 3.8 years in 2011.

**Chart 4 - Average age at first marriage, Republic of Mauritius, 1990-201**

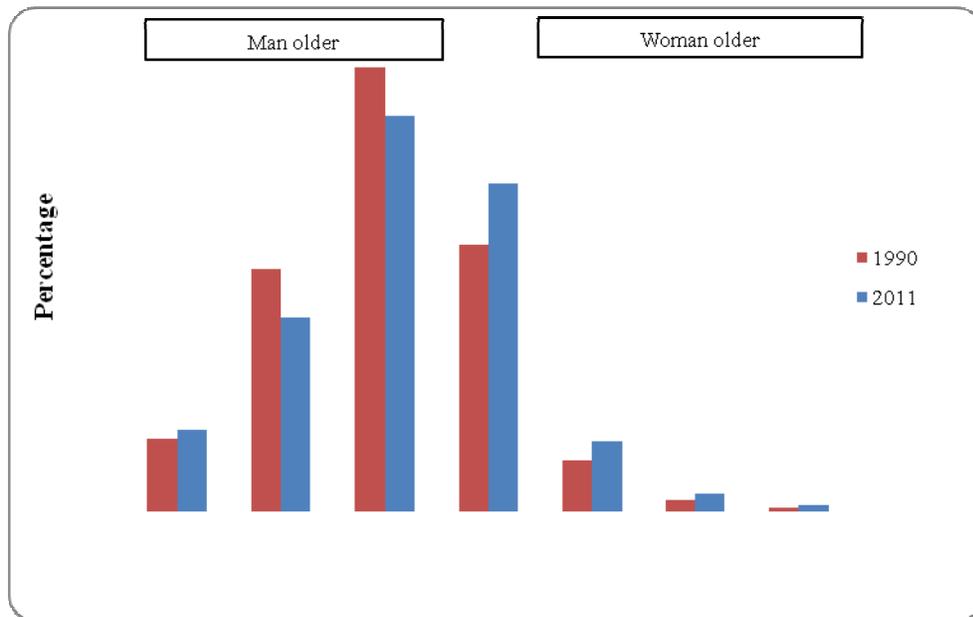


In 2011, marriages where the husband was 5 to 9 years older than the wife were most common and made up 36% of the 10,500 marriages registered. Marriages where the age difference between husband and wife was less than five years accounted for another 30% of the marriages. The third largest group was marriages where the husband was 10 to 14 years older.

The picture has changed over the years. The proportion of marriages with the husband being five or more years older than the wife decreased from 70% in 1990 to 60% in 2011.

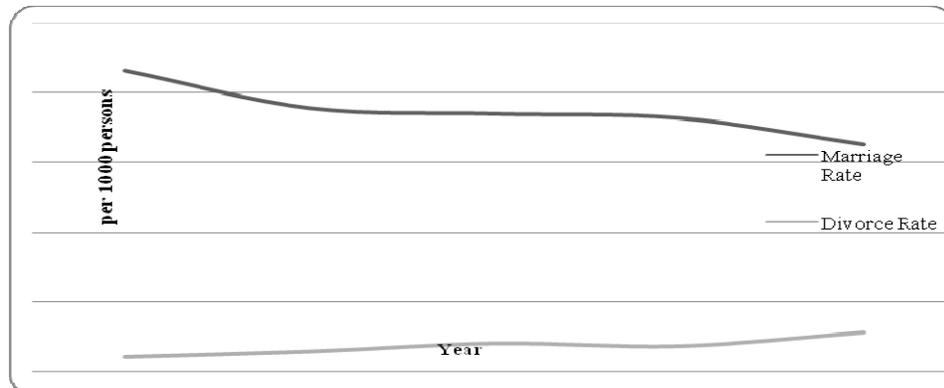
More women are marrying men younger than them; such marriages represented some 10% of all marriages in 2011 against 7% in 1990.

**Chart 5 - Men and Women mutual age at marriage, Republic of Mauritius, 1990 & 2011**



While marriage rate is declining, divorce rate is on the rise. The marriage rate, i.e., the number of persons married per 1,000 mid-year population, fell from 21.6 in 1990 to 16.3 in 2011. The number of divorced persons per 1,000 mid-year population increased from 1 in 1990 to nearly 3 in 2011.

**Chart 6 - Marriage and Divorce Rate, Republic of Mauritius, 1990–2011**



Wives are more likely than husbands to initiate divorce. In 2011, some 60% of the petitioners were women.

In the same year, 1,788 divorces were granted by the Supreme Court, the majority of which (28%) occurred after 5 to 10 years of union. The number of divorces after 25 years of union accounted for 9% of all divorces; there were even 4 divorces within 1 year of marriage.

**Table 8A4- Divorce by duration of union, Republic of Mauritius, 2011**

<b>Duration of union (years)</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
1 year	4	0.2
1 and <3	152	8.5
3 and <5	244	13.6
5 and < 10	491	27.5
10 and < 15	348	19.5
15 and <25	393	22.0
25 or more	156	8.7
<b>Total divorces</b>	<b>1,788</b>	<b>100.0</b>

About one third of the couples who divorced in 2011 did not have children while slightly more than half of them had 1 to 2 children. There were 15 couples with 5 or more children.

**Table 9A5- Divorce by number of children<sup>1/</sup>, Republic of Mauritius, 2011**

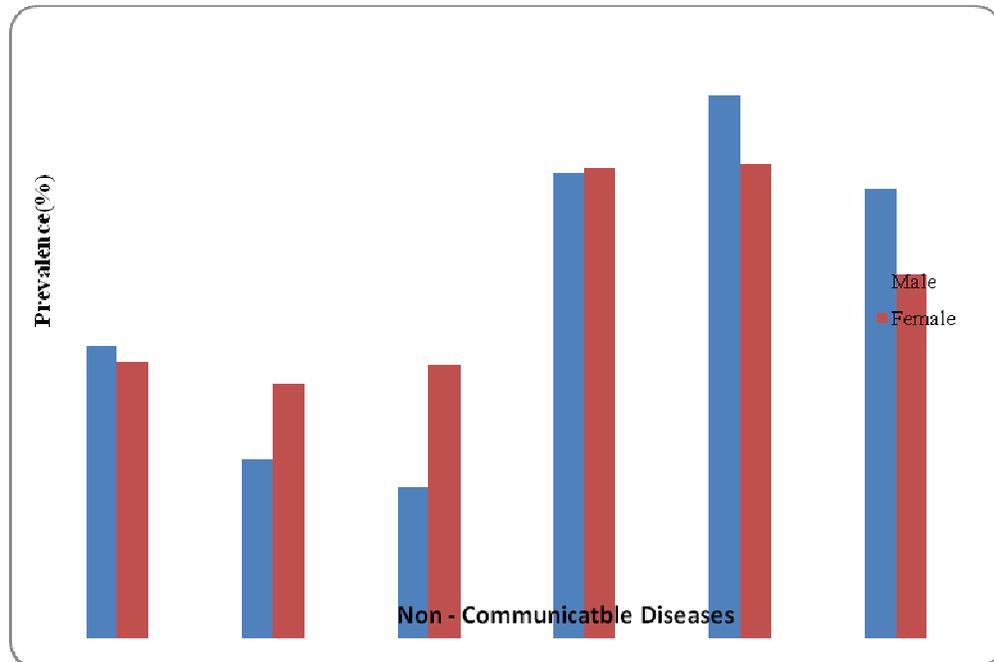
<b>Number of children</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
0	614	34.3
1	517	28.9
2	421	23.5
3-4	221	12.4
5 or more	15	0.8
<b>Total divorces</b>	<b>1,788</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Aggregate no. of children</b>	<b>2,152</b>	

<sup>1/</sup>dependent children are the living children who are dependent on either of the divorcees at the time the divorce petition is filed

## 6. Health

The 2009 Non-Communicable Diseases Survey revealed that diabetes and overweight were equally prevalent among men and women. While men are more prone to hypertension and cholesterol, women are more likely to be obese and have impaired glucose tolerance.

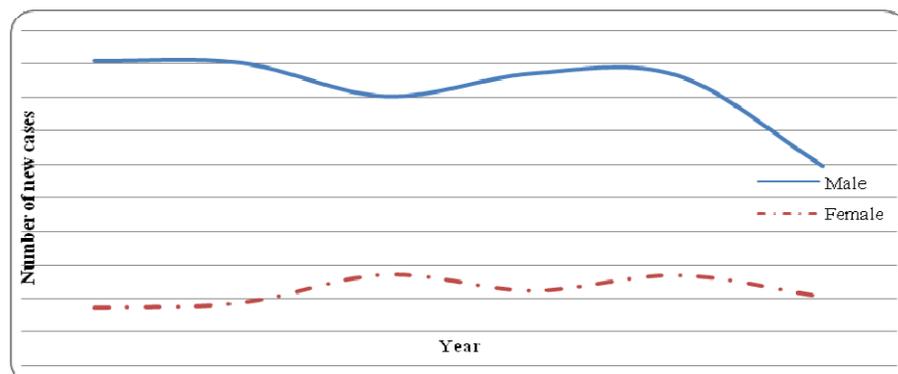
**Chart 7 - Prevalence in Non- Communicable Diseases (NCD), 2009**



Since October 1987 when the first cases of HIV/AIDS were registered, the number has been on the rise to reach 5,188 at December 2011, of whom 20 % were women.

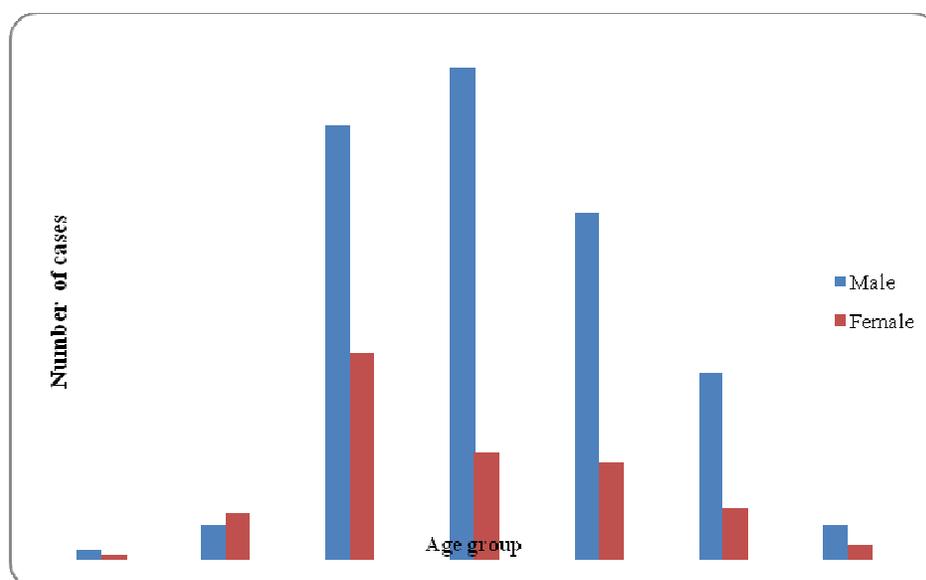
During the year 2011, 401 new cases of HIV/AIDS were registered. The proportion of women among the new cases increased over the years from 16% in 2006 to 26% in 2011.

**Chart 8 - New HIV/AIDS cases, Republic of Mauritius, 2006 - 2011**



In 2011, 60% of the new cases of HIV/AIDS for women were due to heterosexual modes of transmission, while injecting drug was the most common mode of transmission for men (83%).

**Chart 9 - Distribution of new HIV/AIDS cases by sex and age group, 2011**



Some 60% of the new cases of HIV/AIDS in 2011 were found in the age group 20-39 years for both men and women. However, women were predominant in the age group 20-29 years (39%) while men were mostly found in the age group 30-39 years (32%).

## 7. Mortality

Though women are more numerous than men, there are fewer deaths among women than among men with female deaths representing 42.9 % of all deaths in 2011. 5,236 men compared to 3,934 women died in 2011. The crude death rate for 2011 was 8.3 for man and 6.0 for woman.

