



**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

MISSION PERMANENTE DE LA REPUBLIQUE DE MAURICE AUPRES DES NATIONS UNIES

Note No.: 9544/07(NY/UN/562)

7 September 2007

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Mauritius to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea of the United Nations and with reference to its Note dated 15 January 2007 regarding Resolution 61/222 adopted by the General Assembly on 20 December 2007, has the honour to forward herewith, information on the state of development of ocean related activities in Mauritius

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Mauritius to the United Nations avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea of the United Nations the assurances of its highest consideration.

Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea
United Nations, New York



(i) **Achievements and advances in development of living marine resources.**

The fisheries sector is an important sector of the economy supplying fish to the domestic market to ensure the overall food security of the country, producing foreign exchange through exports and providing employment.

Since the adoption of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, Mauritius has invested considerably in the development and management of its fishery resources. In this context, several surveys have been carried out in its Exclusive Economic Zone to explore for new untapped fishery resources. New stocks of deepwater shrimp and deep water snapper have been discovered and exploitations of the latter has started.

Mauritius maintains statistical data on the catch and effort of all its fisheries. This information is available over time and disaggregated by area, species and product type. This has enabled the assessment of the available resources and their exploitation rates.

Improved management of the bank fisheries has been identified as a priority in view of its high exploitation rate. A limited entry system coupled with a quota system has been introduced in the banks fisheries since 1992 and 1994.

The artisanal fisheries produces around 1000 tonnes of fresh fish and employs about 2300 fishers. It is managed through a series of measures such as:

- A buy back programme for the net fishermen with a compensation on surrendering of their nets;
- Spear fishing has been made illegal;
- Dynamite fishing no longer exists;
- Sand extraction has been banned;
- Fishing with cast nets is not allowed;
- Law enforcement against illegal fishing and fishing of undersize fish;
- Relocation of fishing pressure by encouraging fishers to go outside the lagoon and fish around Fish Aggregating Devices.

The Fisheries and Marine Resources Act (1998) provides for the management of the coastal fishery through legislation relating to undersize fish, control of mesh size of nets, close seasons and areas amongst others.

As regards the tuna fisheries, licences are issued to foreign fishing vessels operating in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of Mauritius against payment of the appropriate fees for longline and purse seine fishing in addition to a small local fishery.

(ii) **Plans and expectations of government for the marine sector over the next 10 years**

The Government of Mauritius has the following plans and objectives for the marine sector:

- Continue the relocation of fishers from the lagoon to an outer lagoon fishery to relieve pressure on the over exploited lagoon and reduce conflicts with other lagoon users. In this context, a package of incentives is given to fishers including training in outer lagoon fisheries, loans for the purchase of bigger boats, engines and safety equipments.
- Continue the setting of fish aggregating devices to facilitate the capture of pelagic fishes by fishermen.
- Setting up of marine parks and marine protected areas to help in conservation measures and protection of biodiversity.
- Preparation of management plans to better manage and for the sustainable exploitation of the limited fish resources.
- Better control of fish at landings at Port Louis and the application of Catch Documentation Scheme.
- Encourage tuna fisheries development, if possible through joint ventures.
- Improve port infrastructure and services to attract more fishing vessels to use the port.

(iii) Successes and positive outcomes in the sustainable and effective development of marine resources and uses of the oceans. Entering into partnerships and joint development arrangements and infusion of capital.

- The catch rates in one fishery has been stabilized and a cautious approach is being taken in newly identified fisheries;
- Employment opportunities in the fisheries sector has increased , e.g the work-force in the fish processing factories has increased by 15% in the past two years;
- There has been an increase in the export of processed tunas;

With a view to enhance management of the fisheries sector, the ministry has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Government of Western Australia where joint programmes and exchanges are provided for. The Government strongly encourages joint ventures/partnerships arrangements in fishing, aquaculture, processing and value addition.

(iv) Difficulties encountered in areas of sustainable and effective development in the marine sector

The coastal zones and their marine resources are of vital importance and represent biologically diverse ecosystems. In recent years certain areas have come under pressure from coastal development or other demands. Protecting these resources is of high priority, and integrating the concept of ecosystem approach and carrying capacity into management systems to achieve sustainability has become very challenging due to the following factors:-

- the difficulty in creating a balance in areas of conflicting interests, for example conflicts among users over the use of marine resources or the coastal/sea space;
- difficulty to make users understand the link between biodiversity conservation and eco-tourism;
- conflicts among coastal development, tourism, fishing and conservation activities;
- lack of funds to carry out full surveillance of the exclusive economic zone.

Challenges and constraints in respect of information base and resource mapping

A multi spectral CASI imagery of the coastal zones of the island of Mauritius and Rodrigues was acquired in 1996. Bathymetric maps for the lagoons and habitat resource maps of the two islands have been produced in 2004 from the analysis of the thematic maps produced from the CASI Imagery.

Funding for acquisition of satellite imageries/data, such as real time sea surface temperature, real time picture of the coastal zone or the Exclusive Economic Zone to monitor changes is a constraint.

Training of staff in Geographical Information System (GIS) to keep pace with the ever changing technologies for application and management purposes is needed.

(v) **Availability of incentives and support to the private sector**

Mauritius as a small island development state does not possess any mineral resources. However, the port at Port Louis has well developed infrastructures and is one of the most competitive port in the Indian Ocean. Infrastructures include dedicated quays for fish landings, 80,000m³ of cold room facilities representing a cold storage capacity of over 22,000 tonnes and other facilities for dry storage, private deep water quays and a one stop shop service dedicated exclusively to the seafood industry. Mauritius now has a uniform corporate tax of 15% on profits. Other facilities such as visa/residence permits/acquisition of property by non citizens have been streamlined to facilitate business in Mauritius. Amongst other incentives, Bank loans from the Development Bank of Mauritius and other commercial banks are available. Mauritius has good air/sea routes/ telecommunications/banking/finance and other logistics to promote its development.

Mauritius is pursuing a multi pronged development strategy based on a liberal and an open investment policy to achieve sustainable growth.