



MINISTRY OF BUSINESS, ENTERPRISE & COOPERATIVES
(Business and Enterprise division)

Event : SEED MAURITIUS DIALOGUE FORUM
Location : Labourdonnais Waterfront Hotel
Date : Tuesday 8 August @ 12h45

H.E. Mrs Marjaana SALL, Ambassador and Head, Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Mauritius

Mr Simon Springett, the UNDP Resident Representative

Ms. Marie-Lourdes Raphael-Robertson, representative of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly

Mr. Phalraj Servansingh, Managing Director of SMEDA

Representatives of SEED and NELIS Africa

INTRODUCTION

- Thank you for giving me the opportunity to welcome today's participants to the SEED Mauritius Dialogue Forum
- Theme of the event, centered around **reaping the full potential of enterprise solutions for achieving Sustainable Development Goals and for supporting Mauritius' path towards an inclusive and green economy**, is of utmost importance as we are in the context of perhaps our greatest global challenge, which is meeting growing consumer demands while managing increasingly overburdened natural resources
- The dedication of one of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to promote **Sustainable Consumption and Production (Goal 12)** is a clear indication that shifting to sustainable consumption and production patterns is central to achieving sustainable development.
- **What does a green economy imply for Mauritius?** : This would mean an economy whose growth in income and employment is driven by public and private investment that reduces carbon emissions and pollution, enhances energy and resource efficiency and prevents the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services, whilst creating green jobs.



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IMPORTANCE OF GREEN ECONOMY & ECO-ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Global situation

- Humanity has used up its allowance of planetary resources such as water, soil, and clean air for all of 2017 on **Wednesday 2nd August** - a day earlier than in 2016 – and we will thus be **living on "credit"** for the rest of the year
- Every passing year, the day called the **Earth Overshoot Day** arrives **earlier and earlier**: In 1993, it fell in October, in 2003 in September, and in 2015 on 13th of August

Situation in Africa

- Land degradation, air pollution, and the scarcity of sanitation and safe drinking-water are among the main sustainability problems in Africa
- **About 500, 000 square meters of land in Africa is being degraded** due to soil erosion, salinization, pollution and deforestation – causing damage to agricultural productivity, nutrition and human health
- Forest cover in Africa is likely to continue shrinking, declining to less than 600 million hectares by 2050.

Situation in Mauritius

- **Falling availability of natural resources** on the one hand, and **rising material costs** on the other hand
- Global challenges such as climate change exacerbate the shrinking state of natural resources, and increases pressure for sustainable production and consumption patterns.

How to tackle the problem?

- Given the present environmental and sustainability problems facing the world, it is clear that **past strategies have failed to tackle the collateral damages of such degradation**.
- These challenges are **economic opportunities** and it is high time we pay attention to the **role that entrepreneurs can play** in solving or dealing with them through business opportunities that provide or support **profitable, yet resource-efficient products and services**



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- SMEs, startups and eco-entrepreneurs worldwide are indeed playing a more and more vital role in the transition to a low-carbon economy
- Moreover, an interesting trend observed is that it is **young and small firms** that are emerging as main drivers of radical eco-innovation in the industrial and services sectors.
- The **greening of the business sector** together with the **development of green skills** create **new market niches** – it is up to start-ups to identify them and integrate their business ideas with the objective of helping the environment

How is Mauritius tackling the situation?

- A **Green Economy (GE) Assessment report** was undertaken by the University of Mauritius in partnership with UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme) in 2015 - the GE assessment demonstrates that a green economy transition offers Mauritius further opportunities for sustained economic growth, energy and water savings, increased agricultural productivity and green jobs – with an expected **GDP 6 percent higher in the GE case relative to Business As Usual case by 2035**.
- However, Mauritian SMEs are today **mostly involved in low-value added activities** such as recycling of waste and **medium-value added activities** such as installation of solar water heaters and photovoltaic panels.
- **Our SMEs need to move to higher-value added activities.**
 - A myriad of opportunities available: pollution control, manufacture of electric bikes, water leak detection services, Organic Foods Catering, Eco-friendly Home and Office Cleaning, Natural Foods Cooperatives...etc.