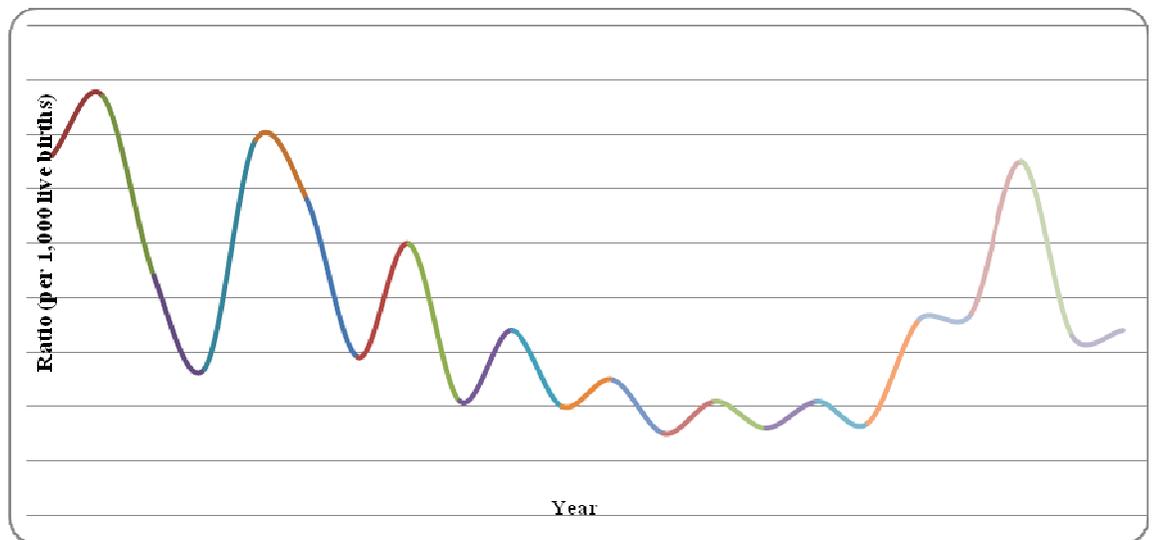
The main causes of death for both men and women in 2011 were diabetes, heart diseases, cerebrovascular disease and cancer (neoplasm). Causes of death specific to women, such as breast and uterus cancer were responsible for 4.6% of deaths among women while maternal death was responsible for 0.1%. It is noted that three men died of breast cancer in 2011. Compared to men, women were more likely to die of diabetes but less likely to die of disease of the liver or to commit suicide.

**Table A6- Deaths (%) by cause and sex, Republic of Mauritius, 2011**

Cause	Man	Woman
Diabetes mellitus	22.7	28.9
Heart diseases	17.4	17.3
Cerebrovascular disease	7.8	9.0
Malignant Neoplasm:	5.9	7.5
of which: breast cancer	0.06	3.3
uterus cancer	<i>n/a</i>	1.3
Hypertensive disease	4.6	5.8
Diseases of liver (inc. alcoholic cirrhosis)	3.5	0.8
Suicide	1.8	0.6
Maternal Death	<i>n/a</i>	0.1
All other causes	36.1	30.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The risk of a woman dying as a result of pregnancy or childbirth during her lifetime has generally been declining over the years with slightly higher level of maternal deaths in recent years.

**Chart 10 - Maternal Mortality Ratio, Republic of Mauritius, 1990-2011**

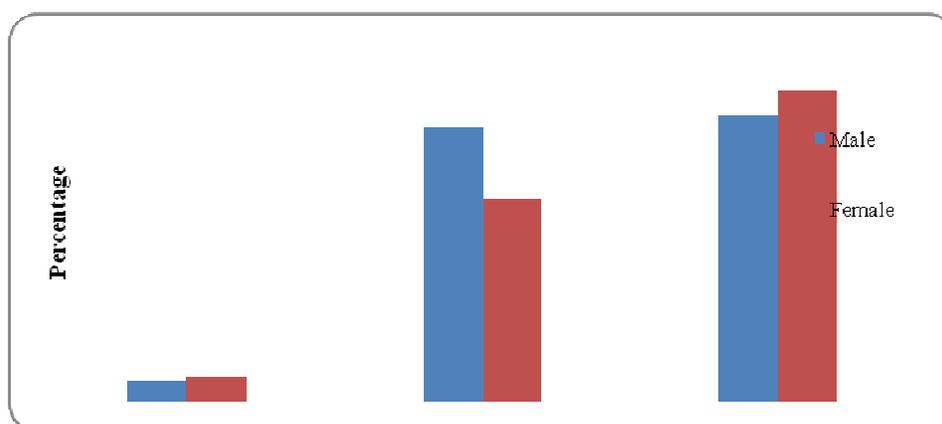


## 8. Education

Boys and girls are equally likely to go to primary schools. The Gross Enrolment Ratio was 100% for both boys and girls, indicating no disparity. In 2011, 116,068 students attended primary school, of whom 49% were girls.

Again both boys and girls are equally likely to drop out at primary level, with a rate of about 0.5%. However, the transition rate, that is the proportion of students progressing from primary cycle to secondary cycle, was 79% for boys and 84% for girls. Thus the Gross Enrolment Ratio at secondary level was higher among girls, 77% against 72% for boys.

**Chart 11 - Drop Out (%) at Primary and Secondary level, Republic of Mauritius, 2010**



At the secondary level, girls represented 52% girls of the enrolled students in the academic stream and 36% in the prevocational stream.

Girls are less likely than boys to drop out from the academic stream, 5% against nearly 7% among boys in 2010. However at the prevocational level, they are more likely to drop out, nearly 8% compared to some 7% for boys.

Girls generally perform better than boys at Certificate of Primary Education (CPE), School Certificate (SC) and Higher School Certificate (HSC) examinations. The difference in boys' and girls' performance was higher at lower level of education and narrowed down as the level increases.

**Table A7- Pass Rate (%) at CPE, SC and HSC, 2011**

	Male	Female	Difference
CPE	62.7	74.9	12.2
SC	71.8	81.2	9.4
HSC	75.3	82.3	7.0

The lower pass rates for boys explain the higher proportion of repeaters among boys both at primary and secondary level. More than one quarter of the number of boys enrolled at Form V were repeaters compared to one fifth among girls.

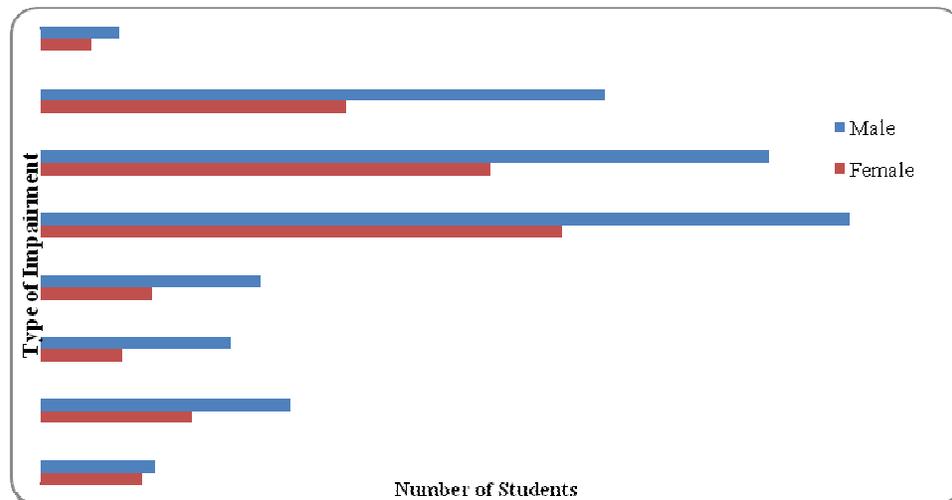
**Table A8 - % Repeaters at Primary and Secondary level, 2011**

	Male	Female
Standard VI	20.2	15.0
Form V	27.4	20.1
Form VI(Upper)	19.5	12.7

In 2011, out of 1,853 students enrolled in the Special Education Needs (SEN) schools registered with the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, 38% were girls. The girls were more represented in the age group 10 to 19 years, 69%, while an equal proportion of boys were aged 5 to 14 years.

Mental/behavioural disabilities, multiple disabilities and learning disabilities were the most common types of impairment among both boys and girls attending SEN schools.

**Chart 12 - Students of SEN Schools by type of impairment, 2011**



Women predominate among school teachers and their representativeness is more pronounced at primary level and at SEN schools.

**Table A9- Distribution (%) of Teachers at Primary, Secondary and Special Education Needs Schools, 2011**

	<b>Primary</b>	<b>Secondary</b>	<b>Special Education Needs</b>
Male	33	41	10
Female	67	59	90
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

In 2010, the Gross Tertiary Enrolment rate was 45%. The tertiary student population stood at 44,334 in 2010, with some 10,907 students pursuing their studies overseas. Out of 33,427 students who were studying locally, 65% were enrolled in publicly funded institutions while the remaining was enrolled in private institutions.

Out of 21,766 students enrolled in publicly funded institutions, female outnumbered male students by some 2,950.

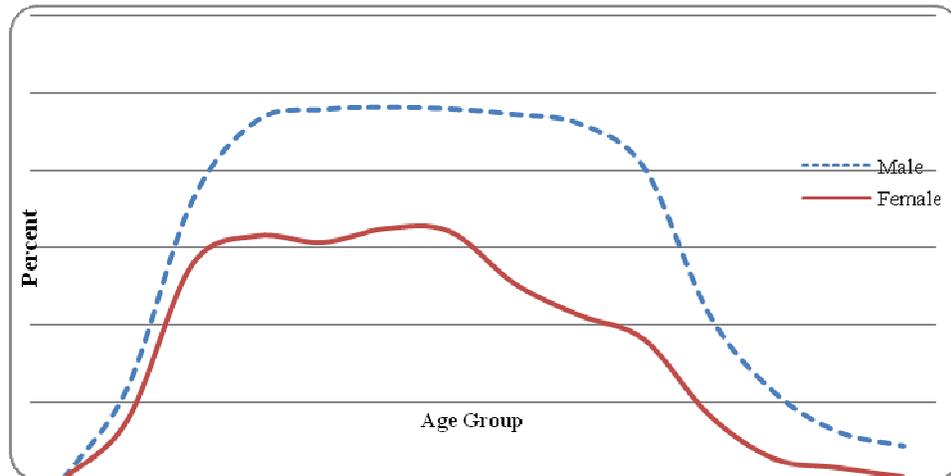
Boys and girls were equally likely to study up to a Bachelor degree. However, 11% of the boys were studying at Masters level against 7.8% for girls. Among both boys and girls, some 56% were enrolled full time. However, female students were less likely to be enrolled part-time (26% against 29% for male students), and more likely to study through the Distance Education mode (18% against 15% for male students).

## **9. Economics Characteristics**

In 2011, a lesser proportion of women than men of working age (16 years and above) were active, that is, in employment or looking for work. The economic activity rate for women was 43.7% against 75.5% for men. The active population stood at 582,800 with 363,600 men and 219,200 women.

Men and women have a similar pattern of economic activity during their life, i.e, less active at the younger and older age groups. The activity rates for both are highest in the age group 30 to 45 years.

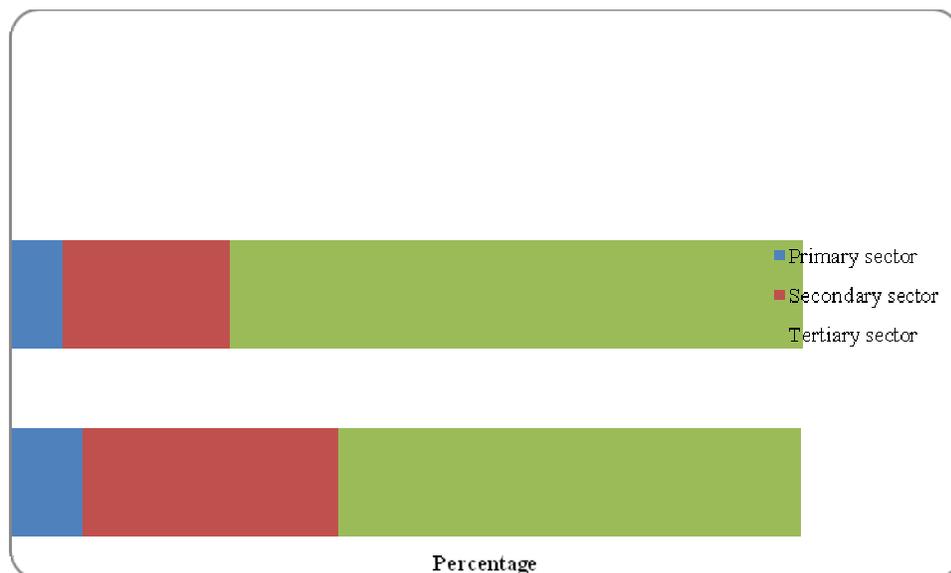
**Chart 13 - Activity rate (%) by age group and sex, 2011**



Some 191,800 women held a job in 2011 and accounted for 35.7% of the Mauritian employed population.

Working women were more qualified than their male counterparts, with 22% holding a tertiary qualification against 17% for men. There were an almost equal proportion of working men and women having a School Certificate but 7.4% women had a Higher School Certificate compared to 5% for men.

**Chart 14 - Distribution of employed person by sector and sex, 2011**



Both men and women had a high proportion of their working population in the tertiary sector (covering trade, hotels & restaurants, transport and other service industries), 68% for men and 57% for women. The secondary sector (covering manufacturing, electricity & water and construction) accounted for one third of the working men and one quarter of the working

women. While women represented some 40% of the employment in the manufacturing sector, they comprised less than 1% of the construction industry.

Women were more likely than men to be employees, with 85% of the employed female in that employment status compared to 78% among the men. They were also much less likely than men to head their own business; while 21% of working men were employers or own account workers, only some 11% of women held that status.

**Table A10 - Distribution (%) of employed persons by employment status and sex, 2011**

<b>Employment Status</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
Employer	5.3	1.6
Own account worker	15.7	9.1
Employee	78.3	85.1
Contributing family worker	0.7	4.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

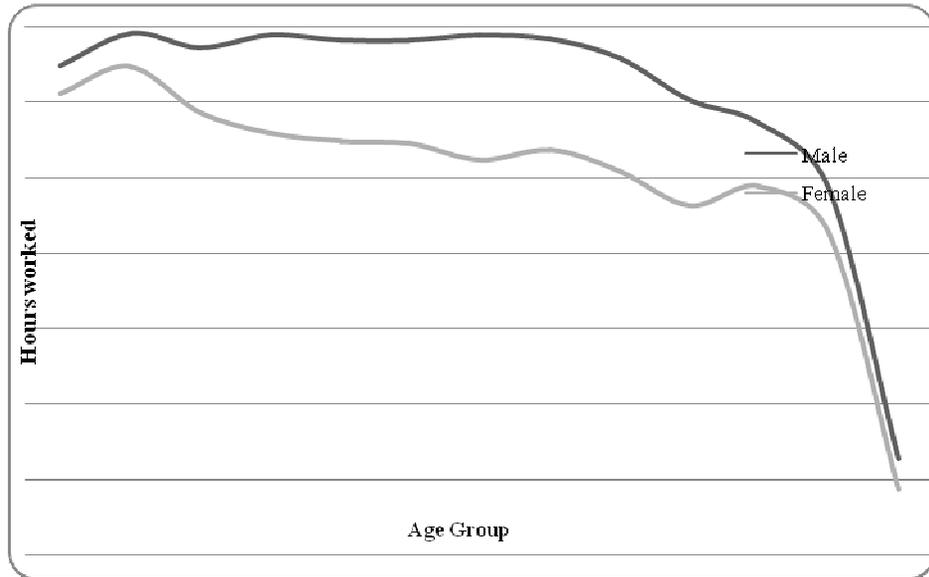
However, women are nowadays more inclined towards entrepreneurship. The number of women registered at the National Women Entrepreneur Council increased by 80%, from 1,900 in 2005 to some 3,500 in 2011. A lower proportion of women was engaged in handicraft activities, 24% against 35% in 2005. The number of women entrepreneurs in the textile sector has more than doubled, with its share rising from 21% to 27%. The agro industry and the services sector attracted more women over the years, representing 28% and 21% respectively of registered women entrepreneur in 2011 against 26% and 18% in 2005.

On average an employed woman works 38 hours, 6 hours less than a man. However, women heading their own business and those contributing in the family business worked respectively 7.5 hours and 8.2 hours less than their male counterparts.

Both women and men worked fewer hours in the agricultural sector than in other sectors of the economy. However, women worked 10 hours less than men in that sector. Women worked 8 hours less in public administration, 5 hours less in hotels & restaurants and 3 hours less in manufacturing, trade & education sectors.

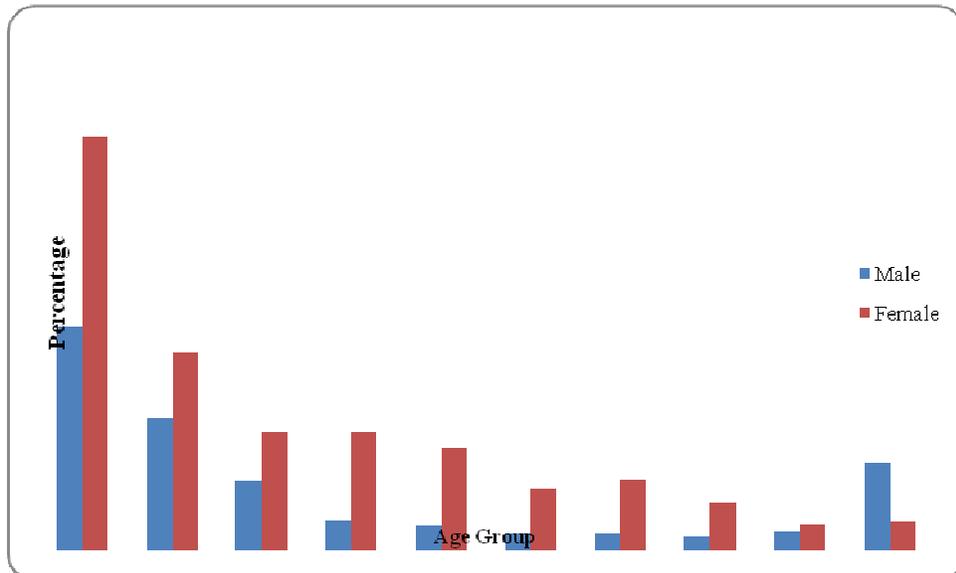
Women as well as men tend to work fewer hours at the older age. The difference in hours worked by women and men varies across ages; it increases with age to reach a peak of 8.3 hours at the age group 45 to 49 years, and decreases thereafter.

**Chart 15 - Hours of work by age group and sex, 2011**



In spite of being fewer in the labour force, women are over represented among the unemployed. Unemployed women numbered 27,300 in 2011 compared to 18,800 men. Female unemployment rate stood at 12.5%, much higher than the rate of 5.2% for male.

**Chart 16 - Unemployment rate (%) by age group and sex, 2011**



Unemployment rate is higher among women than men at all ages, except for the elderly. The difference in unemployment rate is more pronounced at the very young age.

Among unemployed women with previous work experience, 22% left their last job due to marriage, childbirth and household responsibilities. Another 13% women were unemployed following closure of establishment. The main sectors where the unemployed women worked previously are manufacturing (29%), trade (25%) and hotels and restaurants (10%).

## 10. Social Benefits and Senior living in Infirmaries

In 2010, the number of women receiving Basic Retirement Pension outnumbered their male counterparts by 20,900. Out of 153,870 Basic Retirement pensioners, 57% were women. Both male and female pensioners were concentrated in the age group 60 to 69 years. However 74% of pensioners in the age group 90 to 99 years were women. For every male centenary pensioner, there were 9 women centenary.

There were 21,815 recipients of Basic Widows Pension in 2010, a large majority of whom (64%) were aged between 50 to 59 years.

Invalids pensioners numbered 27,769 in 2010, with an almost equal proportion of men and women. Among the 7,374 invalid persons who benefitted from the carers allowance, 46% were women.

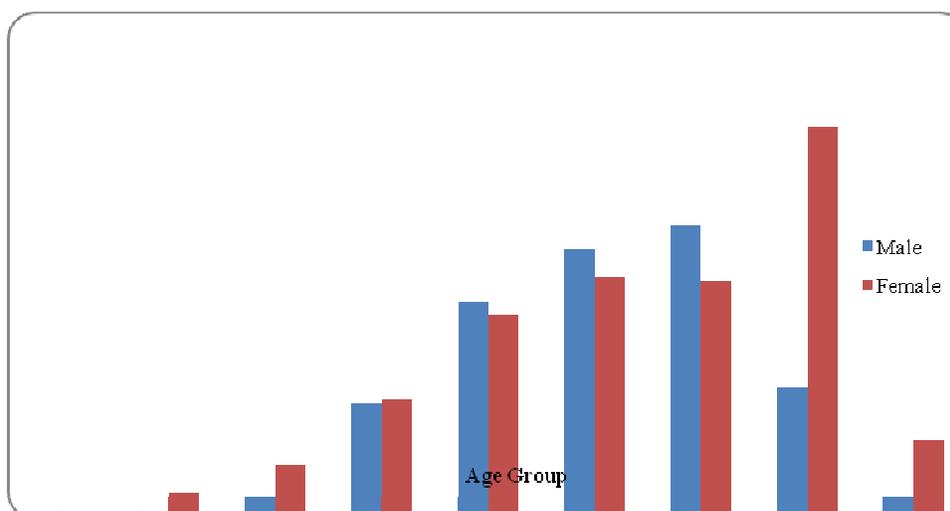
In 2010, 369 children received Basic Orphans Pension, 48% of them were girls. The female orphans were younger than the male orphans; 91% were aged 10 to 19 years against 81% for the boys. In 2010, 6,067 abandoned mothers and 607 unmarried mothers received a social aid allowance.

**Table A11 - Number of beneficiaries by selected benefits, 2010**

Pension Type	Male	Female
Basic Retirement Pension	66,481	87,389
Basic Widow's Pension	N/A	21,815
Basic Invalid's Pension	13,888	13,791
Basic Orphan's Pension	191	178
Carers Allowance	3,973	3,401
Social Aid	15,712	24,163

In 2011, 56% of the 593 inmates living in the 18 infirmaries registered at the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reforms Institutions were women. The women residents were older than men with 35% aged 80 years and over compared to 14% for men.

**Chart 17 - Number of Inmates in infirmaries,2010**



Women inmates were more likely to suffer from a disease or a disability, 89% against 81% for men. However, they are less likely to be partially paralyzed and have mental diseases.

**Table A12- Types of inmates’ disabilities, 2010**

	Male (%)	Female (%)
Partial paralysis	14.1	8.2
Mental diseases	26.6	23.6
Heart diseases	5.3	2.1
Diabetes	5.3	7.0
Other (including those suffering from multiple disabilities)	29.7	47.6
Inmates with no disabilities	19.0	11.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

## 11. Senior Position in Government

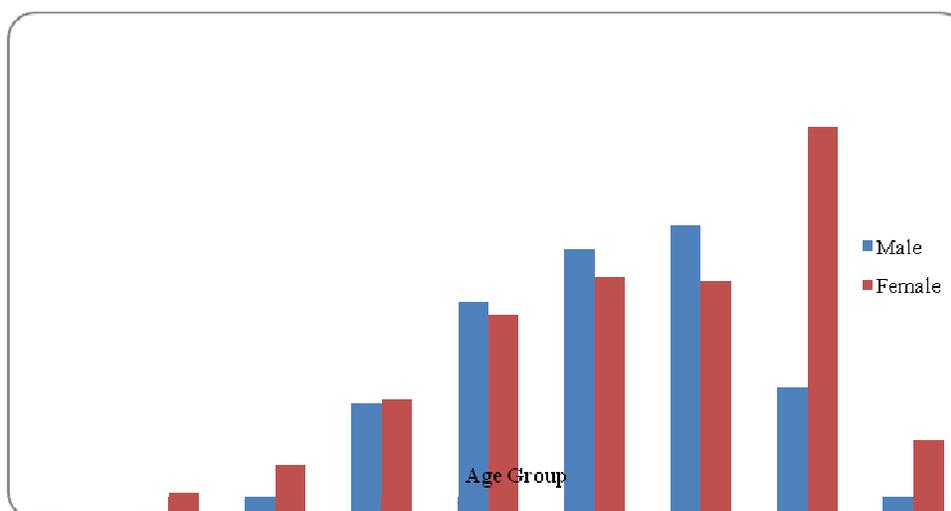
More women are occupying high positions in government services. The proportion of women in the most senior positions increased from 23% to 37% over the last ten years.