SEED AND SWITCH AFRICA GREEN IN MAURITIUS

- Implementation of the **Switch Africa Green programme** is vital for the required transformation
- **Mauritius is lucky to be part of the 6 countries supported by this programme** in its desire to achieve the **transition towards an inclusive green economy**, based on sustainable consumption and production patterns



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- In January 2016: a project launched to prepare an **implementation framework for the SWITCH Africa Green Programme in Mauritius**
 - With the objective of carrying out a **policy review, analyzing gaps and challenges** acting as barriers for the greening of MSMEs and to **identify opportunities** to support green business development in Mauritius
 - A **Country Implementation Plan** with a comprehensive set of policy, fiscal and economic recommendations was published in October 2016
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INITIATIVES OF GOVERNMENT IN FAVOUR OF A GREEN ECONOMY

- Government is conscious that transitioning to more sustainable pathways entails a **reconfiguration of the structure for production, distribution and consumption of goods and services** through a review of existing policies.
- Government's **policy emphasis on developing local sources of renewable energy offers a unique potential for launching a green economy**, with new high value-added jobs, while at the same time addressing environmental issues and reducing future oil import bills.
- Strong will of the Government – several measures during the last 2 years to support blooming of a green economy:
 - Green and Renewable Energy is one of the **priority sectors** deemed eligible to qualify for the **SME Development Scheme**
 - CEB to invest **Rs 400 million to increase the grid absorption capacity of intermittent energy from 148 to 160 MW by 2018** to accommodate the production of more electricity from intermittent renewable sources
 - Major **waste-to-energy project** is expected to add up to 30 MW of electricity on the grid by 2019

SME Master Plan launched in March 2017

- One of the Strategic Thrusts of the Master Plan: **Encouraging Innovation, Technology Transfer and Green SMEs**
 - And naturally, it **recommends the implementation of projects identified through the Switch Africa Green initiative**



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- **Greening of SMEs** also identified as a **Quick Win**, i.e. impactful action to be implemented within the short term and that will yield results in the near future
 - Activities suggested:
 - support start-ups and SMEs promoting innovative clean technology solutions, support SMEs to enter eco-business sectors like bio-farming, bio-tech and waste management
- Another activity suggested by the SME Master Plan and which is in line with the recommendations of the Switch Africa Green Country Implementation Plan : **Introduction of an eco-labelling framework for green value-added products**
- Eco-labelling will provide a market-based instrument to enhance access to international markets for Mauritian businesses and in turn, it will be an **additional incentive for businesses to adopt Green Economy strategies**
- This proposal will be among the plethora of actions to be considered and implemented by **SME Mauritius**:
 - **the new high-powered multi-capabilities institution** that will henceforth be in charge of all SME support programmes
 - Will definitely be a strong partner for SEED and the Switch Africa Green programme

Cooperatives

- National Workshop on **“Mauritius’ Cooperatives towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)”** organised by the Ministry in April 2017 in collaboration with UNDP
- In Mauritius, we want **energy cooperatives** to contribute to the achievement of the sustainable energy goals of energy access, energy efficiency, and reduced emissions.
- My Ministry, in collaboration with the Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities and the Central Electricity Board, has devised and implemented a **“Green Energy Small Scale Distribution Generation Scheme for Cooperatives”**.
- The objective of this scheme is to allow cooperatives to **produce electricity from solar photovoltaic system**, which is in line with the **Government’s long term Energy Strategy** to increase the share of renewable energy to **35%** in the national energy mix by **2025**.



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IMPORTANCE OF THE SWITCH AFRICA GREEN-SEED PARTNERSHIP FOR MAURITIUS

- The big question is **how do we concretely foster the development of new entrepreneurial firms that will create the innovations necessary to respond to our sustainable development needs?**
- As demonstrated earlier, Government has **clearly defined its roadmap** for SMEs and continues to work on devising adapted actions for the sector, including when it comes to the greening of SMEs.
- But **this alone is not enough.**
- Owing to the small size, vulnerability and isolation of our island economy, a **high level of inter and intra sectorial linkages** is required to achieve sustainability
- This thus highlights the importance of benefiting from the support of SEED and of being part of the Switch Africa Green programme
 - SEED has experience providing **holistic approach to support policy makers and eco-enterprises** and **proven successful methodology, toolkits and expertise** on eco-entrepreneurship
- Another essential feature of the programme: the **SAG-SEED Replicator**, whose aim is to **promote the uptake and replication of eco-entrepreneurship to future eco-entrepreneur's** by identifying the most promising eco-enterprise models for replication and making them replication-ready
 - Through capacity building and familiarisation of future eco-entrepreneurs with best-practice models in view of replicating those that are most promising.
- Hence, coupled with the efforts of the Government, such a programme will significantly **support the development of a new breed of eco-entrepreneurs** and of SMEs that wish to tap into the opportunities of going green.

CONCLUSION

- Green SMEs are laying the foundations for what our planet needs: a **fundamental shift towards a green economy**
- It is this new breed of **eco-conscious change agents** that will help us achieve a **sustainable global economy** that works with nature rather than against it, thus redefining the way business is conducted



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- This is only the beginning of the adventure - even more and gratifying rewards are awaiting ahead as it is those entrepreneurs with a keen business sense along with a desire to make the world a better place who will **be hailed as the pioneers and leaders of sustainability in the long run.**
- I think there is **a unique opportunity** to give **a new direction to the SME sector** through **mutually reinforcing interaction** between the Switch Africa Green programme and our political will to develop a vibrant eco-system