**Table A13- Senior Position<sup>1</sup> in Government Services, 2001 and 2011**

	2001		2011	
	Number	%	Number	%
Male	291	77	273	63
Female	89	23	161	37
<b>Total</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>435</b>	<b>100</b>

<sup>1</sup> Senior Chief Executive, Permanent Secretary, Principal Assistant Secretary, Director, Manager, Judge and Magistrate

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Rehabilitation Youth Centre	60	40	100
Judiciary	61	39	100

### 13. Domestic Violence

In 2011, 1,752 cases of domestic violence were reported at the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare, nearly 90% of which were against women. Though women are more likely to be victims, domestic violence against men is on the increase; some 10 years back, one of every 34 cases of domestic violence was against men compared to one out of every 9 cases in 2011.

Some 39% of women victims of domestic violence reported physical assault by spouse or partner, 19% verbal assault by spouse or partner (illtreatment, harassment, abuse, humiliation) and 14% threatening assault by spouse. Reported cases by men relate mostly to physical assault by spouse or partner (30%) and verbal assault by spouse or partner (24%). An equal proportion of women and men (2.5%) reported being assaulted by other members of their households.

### 14. Offences

Men are more likely to be victims of homicides and assaults while women are more prone to sexual offences. In 2010, 75% of the intentional homicides and 56% of the assaults were committed against men. However, women were found to be victims to 90% of the sexual offences.

**Table A15 - Victims of selected offences reported at the Police, Island of Mauritius, 2010**

Offences	Male	Female	Both sexes	
Homicides	57	19	76	
<i>of which Intentional homicides</i>	37	12	49	
Assaults	7,819	6,168	13,987	
Sexual offences	43	350	393	
<i>of which Rape</i>		49	49	

Boys are much more likely to commit offences than girls. In 2010, only 5% of the juvenile offences were committed by girls. The female juvenile delinquency rate stood at 1.1 while that for male was nearly 9 times higher.

**Table A16- Number of Juvenile offenders<sup>1</sup> reported, 2010**

	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Both sexes</b>
Crimes	140	5	145
<i>of which drug offences</i>	9	-	9
Misdemeanours	441	62	503
<i>of which drug offences</i>	16	-	16
Contraventions <sup>2</sup>	744	3	747
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,325</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>1,395</b>
Juvenile Delinquency Rate <sup>3</sup>	9.3	1.1	5.2

<sup>1</sup>Persons aged 12 to 17 years

<sup>2</sup> Exclude contraventions established by camera

<sup>3</sup> Rate per 1,000 mid-year juvenile population and exclude contraventions

## 15. UN Gender Indices

The Gender Inequality Index (GII), introduced by the United Nations in 2010, is a composite measure reflecting inequality in achievements between women and men in three dimensions, namely reproductive health, empowerment and the labour market. It varies between zero (when women and men fare equally) and one (when men or women fare poorly compared to the other in all dimensions).

According to the latest figure published in the 2011 UN Human Development Report, Mauritius ranked 63<sup>rd</sup> out of 146 countries with a GII value of 0.35. Sweden ranked first with a value of 0.05 and Yemen last with a value of 0.77.

**Table A17- GII by selected countries, 2011**

Country	Gender Inequality Index	
	Rank	Value
Sweden	1	0.049
Netherlands	2	0.052
Singapore	8	0.086
France	10	0.106
Australia	18	0.136
New Zealand	32	0.195
United Kingdom	34	0.209
Republic of Moldova	46	0.298
<b>Mauritius</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>0.353</b>
Rwanda	82	0.453
South Africa	94	0.490
Iraq	117	0.579
Ghana	122	0.598
India	129	0.617
Kenya	130	0.627
Yemen	146	0.769

Statistics Mauritius

Ministry of Finance and Economic Development

Port Louis

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## Definitions of Terms

**Activity rate:** The ratio (%) of the economically active population (employed and unemployed) to population aged 16 years and above.

**Age specific fertility rate:** the number of live births to women of a specified age-group per 1,000 women in that age-group.

**Contributing Family Worker:** A contributing family worker is a person who works without pay in an enterprise operated by a family worker.

**Crimes:** Offences that are punishable by: (a) penal servitude (b) fine exceeding 5,000 rupees.

**Crude death rate:** the number of deaths in a year per 1,000 mid-year population.

**Current User of contraceptive method:** A new acceptor who continues with the same or different method of contraception and pays regular return visits to the family planning service point to receive services and supplies.

**Divorce rate:** the number of persons divorced in a year per 1,000 mid-year population.

**Employee:** An employee is a person who works for pay for someone else, even in a temporary capacity.

**Employer:** An employer is a person who operates his/her own business or trade and hires one or more employees.

**Employment:** Employed population consists of Mauritians aged 16 years and above who have worked for pay, profit or family gain for at least one hour during reference week of a month. It includes those who are temporarily absent from work for reason such as leave with pay, leave without pay and temporary disorganization of work (badweather, break down of equipment, lack of order, etc).

**Gross Enrolment Ratio (Primary):** The number of pupils in Standard I to VI as a percentage of the total population aged 6-11 years.

**Gross Enrolment Ratio (Secondary):** The number of pupils in Form I to VI as a percentage of the total population aged 12-19 years.

**Gross Enrolment Ratio (Tertiary):** The number of pupils in all post secondary schools and universities as a percentage of the total population aged 20-24 years.

**Juvenile:** a person aged below 18 years.

**Juvenile delinquency rate:** the number of juvenile offenders involved in offences (excluding contraventions) per 1,000 juvenile populations.

**Life Expectancy at birth:** the number of years a new born infant would live if prevailing patterns of mortality at the time of its birth were to stay the same throughout its life.

**Marriage rate:** the number of persons married in a year per 1,000 mid-year population.

**Maternal mortality rate:** number of deaths due to pregnancy, childbirth and the puerperium per 10,000 live births during that year.

**Misdemeanours:** Offences that are punishable by:(a) imprisonment for a term exceeding 10 days; (b) fine exceeding 5,000 rupees.

**New acceptor of contraceptive methods:** Someone who accepts a contraceptive method for the first time from a provider of a family planning programme.

**Own Account Worker:** An own account worker is a person who operates his/her own business or trade but does not hire employees. He/She may be working alone or with the help of contributing family workers.

**Percentage Repeaters:** The total number of pupils who are enrolled in the same grade as previous year, expressed as a percentage of the total enrolment of the specified grade.

**Sex Ratio:** The sex ratio is defined as the number of males per 100 females.

**Special Education Needs (SEN):** The needs of a child who has a difficulty or disability which makes learning harder for him/her than for other children of their age. It also includes children who cannot use the educational facilities which other children of a similar age use because of their disability.

**Total fertility rate:** the average number of children born to an average woman assuming that she survives to the end of her child-bearing age and is subjected to a fixed schedule of age-specific fertility rates.

**Transition Rate:** The proportion of pupils progressing from the primary cycle (i.e Std VI) to the secondary cycle(Form I and Year I Prevoc), expressed as a percentage of the number of pupils enrolled at Std VI in primary school.

**Unemployment Rate:** Unemployment rate is the ratio (%) of unemployment to economically active population (employed and unemployed).

**Unemployment:** Unemployed population comprises all Mauritians aged 16 years and over who are not working but who are looking for work and are available for work during the reference week.

## ANNEX II

Link to [National Gender Policy Framework](#)

# THE NATIONAL GENDER POLICY FRAMEWORK

# National Gender Policy Framework for Mauritius

## Vision

A society in which all girls and boys, women and men live together in dignity, safety, mutual respect, harmony and social justice; thrive in an enabling environment in which they are able to achieve their full potential, in full enjoyment of their human rights; are equal partners in taking decisions to shape economic, social and cultural development, in determining the values that guide and sustain such development and equally enjoy its benefits.

## I. Purpose

The National Gender Policy Framework outlines Mauritius' vision for gender equality and women's empowerment. Its vision encapsulates the different outcomes expected of a state in which there is gender equality. It is results-oriented and sets out in broad terms how to translate that vision into reality

### ***A generic policy document***

It is a generic policy statement. It gives clear signals to all stakeholders that achieving gender equality is an objective integral to all sectors of national activity, in line with national values and international commitments.

It provides a philosophical framework, general guiding principles, values, norms of conduct and standards to attain while adopting a gender perspective in order to achieve gender equality. It sets out why there needs to be a gender policy, what it involves and who should be responsible for it.

The national policy framework gives a basic understanding of the concept of gender and sets out the reason why there should be a gender approach to all development interventions. It provides a framework for developing further this understanding and for building consensus over gender-sensitive policy and practice across the whole gamut of development interventions. In this sense it also acts as a handbook, and provides the tools to justify and also apply policy.

## ***An overarching national policy framework to develop sector-based and organization-specific policies***

The national gender policy framework does not cover different sectors. There are gender issues that are specific and unique to a sector, organization or agency. Each sector and agency has to be responsible for and take ownership of the development of their own policy.

The national gender policy framework provides the overarching framework and principles which the various entities within the public sector, as well as private and civil society organizations can draw on to produce their own more detailed policy documents, programmes and codes of practice in an inclusive manner engaging relevant stakeholders.

## ***An unfinished agenda for gender equality***

The National Gender Policy Framework acknowledges and builds on past achievements and ongoing national efforts to achieve gender equality. Over the last two decades there has been much legal activism in that area and much progress has been made.

This updated national gender policy framework is based on awareness that there is still an unfinished agenda for achieving gender equality. Further progress can be facilitated but it can be also made more difficult by what has already been achieved.

The successful work on the legislative front across many critical domains can create the perception that the near achievement of formal equality is sufficient to ensure actual equality in terms of opportunity and outcomes. Moreover, the mechanisms to translate legislative provisions into systematic and adequately resourced implementation that yields the desired outcomes are still weak. The actors actively applying a gender perspective are in a minority and isolated across sectors and within organizations.

Gender relations are dynamic. They can be transformed within a relatively short period, often partly as a result of targeted interventions, as unintended consequences of other interventions and by changes in social and economic conditions, all interacting in complex ways. The new conditions can themselves create further heightened expectations about what constitutes desirable gender relations, changes the norms and the standards of what is to be expected of relations between men and women. The pattern of changes and expectations can be uneven. Among gender advocates, who have championed much of the legislative and regulatory measures, the expectations can evolve rapidly. Socio economic changes and shocks

have also transformed behaviour and mind sets. Such changes have often been spearheaded by women, who have transformed their fertility behaviour in over a decade in the 1969s and 1970s and have broken down resistance to -their albeit lower paid and more precarious- factory work outside the confines of home and shattered the family model of the sole male breadwinner during the 1980s.

But many changes are not yet very broad-based or far-reaching. There is still much work left to do to uproot deep-seated causes of gender inequality, to change behaviour and to shift mindsets and attitudes regarding what gender relations should be and to create the conditions for women's empowerment.

In order to respond to changing gender relations and socio economic conditions, sector-specific policy documents and accompanying action plans need to be more frequently reviewed and adjusted to keep track of these developments, assess the progress already made and take steps to make further progress.



### ***An updated gender policy framework***

The new updated gender policy framework has also been developed because the previous gender policy and action plan validated in 2005 has been overtaken by a changing policy and institutional environment. It is now an opportune moment to translate international commitments made in regard of gender equality, the ensuing supportive national legislation and relevant policy objectives into more effective implementation.

The current processes of globalization and liberalization are transforming the way economic, social and cultural life is organized everywhere in the world and in Mauritius. The erosion of trade preferences in the sugar and textiles sector has already affected livelihood prospects of women and men in different ways, subjecting them to global market turbulences.

There are now far reaching policy and institutional reforms under way. They seek to alter the way government shapes and conducts its core missions and relates to other institutional actors such as the private sector and civil society. These reforms are the shift towards programme-based budgeting and new performance management systems and human resource development strategies in the public sector. Such technical and operational changes will require changes in institutional culture and mind-sets towards a results and performance-driven approach. The management of such transformations presents significant challenges, even when a progressive and iterative approach is taken.

A performance-based budgeting system seeks to align state budgets and programmes more closely to policy priorities. Apart from this greater effectiveness, it also aims to achieve greater efficiency and economy in public sector actions. Ministries and agencies have to be more transparent about and accountable for what they will spend on, for what purpose, and with what results. They need also to take steps to understand what factors lead to or inhibit performance and to take appropriate corrective measures in the light of such knowledge and information.

Such an integrated planning and budgeting system, particularly as it is focused on development outcomes, creates appropriate conditions for implementing results-oriented strategies to achieve gender equality, for learning from practice how to improve on these strategies and for reporting on progress achieved.

However, at the same time, the drive for efficiency and economy in public financial management can pose threats to the gender equality agenda, as state expenditure can correct for and mitigate gender-based disadvantages. Private markets are not inherently egalitarian and are certainly not risk-free. The basis for state or public action in conditions of liberalization has to be carefully examined and asserted.

In the absence of a widely-endorsed policy framework for guiding public interventions - for including gender analysis in the changing institutional and technical routines from the outset - gender equality can be ranked as a low priority.

The new national gender policy framework clearly and firmly sets out what is expected of state and para-statal agencies in the development of and shift to performance based systems and how to make them gender-responsive in the process.

It also gives guidance to non-state agencies and institutions about how to foster a gender-sensitive culture in their organizations, become more gender-responsive in their own actions and become more proactive in ensuring that states are accountable to their commitments taken in regard to gender equality and that citizens- girls and boys, men and women- are able to claim their rights.

## II. Guiding principles of the National Gender Policy Framework



### ***Based on the realization of human rights:***

The National Gender Policy Framework is derived from the national constitution and the human rights instruments- treaties, conventions- that the Republic of Mauritius is party to at the global, regional and sub-regional levels. Mauritius has ratified the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women [CEDAW]. As an overarching convention, the CEDAW informs and is compatible with other human rights instruments, which cover all dimensions of human development, security and well-being –economic, social, cultural, and environmental. The commitments made to universal human rights mean that women’s rights are human rights and that customary, cultural and religious practices need to be subject to the **right to gender equality**.

The National Gender Policy Framework has also been guided by the commitments made at all the United Nations international conferences on Women and in particular to the implementation of the Beijing Platform of Action in 1995. Mauritius is party to the 1997 SADC Declaration on Gender, its 1998 Addendum on the Prevention and Eradication of Violence against Women and Children, the African Union Declaration on Gender Equality signed in 2004 and the Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender Equality 2005-2015. It has signed and ratified the Protocol on the Rights of Women of the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights in 2005.



### ***Millennium Development Goals action framework***

Mauritius is also a signatory to the Millennium Declaration. The Millennium Declaration makes clear that the Millennium Development Goals [MDGs] are underpinned by economic, social and cultural rights. The National Gender Policy Framework subscribes to the development orientation enshrined in the MDGs. The MDGs consolidate the conclusions reached during the major international conferences of the last two decades and encapsulate minimum standards to attain across major domains of human development. It is clear that significant advances have already been made in Mauritius in respect of almost all the generic and global MDG targets set by the international community. But the goals themselves have not been attained. And the development approach of the MDGs constitutes good practice. Public action has to focus on sustainable human development, on poverty eradication in all its

dimensions and on inclusive development processes. For economic growth is a means, not an end in itself.

More importantly, the goals, targets and indicators embody an **outcome-based and holistic approach to development**. These commitments mean that state action has to be oriented towards the achievement of development goals and need to be people-oriented. Each country can set nationally-owned and progressively higher, more refined and relevant targets for each of the goals, review them periodically as well as report on progress made. For instance, where universal enrolment rates for education have been attained, such as in Mauritius, targets can now be set for educational achievements, not just enrolment.

The National Gender Policy Framework does not only refer to the third MDG goal, Achieving Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment. All the other seven goals, concerning poverty, education, health, environment and partnerships for development have to be gender-responsive. This is because it cannot be presumed that women and men face the same situation in these domains, and that all women and all men face the same situation. When framing strategies and outcomes in these sectors and thematic areas, the gender differences, disparities and issues have to be taken into account.



### ***Accountability for Outcomes***

Rights entail corresponding duties and obligations. State parties who have made commitments to human rights become duty-bearers who have an obligation to meet their commitments and are accountable for progress made. All sectors need to apply a gender lens to the diagnosis of their sector. They need to consider how the achievement of gender equality supports their own sectoral objectives. They need to put in place mechanisms that ensure that their interventions at the very least do not lead to greater inequality between women and men and at the most actively promotes gender equality and achieves tangible results.

All Ministries and agencies need to refer to the gender-responsive elements of the conventions, treaties, conferences, MDG goals and relevant to their sector when developing their strategies, programmes, budgets, monitoring and evaluation frameworks.



## ***Human-centred and outcome-oriented***

The National Gender Policy Framework invites all sectors and institutions to focus on outcomes and impacts relating to the lives and livelihoods of human beings, as citizens who are holders of rights. This focus on the active realization of human rights involves starting from an examination of the situation of individuals and societal cells such as households and families; keeping sight of the transformation desired in this situation on the basis of development rights, values and standards; steering the policy, planning and budgeting process accordingly and evaluating the effectiveness of government intervention to achieve this transformation at each point of the process.



## ***A gender perspective is necessary and adds value***

There are four interrelated reasons why such a people-oriented, outcome-based focus needs to have a gender perspective.

First, a people-oriented human centred- development approach cannot be abstract.

It has to be concrete and focus on, and make a difference to actual, real people.

Individual people are unique and cannot be presumed to be the same. There is great diversity.

There are known differences innate to real people. They are first of all identified, classified and socialized as either women or men<sup>1</sup>. Then comes all “embodied” variables of differences, such as age, colour, “race” and ethnicity.

But then there are differences based on economy, society, culture, religion, location, geography, environment, climate. These differences between women and men depend on different contexts, can change over time. These changes may be dependent on a number of factors.

Some of these differences may be great, some may be small. Some may be meaningful, some not. They need to be identified, assessed and interpreted.

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<sup>1</sup> Persons of the male or female sex are invariably brought up to become boys and girls, men and women and men but some exceptionally may decide to live and be considered as women or men and undergo so-called “sex change” operations

Second, people cannot be considered as isolated, unrelated individuals, leading parallel unconnected lives.

They live in society, form relationships and groups.

These relationships are at the basis of how society and the economy is organized. It is this social cooperation and interdependence which makes possible a division of labour, resources, responsibilities and power.

Relationships between women and men are the basis of this social and economic organization, whether in the family, household, and other institutions. The division of work, resources, responsibilities and power are along gender lines.

The nature of the relationships between women and men depends on many factors and change according to different contexts. These cannot be presumed to be symmetrical, equal or harmonious. They can be coercive, exploitative or abusive.

Because of this relationship, what affects one individual can affect the other, indirectly. But again this cannot be presumed to be symmetrical between women and between men.

Third, what women and men, of all ages and in different contexts, can make of their lives depend on their situation:

The activities they do, whether paid or unpaid,

The resources they use,

The power they have to make decisions, to control assets and dispose of them.

The rights, the entitlements they have and actually enjoy.

The obligations they face, whether implicit and explicit.

The norms, rules and values they live under, whether implicit or explicit.

There can be differences in these dimensions of women and men's situation, which need to be identified. The differences can stem from the relationships among them. There can be much diversity in these situations.

These dimensions are closely interlinked and have to be examined together to reveal whether there are interlocked patterns of opportunity, or disadvantage or deprivation: For example, what activities people can do depend on what assets they have, what obligations they face and what the dominant values are concerning activities and obligations.

Fourth, public action, through government policies, regulation, programmes and budgets intend to have an impact on the situation of women and men. There is a need to understand their situation and take into account the differences and relationships. This is the case because :

- The policies and budgets will have an impact on different individuals and groups differently even when there is no intention of discrimination, exclusion or preference.
- These relationships among people will affect how individuals can benefit from and can respond to policies, programmes and budgets, will affect whether they are able to respond to opportunities and are able to overcome blockages and constraints.
- This in turn will have implications for success in achieving policy objectives.
- The policies can explicitly aim to identify and reduce inequalities among different groups, and discrimination against such groups. Differences on the basis of sex, age, colour, and ethnicity cannot be grounds for discrimination. Nor can disparities and inequalities in assets, resources, activities, obligations continue to be source of unequal capacities and opportunities and well-being.
- 

Gender analysis involves creating data, information and knowledge about these conditions to inform policy-making. Gender-responsive policy-making means being informed by such context-specific knowledge about gender relations in order to shape and implement policy which aims to change the situation.



### ***Development value***

The attainment of gender equality and the need to be gender-responsive have both **intrinsic and instrumental values** and purposes.

Gender equality has an intrinsic value. Equality and equity are valued as such, in their own right.

A gender perspective can also have an instrumental value. Applying a gender perspective can help to achieve other objectives, such as education, economic development and health, adequate nutrition. It makes sense to have a gender perspective when there are differences and relationships among individuals whose lives, capacities, livelihoods and well-being are targeted by sectoral programmes.

The National Gender Policy Framework for Mauritius places an intrinsic value as well as an instrumental value on the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment.



### ***Substantive as well as formal equality***

The National Gender Policy Framework is based on the understanding that formal equality is not tantamount to substantive equality. It calls for an **explicit analysis of the substantive and real conditions facing women and men** in any development situation.

Development actors and practitioners cannot assume *a priori*, that they are treating everybody the same, without distinction of sex, age, family status, colour, religion, ethnic affiliation and sexual orientation.

This is because **treating people as if they were the same, when in fact they are not**, can cause bias, prejudice and *de facto* discrimination. What is important is not just intention but actual outcomes. The unintended outcome can be perverse. It can lead to a violation of human rights and a state of disempowerment, exclusion, deprivation and injustice.

There is therefore an obligation to engage in knowledge-based policy-making, to find out what the situation of women and men are, rather than assume that it is irrelevant to do so. It involves the integration of a gender perspective at all stages of the policy process.

A **supposedly neutral** approach may in fact be biased in favour of men and may expect that women conform to patterns of behaviour which are in fact usual male patterns and which are treated as the norm. It cannot be assumed that all women face the same conditions as men in the public sphere and that they benefit from the same privileges and facilities as men in the private household or family sphere. This is particularly so because historically women have been assigned to the private family sphere usually under men's control, while the public sphere has been and continue to be a male domain. Policies which lead to bias against women are based on an implicit or explicit assumption that the man is the money earner in the workplace and the woman is the consumer in the home and as the physical bearer of their children, is also their carer and their parents' carers, and that all men and women live these conjugal lives throughout their lives. In substance and reality, these arrangements may be diverse, and may be evolving rapidly. When these arrangements do exist, they may tend to perpetuate the existing inequitable relationships between women and men.

**Equality of treatment** only prevails when the existence of differences, disparities, and the nature of gender relations have been examined and relevant measures are then taken to ensure equality in terms of opportunity and in terms of outcomes.

It prevails also when steps are taken to confront stereotypes about what men and women can and should do and which limit their potential.

It means that state and non-state actors have to ensure that they have taken steps to understand the situation of women and men in their respective domains, both in terms of their objective situation and in terms of their subjective insights and perspective into their own situation.

### ***Gender differences among men and among women***

The National Gender Policy Framework operates under the principle that **women, as men cannot be treated as a homogeneous category**. This principle needs to inform all policies and programmes in order to make them gender-responsive. Differences among women and among men based on ethnicity, sexuality, disability, age that are more embodied on the one hand and other more socio economic variables – education, marital status, income, health, location – should not be overlooked. Policies and programmes, which want to develop a more finely targeted approach have to be sensitive about the differences among men and among women when addressing other issues: The experience of poverty and the dynamics leading to poverty may not be the same for women and men. But not all women and not all men are poor. Ageing and disability is not experienced in the same way by women and men. But equally, the situation of young and elderly women is not the same, of married and unmarried women is also not the same.

This principle means that all sectoral interventions have to be sensitive to gender differences, which include differences among men and among women.

### ***Moving from disempowerment to empowerment***

There are at the same time enduring **similarities in the situation of women** as a social group, which arise from a combination of economic, political and social structures and from the deep-rooted values and entrenched ideologies about gender relations and gender identity which continue to sustain the disempowerment of women. A situation in which there is gender inequality is one in which women are disempowered to some extent or other over all aspects of life, in private and public spheres, including in sexual relations.

Some of the powerful indicators of these across the world are the low share of women in decision-making instances, the prevalence of gender-based violence and sexual violence, the rising share and prevalence of HIV/AIDS among younger women the unequal share of unpaid work and caring obligations, the persistent income gap and lower returns to education for women. The gap may be not as severe in different contexts but always exists.

Such similarities provide the rationale for initiatives designed to reverse past gender discrimination and historically accumulated and cross cutting disadvantages. The National Gender Policy Framework recognizes that there is an existing state of gender relations which disempowers women.

There is a need to stimulate change in social and economic structures but also in mindsets, attitudes and beliefs of individual women and men. Both contribute to sustain gender inequality.

It cannot be presumed that if there is formal equality, the resulting outcomes are just, are the result of innate differences and disparities which cannot be changed or are the result of choices and options made freely. This is because it cannot be presumed that existing activities that women and men perform, the mutual arrangements they make, the responsibilities and obligations they take are out of free choice, if the conditions which make this choice really free do not exist. These conditions are both objective and subjective and concern adequate resources, capacity, autonomy, power, lack of fear and enabling norms and values. There must be the real substantive possibility to make other choices, rather than the one actually made, for that particular outcome to be the result of **“free choice”**.

Norms concerning women’s obligations and women’s place are so entrenched that they are often perceived as “natural” often by women themselves, rather than cultural and amenable to change. Challenging the norms individually can pose great personal risks of ostracism and violence. Individual women may sacrifice self-esteem and personal safety for their social acceptance, their material security and those of their children.

The National Gender Policy Framework thus encourages the **creation of spaces for questioning and rethinking assumptions**, for challenging existing norms, stereotypes, double standards and cultures of silence, for addressing controversial issues such as over sexual and reproductive rights, for changing values and mindsets, for dialogue and negotiation about such gender-responsive transformation.

Gender relations, like culture, are not static. They are not predetermined by nature and biology. They are dynamic and amenable to transformation. These spaces are sites where culture is expressed, created and transmitted: the home, school, the media, work spaces, clubs, specific fora and events for dialogue and debate.

Empowerment is a process and a state of being which has many interrelated dimensions: It means the “**power to**”: having the capabilities to do and act. It means the “**power with**”: the ability to work together with others, to derive strength from acting together. It also depends on the “**power within**”: the confidence and self-esteem to form, voice and assert opinions, seek, make and accept change and act without fear.

Empowerment does not mean, indeed it challenges, a negative and destructive power and control over others, such as gender-based and sexual violence.

There are enduring similarities in women's situation, across cultures and over time, which arise out of the nature of the social relations between women and men and not their respective biological characteristics. Such **gender-based disadvantages are interlocked**. They cut across dimensions of human development, such as capacity, opportunity, security and well-being:

Gender-based violence disempowers women, incapacitates them, damages their health and well-being and also lowers performance and productivity in the work place.

Despite high or higher levels of educational performance, women do not achieve appropriate recruitment, promotion, remuneration as compared to men.

Women continue to have a marginal presence in political and economic decision-making instances, despite these higher levels of capability, because of deeply entrenched norms and attitudes which condition their own behaviour and that of men.

Current wage gaps between women and men entail lower pensions for women in later life and persisting patterns of economic dependence and insecurity in old age for women.

The unequal division between paid work and unpaid work between women and men, the unequal sharing of family and household maintenance and caring obligations between them are a manifestation of the power of men to privately impose such obligations on women and of the social and economic arrangements and cultural norms which perpetuate this situation (employment practices, fiscal policies).

This unequal division of unpaid work and of caring obligations has ramifications across many sectors, economic, political as well as social. It sustains the financial dependence of women on men. It contributes to the unequal distribution of work, reward and leadership between them, and the unequal enjoyment of leisure and cultural pursuits by both men and women.

Practically, it means that there must be resources devoted for affirmative action and for the empowerment of women in order to create the conditions for equality of opportunity and outcome.

### ***A coordinated, cooperative approach among sectors***

Applying an outcome- oriented approach means acting from the understanding that one issue can have many different root causes and any one intervention can lead to a wide range of potential impacts.

Further, there is a recognition that the **MDG goals, and human rights, are interrelated**: one contributing to and thus dependent on the achievement of the other; one action can contribute to the achievement of more than one goal and several interlinked actions across sectors may be needed to make progress towards achieving one goal.

The national gender policy framework thus promotes a **co-operative approach** among sectors towards achieving gender equality. Achieving gender equitable outcomes involves different multi-pronged interventions from different sectors. These outcomes concern gender equality in the related dimensions of capacity, opportunity, security, -including bodily integrity-, and well-being. The fundamental reason is because issues of gender - and for that matter, any development outcome which concern human beings and how they relate to each other - cut across sectors. The dimensions of human development are interwoven. They present different patterns for women and men because of the unequal conditions of partnership between them.

A coordinated, cooperative and overarching approach is needed to address these issues effectively in an integrated and focused manner. It presents significant challenges with organizational cultures and technical mindsets that are narrow and sectoral.

### ***Taking into account unpaid, non –market work and achieving gender-equitable work-life balance***

The National Gender Policy Framework is based on an understanding that the **social and economic dimensions are mutually supportive**. Women's and men's contributions in both spheres, how one sphere contributes to the other, has to be explicitly accounted for, recognized, valued and become more balanced. Time spent caring for children and loved ones has two dimensions. It is valued for its own sake. But such unpaid work together with domestic tasks and household maintenance is also part of social reproduction, without which economic production cannot take place and without which the social fabric that sustains families, communities and psychological well-being cannot be maintained. While it yields benefits to the recipients and the wider society, the unpaid, taken for granted, work generates costs for the

carer, usually women, in terms of activities and prospects sacrificed and potential unfulfilled over a lifetime. These interactions have to be considered in a holistic way in crafting development interventions designed to achieve both social and economic transformation in a gender-balanced manner. Men and women have rights and responsibilities in both spheres and family responsibilities cannot be ascribed to women only. Achieving work-life balance and gender balance in both spheres are both sides of the same coin. Such an understanding has to permeate social and economic policies.

### **III. Broad operational strategies for achieving gender equality**

This part of the National Gender Policy Framework applies the guiding principles developed in the preceding part to operational strategies and practices to achieve gender equality.

All sectoral entities and organizations are invited to refer to the normative frameworks they have adhered to and show demonstrable, transparent commitment to the attainment of standards, achievement of development goals and objectives and those pertaining to gender equality.

#### ***Rights-based***

This commitment to a rights-based framework carries an obligation of conduct as well as an obligation of results: how to carry out interventions and allocate expenditure equitably and what to seek to achieve. Both obligations focus on elimination of de facto discrimination and on substantive equality.

All state and parastatal entities need to develop a strategic framework to guide resource mobilisation and the allocation of these scarce resources and to inform the regulations they put in place. In reviewing/developing this strategic framework in the context of switching to a medium-term expenditure framework[MTEF] and performance-based budgeting[PBB], they need to specify the policy framework concerning gender equality and women's empowerment in their respective sectors, consider their responsibility to implement effectively legislation and plans of action concerning gender equality, in order to guide resource allocation.

## ***A gender-responsive strategic framework for resource allocation and service delivery. First steps: Situation analysis and impact assessments***

The strategic framework needs to take into account the development issues and challenges in these sectors and domains. The policy cycle has to start with confronting existing policies and interventions with this situation analysis to ensure their continued relevance. *Are the policies themselves relevant?* It involves a situation analysis of women and men. It establishes the relevance of taking into account gender issues and considering them as sectoral development issues, starting from a rights-based, user or client perspective. The answers to find are whether the interventions target populations and whether there are differences among women and men in activities, rights, assets, decision-making, responsibilities in the sector in question, which can have a bearing on the attainment of objectives and can lead to the formulation of further gender-related objectives. The absence of policy is in fact a de facto policy, which supports the status quo. So there is always by default a policy approach, which carries costs as well as possible benefits.

The situation analysis creates a baseline from which to develop outcome objectives, regarding what changes are targeted in this situation and what can realistically be achieved with the financial and other resources which can be mobilized.

It is good practice to engage in **gender analysis** of a development situation. Gender analysis does not assume that there are no differences between individuals and that those differences do not matter. Gender analysis systematically seeks to identify whether there are and what are the differences among individuals and examine the relationships among them. It also seeks to uncover the underlying reasons for these differences in order to develop appropriate means to address gender gaps and the factors leading to them. It takes into account the perceptions and priorities of both women and men in identifying development issues and challenges and working out effective and equitable ways of addressing them.

Best practice also involves carrying out a **gender-sensitive review and impact assessment** of past policies, programmes and budgets as well as of prospective policies. *What should be the priorities? Where are allocations directed actually? How to re-align allocations?* Looking at the human implications of any programme can highlight the differences between women and men, and thus the potential differential impacts. The questions to ask and formulate answers for are, whether the policies and interventions have contributed to worsen, reduce or

leave the state of gender inequality the same not only in the sector but across sectors. For the same reason, it is good practice to, before the event, consider the possible impacts of intended policies on different individuals and groups, and not only to identify the impacts after the intervention. Relevant policies are different ways of collecting revenue and of financing expenditure because they are not neutral in their implications for women and men, in particular poorer women and poorer men.

One instrument which can be used is environmental impact assessments [EIA]. They can be enlarged to contain explicitly the likely gender impacts of proposed developments.

### ***Using Gender-responsive information and statistical systems***

Such knowledge-based and information-based policy making process has to be supported by information and statistical systems which are themselves engendered. This means that the design, collection, treatment, analysis of surveys and questionnaires and other instruments of producing such information and **micro data** on individuals and households has to be gender-sensitive. A user-producer nexus of such information needs to include gender expertise.

A basic principle is **that information concerning individuals has to be kept disaggregated by sex, but also by other relevant variables**, such that the relevant gender gaps can be identified and related to other variables. This applies to micro data as well as **administrative data**, produced by organizations in the context of delivering goods and services and providing transfer payments. This data has to be kept disaggregated up to the level of central entities and not just at the establishment level of organizations.

Disaggregation by sex is one component of a gender-responsive information system. Gender-specific information, such as the number of complications following abortions, or the incidence of prostate cancer cannot be disaggregated by sex. Data concerning collective infrastructure- such as road and transport systems cannot also be disaggregated by sex, but gender-relevant information can be collected about who uses and who has effective access to transport, as well as how long it takes to travel and for what purposes. Needs can be different and priorities can be different among women and men, by virtue of their roles, responsibilities and life patterns which are shaped by their relations in the household, at work and in other spheres.

Micro data and administrative data also need to be disaggregated to the lowest possible level of decision-making and to take into account the differences in contexts and the fact that women as men cannot be treated as a homogeneous category. It cannot be assumed that what applies in one area can be generalized to other areas: the situation of women and men in Rodrigues island and Mauritius island, of urban, peri-urban and rural areas and districts cannot be presumed to be the same, because location interacts with other economic and socio cultural variables, and can produce different profiles and patterns of exclusion, substantive discrimination and opportunity.

Such an information system is important for policy formulation, programming and budgeting, monitoring and impact assessment purposes.

Micro data and administrative data need to be combined to assess whether the interventions are effective, how to develop them and how much they cost, and therefore to identify relevant performance indicators at the level of outcome, output or inputs. Administrative data disaggregated by sex can indicate how much the state has spent on women and men separately but not what proportions of women and men and what the different needs and gaps are.

At the macro level, the information system needs **over time** to be able to model interactions among different economic and social sectors and environmental processes. Such interactions are particularly important in the vulnerable context of a small island developing state such as Mauritius [SIDS]. They can be modeled through the building of satellite accounts to the System of National Accounts. Such satellite accounts can include one for unpaid labour, based on data on the time use of women, men girls and boys. Social accounting matrices which include time spent on unpaid work and on leisure can inform on the differential impact of policies.

### ***Formulating gender –responsive outcome objectives***

The National Gender Policy Framework builds on several decades of experience nationally, regionally and globally over the best means to achieve gender equality. There are two broad, interrelated approaches: One is to institutionalize a gender perspective, applying a gender analysis to all sectors of development intervention and throughout the policy cycle and processes. The other is to develop specific positive and affirmative actions within and coordinated across sectors to correct and mitigate for current gender disadvantages which have

been accumulated historically. Both types of intervention are necessary and complementary for attaining gender equality and for effectiveness in achieving other policy objectives.

The situation analysis and the relevant development standards can identify what the gaps are and what the development challenges are. The next step is to formulate the outcome objective, concerning the gap to be closed and to develop the strategies and interventions needed to close the gap. Is the expenditure adequate to reduce gender equality and achieve other objectives?

### ***Working out the related chain of results in an iterative process***

To find this out, one needs to go beyond inputs in order to work out the required activities to produce the outputs that will generate the relevant outcomes. It means constructing a results- chain using the tools and methodologies of gender-responsive policy, planning and budgeting.

This can be arrived at through an iterative process, which is **both top-down and bottom-up**: The bottom-up approach is to work out why the gaps exist and what different options exist to close them. In other words, what outputs and interventions are needed to address them, as if there was no financial resource constraint. The top-down approach is to work within the hard budget envelope assigned to the sector. Such a constraint necessarily involves ranking, phasing among competing alternatives as well as identifying complementary interventions; costing and choosing among options. It means being clear what the policy priorities are and what are the gains and losses under different scenarios.

The National Gender Policy Framework states that interventions in the worst case should not worsen gender inequality. The “do-nothing scenario” has to assess what are the costs in terms of perpetuating gender inequality. The different options should be transparent and form the basis of policy dialogue and negotiation.

### ***Including measures for gender equality among priorities for public expenditure***

The basic principle underlying current Public Financial Management on the expenditure side is that state expenditure should focus on what markets fail to allocate efficiently and also on enabling markets to function efficiently: The grounds for state intervention are the presence of

public goods, externalities<sup>1</sup> and inequalities. The last two particularly are strong grounds to address gender inequality and for raising the importance of addressing gender gaps and gender issues through state intervention.

The existence of unpaid labour and the resources it provides to the paid economy is not captured in market transactions. The state can correct for such hidden subsidies which women provide to society and the economy by lessening the burden of unpaid work and by taking over as provider of caring services, such as nutrition, health, child care and adult care services. The state can also correct for gender-based distortions that block effective human resource development and the ability of women and men to take up market opportunities. The measures can mean both appropriate allocations as well as the right regulatory framework. In this sense, gender-sensitive interventions yield a double dividend: It makes for smart economics as well as smart social action.

The ways in which the state mobilizes resources through taxes on income, goods, services and wealth also has gender impacts, because women and men have different access to income, have different endowments of wealth, ownership of enterprises and are differently affected by the taxes on goods and services.

These considerations need to be at the heart of decisions concerning fiscal policy, to determine the fiscal space, the size of the resource envelope, the criteria for its allocation among sectors as well as within sectors over the medium and longer term.

Once gender gaps and gender-specific needs have been identified, the outcome objectives have to follow consistently: The gaps need to be closed for reasons of equity and efficient allocation of resources.

### ***Strategic Partnerships with other organizations***

The determinants of factors which create development problems in one sector and the formulation of strategies and measures to address them, often are present in other sectors. Effective solutions call for multi-sectoral interventions. It opens up the way for different sectors,

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<sup>1</sup> These exist when the effect of one party's action on another party is not taken into account reflected in calculating market prices and costs, so that social costs and/or social benefits can be higher than private costs and benefits. Positive externalities such as the benefits of women's education on children's nutrition and education are in fact transmitted through gender relations.

line ministries and agencies to engage in strategic partnerships around specific outcomes and particularly at local level.

### ***Accountability for performance relating to outputs, but which focus on outcomes***

Outcomes and impacts cannot be attributed to any entity because several external factors may intervene to contribute to them or frustrate them. For this reason, organizations can only take responsibility for outputs, which are within their span of control.

However these outputs have to be outcome-focused and the links leading to them have to be specified. For instance, how outputs or outcomes are framed is particularly important. What is the meaningful development problem for women and for men? Is the focus on building roads, or on reducing congestion or on reducing travel time and then for whom, to what extent? And with what results in terms of impacts and for whom? How can the chain of results be specified and how can indicators of having achieved these objectives be produced and with what costs. If travel time is the issue then other strategies can also be used not just transport ones. Building roads no matter how efficiently and at least cost can have the perverse result of increasing congestion, if it encourages even more cars on the roads.

Clarity about objectives and outcomes and about priorities is thus essential. And both equity and efficiency considerations have to be taken into account. It is not enough to switch from input-based budgeting to output-based budgeting in a multi-year time period.

Social responsibility entails clarity about outcomes. It is no longer sufficient and acceptable to just deliver services and let events take their course, without feeling any responsibility for actual outcomes. It is on the basis of these outcomes that resources can justifiably be allocated to particular budgetary entities and organizations.

The complexity of real life situations have to be taken into account and be the subject of wider participation in reaching decisions.

Teaming up with other strategic partners increases the synergy that can be achieved by making different linked sectoral outputs –each the responsibility of a specific entity- contribute more closely to desired outcomes and make significant and tangible improvements in men and women's lives.

Providing budget information in the form of gender-sensitive objectives and descriptions of existing situations and what changes are sought can provide a powerful platform for civic engagement and participation in policy processes.

### ***Gender-responsive costing and budgeting of development interventions***

Costing needs to take into account total resource costs. This means that the costs of unpaid labour in the household and voluntary services to the community have to be explicitly taken into account. A cost reduction, and thus economy measure, has to be really about reducing costs and should not in fact be an exercise which shifts costs from one sector to another and has unrecognized, unrecorded, undesirable impacts across many other sectors. Such an economy measure carries cost in terms of effectiveness. Time use data can generate information about such costs of unpaid labour. For instance, reducing time spent convalescing in hospitals carries costs in terms of caring services in the home, which may in fact lead to inability of the unpaid carer to work as well as increase stress.

### ***Gender-responsive monitoring and evaluation: reporting on commitments***

Monitoring and evaluation requires both systems to monitor and evaluate, as well as indicators. The indicators demonstrate what change has been achieved, and enable the posing of questions to interpret them. The system needs to generate information about why progress has not been achieved and what factors led to or blocked any progress. Gender-sensitive indicators thus need to be developed which explicitly provide quantitative and qualitative information about results concerning the evolution of gender issues. Background analysis of the situation is essential, to determine which cluster of indicators need to be considered together, to gauge the extent of progress in unlocking gender disadvantage and to identify new unanticipated developments.

The reporting on performance thus closes the cycle from the development of the gender-sensitive base line to the results and milestones achieved. It can document and communicate significant information about what works and what does not work in the quest to achieve gender equality.

Accountability for results also means that the allocations were actually spent and reached the intended beneficiaries and rights-holders were satisfied and there were improvements in gender equality and well-being.

Allocations guided by considerations of equity do not mean equal allocations for women and men. Such allocations should reflect the need to close gender gaps and place equal weights on the different needs and priorities of women and men particularly as regards the provision of collective goods.

There needs to be adequate resources to carry out coordination and monitoring functions and responsibilities in regard to the setting up of gender-responsive, outcome oriented policies, programmes and budgets.

#### **IV The Institutional Arrangements for achieving gender equality**

##### ***At the level of the state and across sectors: strategic partnerships.***

The Republic of Mauritius has made commitments regarding gender equality and the empowerment of women. State actors and non-state actors have obligations to ensure that these commitments are honoured, across legislative, judicial, executive and administrative arms of the state and within civil society. This section sets out who has institutional responsibility over what.

The legislature is responsible for ensuring the appropriate legislative framework for gender equality. Parliament has also to have oversight and scrutinize laws, policies and budgetary allocations and actual expenditure to monitor compliance with commitments made in regard to gender equality. The development of gender-sensitive outcome and performance indicators facilitates the exercise of this oversight, because meaningful budget information is made available and it will be possible to scrutinize whether budgets are based on policy and gender equality-related legislation and to what extent they are consistent with gender equality objectives.

The executive as a whole takes collective responsibility to translate international commitments and legislative provision into policy priorities and leadership in demonstrating clear and unambiguous commitment and accountability for achieving gender equality.

There is a national machinery, a Gender Management System [GMS] that manages the integration of a gender approach in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of policies, programmes, activities and budgets. The lead agency for this integration is the Ministry of Women's Rights, Child Development, Family Welfare and Consumer Protection [MWRDFWCP]. It is responsible for overall reporting and monitoring of the application of the strategies for achieving gender equality. Such a responsibility is too vast to be placed on the shoulders of MWRDFWCP alone, with the resources it actually has.

The development of a strategic framework includes a strategic planning exercise to clarify and match the mandates and missions with the organizational, technical and financial means to operate efficiently. A test of the sincerity of purpose of a national gender policy has to be that sufficient and appropriate resources are allocated for the organization responsible for taking the lead on gender equality as well as units of other organizations.

Other central ministries also form part of the GMS to the extent of their mandate and responsibilities. They are responsible for setting norms of conduct for state policy processes, as well as the regulatory framework and contractual arrangements under which public and private partnerships are created. Explicitly ensuring that these norms and frameworks are gender-inclusive and gender-responsive is part of their remit.

Central ministries such as the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development [MOFED], the Ministry for Civil Service Affairs and Administrative Reform [MCSAAR], are respectively responsible for overseeing the articulation of policy, planning and budgeting on the one hand, and governance, human resource management and development policies and performance management systems in the public sector on the other hand. The onus to make such changes in public financial management and public sector management is on them as well as the need to ensure that they are gender-responsive.

The National Gender Policy applies *the principle of cooperation* to consider that a **strategic partnership** is the most effective way of consolidating institutional resources for achieving gender equality. At the central level, **MOFED and MCSAAR can be the strategic partners of the MWRDFWCP** in developing and supporting gender-responsive systems and policy processes, especially in the context of public sector reform.

The strategic partners need to develop the technical and organizational capacity to do so as a team, in much the same way that learning is needed to switch to new systems. These three

ministries are responsible for setting the standards and norms of conduct and practice to be applied by line ministries.

Line ministries and sectoral agencies are responsible for developing gender-responsive, policies, programmes and budgets, within their sectoral and functional scope, with the support of the central ministries. They are also responsible for generating sex-disaggregated administrative data for gender-responsive planning, implementing and monitoring of their interventions.

Gender focal points [GFPs] have been identified at the administrative and technical levels within each organization, as part of the GMS. So far, their ability to make significant inroads in the practices and mindsets within their respective organizations has been limited. It is an indicator of the low priority hitherto assigned to the issue of gender. However, as a group GFPs, to the extent that there is continuity in their nomination, have learned as a group and they value the networking and opportunities for acquiring knowledge and exchanging know-how.

The National Gender Policy Framework considers that GFPs **can evolve as knowledge networks and constitute a community of practice** which can effectively apply the principle of cooperation, intellectual and policy coordination so needed for successful application of an outcome-based approach. They can become part of a peer review mechanism for mutual support in reviewing policies and programmes and in developing the sectoral gender-responsive strategic frameworks, which are an essential component of MTEFs and PBBs.

This community of practice needs to be supported by gender expertise through a network of external advisors, academic, research and policy analysis institutions and think tanks.

The **Central Statistical Office** has the responsibility for taking the lead in setting up and supporting user-producer networks of statistics, for incorporating gender expertise within its multi-disciplinary teams, for supporting the production of gender-sensitive indicators and for developing over time the statistical capacity so that it is progressively able to build accounts of the interactions between economy, environment, society from a gender-informed perspective.

## ***Within organizations***

Gender mainstreaming to achieve gender equality is an institutional responsibility of all staff. The capacity to mainstream gender equality in the organizations' work area is a basic requirement for all levels of staff.

The first responsibility centre for gender mainstreaming is senior management in policy-setting and monitoring results, in overall coordination and leadership.

Senior management can assign and delegate specific responsibilities to other members of staff, which need to be at a sufficiently high level to make decisions.

In view of the policy to integrate a gender approach from the outset in the switch to MTEFs and Performance-Based-Budgeting, gender expertise and the Gender Focal point function need to be located within a **multi-disciplinary task force, unit or cells for gender-responsive MTEF and PBB**, dedicated to spearheading and coordinating the process.

This cell or technical centre of responsibility has the task of fostering and nurturing coordination between different functional parts of the organization, linking those responsible for data collection, studies, planning, policy analysis, budgeting and service delivery at all levels. This is because an outcome based approach requires coordination rather than a division of tasks and responsibilities as does a cross-cutting gender approach.

The management and supervisory skills of staff at all levels have to be developed to include their sensitivity to gender equality issues.

The mainstreaming of gender equality considerations requires a mix of skills within the organization: the ability to analyse, to network, to have a baseline understanding of socio-economic and gender issues, to manage change as well as specialist thematic gender expertise and knowledge of sources of gender expertise at country, regional and global levels. Those responsible for service delivery and transfers to individuals and households need not to lose sight of their users and clients and need to be encouraged to develop inter-personal and communication skills which are sensitive to their gender-based differences and potential disadvantages.

Appropriate incentive systems and capacity development need to be put into place to facilitate this process. A large part of this task falls under the responsibility of MCSAAR, and related agencies which deliver capacity development for public sector managers.

Specific gender competencies and tasks related to the application of gender mainstreaming need to be included in the definition of performance, in the development of work plans and in performance appraisal. Gender-related skills and tasks can no longer be relegated to subordinate positions and voluntary, ad-hoc work on top of other more formally-recognized tasks. The specific skills required depend on the substantive jobs, and staff members need opportunities to learn/acquire the skills relative to their particular work roles. Men are strongly encouraged to develop such skills and to champion the cause of gender equality, to become role models for transforming the ethos and culture of their organizations.

Human resource policies need to be developed to ensure that the principle of **gender parity or gender balance in management and decision-making** posts is achieved as early as possible.

At the same time, supportive human resource management strategies have to be devised which take into account the **life-patterns of women and men with family responsibilities** and to provide for decent work principles. This includes working hours, travel arrangements and other conditions of service, including arrangements for flexitime and provisions for child care.

An **empowering organization** is a pre-condition for the mainstreaming of gender equality considerations. It needs to eliminate disempowering rules, practices and behaviour, and to ensure that all women and men staff have the capacity to negotiate effectively and to contribute with full creativity to the dynamism of development.

Organizations have to develop own gender-sensitive and equal opportunity policies within which take into account their members of staff's rights as well as obligations, under existing legislations and regulations. This means a **transformation of organizational culture** which is gender-inclusive and does not have predominantly masculine or feminine management cultures. All codes of practice and ethics need to be revisited and made explicitly gender-sensitive.

Within each organization, policies regarding sexual harassment have to be put in place which are binding for all members of staff, which sets clear rules and unambiguous signals of a policy of zero-tolerance for sexual harassment, for all forms of gender-based violence and images and practices which are demeaning and insulting to women.

These transformations have to be undertaken, like the drafting of gender policies, in a participatory manner, favouring dialogue, identifying resistance and facilitating change.

The required resources to apply such standards of gender-responsive programme formulation and delivery and gender-inclusive organizational development have to be explicitly included in implementation plans costed and budgeted for. In no way should the gender policy document be a symbolic wish list unconnected with resources to implement it.

### ***Multistakeholder outreach strategies for achieving gender equality and women's empowerment: a local and participatory approach***

The Ministry of Women's Rights, Child Development, Family Welfare & Consumer Protection provides outreach activities and service delivery to women, children, families as separate social groups and categories. It has dedicated units and programmes for each of these categories. At the same time, within the same localities or districts, there are other ministries, NGOs district councils and municipalities providing outreach activities and services delivery in various sectors: community centres, counselling services on sexual and reproductive health, on family planning and marital counselling, parent and teachers' association, youth clubs and sports clubs, in addition to family centres and women centres. There are also programmes which are not location-specific, but which focus on overlapping target groups, such as the Empowerment Programme, which focuses partly on unemployed women and young persons.

The MWRCDFWCP also oversees and supports organizations such as the National Women's Council, which is an organization catering for women's associations and the National Women Entrepreneur Council.

There is recognition of the need to rationalize and coordinate such structures and programmes and adapt them to changing needs and priorities. Specifically, women's centres' programmes have been historically focused on a stereotypical model of women's role in the family as home-makers and also on building women's skills in women-specific stereotypical areas. Opening hours, the focus on physical centres, the content of courses and nature activities may no longer be adapted to the needs of different women and men in specific localities.

The National Gender Policy Framework considers that such outreach activities have to be conceived as participatory and bottom-up settings for promoting gender equality and decentralized rights-based development, for changing mind-sets and attitudes and fostering dialogue and negotiation about gender-sensitive social transformation and for addressing domestic violence.

The approach from service-providers should be based on the principles of cooperation and the outcome-focus, and on the cross-cutting and holistic approach to gender equality. It encourages such agencies, starting from MWRCDFWCP to set up partnerships with other ministries and agencies and develop programmes based on the same principles and operational guidelines of this framework targeted to specific localities and starting from areas where there is relatively more exclusion and deprivation.

A web of services of proximity, involving diverse stakeholders and including the media, in particular local radio, breaks down social isolation and exclusion, fragmentation and polarization. It makes for safer and more inclusive and vibrant **neighbourhoods**, in which social and environmental issues can be addressed and potential conflicts resolved and more participatory forms of development nurtured.

The specific role of women's centres is to support the empowerment of women along the lines proposed: developing the power to, the power with and the power within. Building self-confidence and self-esteem is important to overcome disempowerment, for being able to engage in mainstream social as well as economic and political activity. Such spaces can thus serve as incubators for women to be able to find and assert a place in the public sphere or graduate to other mainstream institutions catering for small business development and specific skill and trades training.

They need to exist as places where women from different social groups and women's associations can move from the isolation of homes, given the changes in family structure and the gradual erosion of extended-family ties, from the burden of unpaid work, can cross the digital divide and explore and discover leisure, communication and cultural activities together, as well as build the local knowledge and exposure that can enable them to position themselves as local councillors and national politicians.

### ***Gender-responsive private sector activity and organizations***

The National Gender Policy Framework applies also to private sector organizations and institutions. It encourages the private sector institutional actors and umbrella organizations to set the tone and promote the introduction in codes of practice, codes of social responsibility and ethics, its social audits, the principles and values of gender equality.

The past economic growth of Mauritius, from sugar, tobacco and tea plantations and factories, diversification into export-oriented manufacturing particularly, has been based on what

has been termed the “low” road to development, based on cheap, docile, labour and relatively more flexible labour, low repetitive skills, poor and harsh working conditions. It has in fact been based on the existence of gender inequality and wage discrimination, with ambiguous outcomes for women, who are now facing much higher rates of unemployment than men.

A low-cost approach to global competitiveness in fact means for workers particularly, the suspension of their daily household family commitments such that they are lower cost and more available as migrants. Even with the cumulation of paid and unpaid workloads, taking shortcuts in provisioning for the family through fast food consumption and bought services and the cutting back to the minimum on time-consuming extended- family obligations necessary to sustain lifetime social insurance and social networks, there can be no competition between Mauritian workers and migrant workers. The low road is now no longer open to Mauritius as it cannot be competitive in the global “race to the bottom”, in terms of both labour and environmental standards.

The “high road” to competitiveness, based on niches, knowledge and innovation provides a more conducive environment for gender equality and should build on the high and increasing capabilities of young and more educated women. It is now time for private sector organizations to create an enabling environment for making use of the potential and talents of women as well as men and develop human resource strategies that allows for family-friendly policies, even in the context of 24-hour . IT-based and outsourcing organizations, for career-paths that take into account the time-use and life-patterns of women and the responsibilities for child- care, and provide for more gender-balanced responsibilities. Such arrangements need to be developed in partnership with state and other actors.

Mauritius can choose to export some of its work force to take advantage of the “crisis of care” in advanced industrial and ageing societies. But it has to continue to make Mauritius an attractive and safe place to live and do business in order to encourage foreign investment, foreign residents, tourism and the influx of skilled workers. It is also an ageing society. So there is a limit to externalizing or passing on the costs of doing business. Sooner or later, these passed- on costs erode the economic base itself. These costs are the rise in crime, of substance abuse, delinquency, of gender-based violence, violence at school, child abuse and the neglect of children, which are manifestations of a home-grown “crisis of care”. While there is awareness of the environmental limits to economic growth to a certain extent, there is greater blindness over the social limits to growth. Short-term, short-sighted and self-centered approaches are rapidly self-defeating. It is no longer an option to revert to the male bread-

winner model in which women do all the care work and socialization of children in the seclusion of the family cell.

It is thus important for private business to subscribe to the principle of the National Gender policy Framework that social and economic dimensions are mutually supportive and that both social costs and benefits have to be considered for economic growth to be sustainable and viable.

Revisiting development along a high road involves opening the eyes and minds to the gender-based nature of economic and social arrangements. It means practically forging new social and economic arrangements which are more gender-equitable but which are also more effective in promoting economic development.

A gender-sensitive approach to doing business not only involves applying the principles of decent work to production. It also means that marketing of goods and services should not be based on humiliating and demeaning images of women and representations of what women and men do which are based on reproducing stereotypes, particularly concerning domestic chores.

Private business can proactively set the tone for more gender-sensitive marketing and engage in the national project of transforming mindsets and attitudes. This can also mean sponsorships of events such as sporting events, which explicitly seeks to raise the profile of women in sport and which promotes gender-balance access to sports and cultural activities.

### ***The Media***

Media organizations can play a more proactive role not only in applying the principles and guidelines of the National Gender Policy Framework. But also in being key players in changing attitudes and mindsets, in delivering key messages and creating fora for negotiation and dialogue over the transformation of gender relations and questioning stereotypes, in acting as watch dogs to ensure accountability for women's human rights and the effective application of the National Gender Policy Framework..

Like all organizations, they are invited to develop their own gender policy and collaborate with colleagues and professional associations to develop industry guidelines and encourage their application.

## ***Political Parties***

Political parties have a special responsibility to fast track strategies and measures to increase the share of women not only as candidates but also as elected parliamentarians and as cabinet ministers, as well as in local government.

Across parties and within Parliament, there needs to be a zero-tolerance of language and behaviour that is abusive and demeaning to women, and personal attacks on candidates that explicitly reveal an anti-women bias.

Manifestoes and programmes need to include explicit reference to their position regarding gender equality and women's empowerment, across all thematic and sectoral areas.

Candidates, male and female, need to be briefed on policies regarding gender equality and women's empowerment.

## ***Civil Society Organizations***

Civil society organizations, particularly women's organizations have been in the forefront of struggles and mobilisation to achieve women's rights and setting the agenda for gender equality, to denounce violation of rights and campaign on wide-ranging, sensitive and controversial gender issues.

They have an important role to play within the National Gender Policy Framework to create a strong vibrant proactive constituency for gender equality, hold government to account over its commitment to gender equality, develop broad alliances to address the democratic deficit of the very low share of women in parliament and government, comment and put forward proposals concerning the performance-based budgets and engage in independent participatory evaluation and monitoring of government programmes. Local community organizations and NGOs can be strategic partners in designing gender-responsive participatory programmes of local development and community outreach.

## Conclusion

In light of the changing policy environment and the far reaching policy and institutional reforms such as Programme Based Budgeting (PBB) and the Performance Management System (PMS) of the Government, the 2005 National Gender Policy has been revisited.

The National Gender Policy now stands as a generic policy document that builds on past achievements and on-going national efforts to achieve gender equality and is guided by State action towards human-centred and sustainable development. It further provides the framework for each Ministry/ Department and Agency to derive their organisational specific gender policy which will guide their strategic framework for programmes and budgeting.

The revised policy framework has provided the following-

- (i) the guiding principles of the policy;
- (ii) the broad operational strategies; and
- (iii) the institutional arrangements for achieving gender equality.

Given the cross cutting nature of gender issues, the policy framework has also called upon a strategic partnership at the levels of-

- (i) the State;
- (ii) within organisations;
- (iii) among the private sector;
- (iv) the media;
- (v) political parties; and
- (vi) civil society organisations to consolidate resources to achieve gender equality.

It is the earnest anticipation of the Lead Agency of the National Gender Machinery that National Gender Policy Framework will be adopted and used by all stakeholders with a view to furthering the gender agenda at the national level, using a multi-pronged and holistic approach.